

# **Discourse Analysis on Online Written Communication of Indonesian University Students in Social Networking Sites**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research aimed at finding out the: (1) Lexical features, (2) Orthographic features, (3) Grammatical features, (4) Paralinguistic features, (5) Paralinguistic and graphic features, (6) Other features on Social Networking Sites, (7) Students' perception on Social Networking Sites, and (8) Students' responses on WhatsApp in learning English. The subject of the research was the second semester of Education Administration, Universitas Negeri Makassar in academic year 2018/2019 which consists of 33 students. Questionnaire, group discussion, and response question were chosen as the instruments for collecting the data which were then analyzed through reading and memoing, describing, classifying and interpreting, and reporting the data. The result of the research is: (1) In terms of lexical features, the students used interjection of vocabulary, abbreviation, word letter replacement and code mixing and code switching, (2) In terms of orthographic features, there were two types of this features that the students used that are words spelling including misspelling and capitalization, (3) In terms of discourse features, the students used interaction features such as question mark and there was also the stream of consciousness in the students' writing that deals with the spoken language that represented to written form, (4) In terms of paralinguistic and graphic features, the students use excessive punctuation and emoticon to show their emotion, (5) In terms of grammatical features, it was found that the students used incorrect tense in their sentence, (6) In terms of other linguistic features, there was a written out laughter in which represent the sound of the students' laughter in the chat room, (7) students' perception on Social Networking Sites, namely: (a) Social networking was a problematic issue which affect their academic life, (b) Online network did not distract them from their studies, (c) Hours spent online could never be compared to the number they spent

reading, (d) There was improvement in their grades since they became engaged into these social networking sites, (e) Unlimited access to online network did not affect their academic performance negatively, (f) Engaging in academic discussion on Twitter did not improve their academic performance, (g) WhatsApp was used to disseminate knowledge to their classmates, (h) They did not solely rely on information gotten from Wikipedia to do their assignments without consulting other sources, (i) The usage of Wikipedia had helped improving their grades, (j) Engaging in academic forums on Yahoo! did not reduce their rate of understanding, (k) They used materials gotten from blogging sites to complement what they had been taught in class, (l) They would perform well in their academics even if they stopped using social media, (m) Males are more effective at using social networking sites for nonacademic purposes, (n) Female students used social networking sites more to explicitly foster social connections, (o) Gender determined the level of social media network usage, (p) Male and female students used social media networks differently in different frequencies, (q) age had impact on the use of social media, (r) Social media became boring as they grow older, (s) social media was relevant to people of older generation, and, (t) Younger generation were the most active users of social media, and (8) There were 30 out of 33 students (90.9%) responded positively that learning through WhatsApp are beneficial for them, however, there were 3 students (9.1%) who responded the opposites. 30 students who had a tendency to respond positively had reasons as follows: getting correction easily, asking and discussing more relaxed, and learning more efficient. On the other hand, the students who responded negatively said that it was not easy to learn as sometimes they did not understand sentences.

Keyword: Discourse analysis, online written communication, social networking sites.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Presently, the rapid development of technology has transformed the way people live in a modern and flexible way. In terms of communication, advanced technology results in the massive products of social networking sites. These outputs create a platform where interaction becomes easier than ever before. One of its conveniences is the social networks can be used to connect without being in the same location at times. Moreover, this, in turn, can be applied in the field of education such as learning and performing a language.

In learning English, students and an instructor can use this platform to communicate with certain applications. One of the social media which is popularly downloaded is WhatsApp. Through this application, students use a chat feature to express their ideas and feelings. In online context, students show linguistic features in written discourse. The researcher is inspired to investigate the linguistic features based on their interaction. As in fact, language use in the chat room seems different from standard language due to some possibilities such as to save time.

Various social networks such as blogs, wikis, and media sharing are popular among students in practice. Despite becoming an addition in recent years on the internet, social media have shown great proliferation, including educational area. This online social networking is progressively being used not only by the students but also by teachers or lecturers for different purposes. Moreover, after an exploration of an extensive range of social media, it has been found out that these applications bring some educational benefits for students and teachers which provide an opportunity for learning.

Hezili (2010) classified the linguistic features exist in the online communication in terms of (1) orthographic features (alphabet, capital letters, spelling, and punctuation), (2) linguistic (informal vocabulary, abbreviation), (3) grammatical (word order, sentence structure), (4) discourse features (coherence and cohesion) and (5) paralinguistic and graphics features (alternative marker such as capitalization, and little excessive punctuation). Besides, the main

difference between the offline and online written discourse is the language in the online context is regularly in nonstandard form.

Furthermore, linguistic features have already been studied by some researchers. Saalek (2015:137) in his study concluded that communication via electronic communication mediums may facilitate the rise of the new variety of language that is e-discourse and create new forms and functions of language. Hence, discourse analysis in online written communication shows that students tend to deliver their message short and brief in instant messaging, that is why they use the abbreviation and another form of language to make their conversation shorter but still easy to understand. The linguistic features of online context are unique as they have the same meaning with the standard writing but different in form.

Applying such technology in students learning habits can be difficult at times. Therefore, it is important to have students' opinions on the usage of social networking sites in general. There are plenty of statements where students have to choose among agree, strongly agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Finally, the researcher is also interested in finding out students' responses to WhatsApp application during learning English in a given time. Students write their opinion in the specific form called Google Form. Based on the illustration above, it can be stated that the use of social networking sites in students and the instructor interaction show some linguistic features. The researcher decided to study discourse analysis and students' opinions about social networks.

The objectives of this study are to find out and describe:

1. The lexical features used by the students in online learning
2. The orthographic features used by the students in online learning
3. The grammatical features used by the students in online learning
4. The discourse features used by the students in online learning
5. The paralinguistic and graphic features used by the students in online learning
6. The other features used by the students in online learning
7. The students' perception on Social Networking Sites

8. The students' responses on WhatsApp in learning English.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Segesrtad (2002) in his study found that, in terms of abbreviations some seemed to be taken over from the norms in international chat, rooms, *lol* (laughs out loud) and *brb* (be right back) and after all the modes have been investigated, it showed that even though web chat is a sort of written conversation, the most frequent token is the word *du* [you], and not the period.. It seems that the norms of standard writing are not as important in this situation. It also shows the importance of the topic, or perhaps the goal of interaction, in the situation: the words *du* [you] and *jag* [I] are what people talk about. He also discovered that writers use all capital letters, duplication of messages, emoticons, asterisk, symbol substituting words to as paralinguistic cues in the interaction.

Thurlow and Brown (2003) found common patterns on the student's message were found: such as shortenings (missing end letters), e.g. 'lang' for language', Contractions (missing middle letters), e.g. 'gd' for 'good', ;g' clipping (final letter missing, e.g. 'goin' for 'going', Other clippings, e.g. 'hav' for 'have', Acronyms and initialisms, e.g. 'v' for 'very', Letter/number homophones, e.g. '1' for 'one' Non-conventional spelling, e.g. 'sum' for 'some'.

Based on the prior studies above, the researcher concentrated also on the various linguistic features of the language on the internet, particularly in the chat room. The features found were classified into some types of linguistic features.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research used the mixed method, namely, qualitative and quantitative method. Qualitative was used to analyze the language features in online discourse in terms of Lexical, Orthographic, Grammatical, Discourse, Paralinguistic and Graphic features, and other features used by the students to interact with friends and the researcher on the social networking sites. Quantitative method was used to analyze the students' perspective on Social Networking Sites and students'

responses on WhatsApp in learning English. The primary data source of this research was taken from private and group chat conducted through WhatsApp.

Participants of this research were Education Administration students at Faculty of Science Education in State University of Makassar who enrolled English subject in the second semester. They participated in English group chat created by the researcher on WhatsApp. In this group, the students performed various activities in learning English, such as giving opinion, feedbacks, or answering questions. It was conducted for four months on online platform. There were thirty three students and the researcher in this group or classroom. The data collected then analyzed in some step explained by Gay et al (2006) that are, reading and memoing, describing, classifying and interpreting, and reporting.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of this research showed that the students used six linguistic features in the chat room. The explanation of the linguistic features can be seen in the following table:

No	Linguistic features	The items
1	Lexical	Interjection Abbreviation Word Letter Replacement Code Switching and Code Mixing
2	Orthographic	Words spelling Capitalization
3	Grammatical	Tenses use
4	Discourse	Interaction features The stream of consciousness
5	Paralinguistic and graphic	Emoticon Excessive punctuation
6	Other features	Written Out Laughter

The detail findings of each feature in the table above can be seen in the following description:

### 1. Lexical Features

Lexical features deal with the use of informal vocabulary in online communication. The vocabulary of a language, described in terms of the set of words and idioms given characteristic use within a variety. The types of lexical features discovered in this research can be seen in the following table:

**Types of Lexical Features**

Types	Online Form	Standard Form
Interjection	Hmmmmm Yuhuuuu Ohh no Woww	Hmm Yoo-Hoo Oh no! Wow
Abbreviation	OMG LOL Lmaooo	Oh My God Laugh out loud Laugh My Ass Off
Word letter replacement	U A	You Are
Code-switching and code Mixing	Because I'm ikut indoor at ukm seni, sir	Because I join the indoor at UKM Seni, sir

In terms of lexical features, there were 6 types of features found. The explanation of each type can be seen as follows:

An interjection is a name or phrase that happens as a statement on its own and shows a spontaneous response or reaction. The words, yuhuu, oooow, wow and are interjections that function to express the students' feeling or reaction during the course. An abbreviation is the shortened form of a word or phrase that is used to represent the complete form of the words. The abbreviation was used to make the words shorter so the students didn't have to take too much time to type the words. One of the examples was LOL which stands for laugh out loud. It was

used to show that he was laughing because the teacher said funny thing. Word letter replacement refers to the replacement of a word into a single letter. In this research, the student replace the word you into a single letter u.

Code-mixing and code-switching are the interchangeable use of two languages in one sentence/ utterance in this research that the student performed code switching and code mixing in response to her teacher’s question. In this case, the students mixed/ switched the language between first language (Bahasa Indonesia) and second language (English)

## 2. Orthographic Features

Orthographic features deal with the use of the alphabet, capital letters, spelling, punctuation, and ways of expressing emphasis (italics, boldface, etc.). The types of orthographic features found in this research can be seen in the table below:

**Types of Orthographic Features**

Types	Online forms	Standard form
Words spelling	Omaigat Homtown Vidio Publick God	Oh my God Hometown Video Public Good
Capitalization	And i just download new game again. Pinrang mitt, are you miss me? i love indonesia	And I just download new game again. Pinrang Mitt, do you miss me? I love Indonesia

In terms of orthographic features, there were two types of features found. The explanation of each type can be seen as follows:



Word spelling deals with the way the words are spelled. In this research, the researcher found some eccentric spelling of some words such as omaigat, and homtown, and publick. Those words are categorized as eccentric spelling because the students added additional letter to emphasize the meaning of the words.

Capitalization deals with the writing of the words that are in upper case in the first letter then the rest of the letter is written in lower case. The students sometimes just write their sentence in lower case even it is for proper noun such as name (mitt)

In this research, the researcher found that sometimes the students didn't pay attention to the word spelling and capitalization while interacting with their teacher in the chat room. They abandoned the convention of words spelling and capitalization especially for proper nouns.

### 3. Grammatical Features

Grammatical form deals with the grammar of the sentence that makes the meaning in terms of distinctive use of sentence structure, word order, and word inflections. The types of grammatical features found in this research can be seen in the table below:

**Types of Grammatical Features**

Types	Online Form	Standard Form
Tenses Use	I cleaning my fridge sir  Yes, sorry, because pardi dont understand so I'm menjelaskannya	I am cleaning my fridge sir  Yes, sorry, because Pardi does not understand so I explain to him

In terms of grammatical features, there was 1 type of features found. The explanation of each type can be seen as follows:

Tenses Use. The examples show that the students did not use the verb and subject agreement to the sentences. This makes the sentences are not completed

#### 4. Discourse Features

Discourse features deals with the coherence, relevance, paragraph structure, and the logical progression of ideas. The types of discourse features found in this research can be seen in the following table:

**Types of Discourse Features**

Types	Online Form	Standard Form
Interactional features	Use your own language” so, are we use the Indonesian language or we tell about what we have learned in three items use English language?	Use your own language” so, do we use the Indonesian language or we tell about what we have learned in three items use English language?
The stream of consciousness	I currently want to join but this vacation I used to help my parents because I have children the twins that I have to take care of, so I ask u about it.	I currently want to join but this vacation I used to help my parents. I have children the twins that I have to take care of, so I ask you about it.

In terms of discourse features, there were 2 types of features found. The explanation of each type can be seen as follows:


Interactional features. The students used interaction features when interacting with their teacher. The most used interaction features used here was the question mark. The question proposed by the student because they wanted to clarify the teacher's explanation or to ask more about the topic discussed

The Stream of Consciousness also appeared in the students' chat room. The stream of consciousness style of writing is characterized by the unexpected rise of thoughts and the absence of punctuation. One of the examples found was the sentence I currently want to join but this vacation I used to help my parents. I have children the twins that I have to take care of, so I ask you about it.

### 5. Paralinguistic and Graphic Features

Paralinguistic and graphics features deal with general presentation and organization of the online written language, defined in terms of such factors as the use of spaced letters, the alternative markers for emphasis (paralinguistic), the use of capitalization, the little excessive punctuation. The types of discourse features found in this research can be seen in the following table:

#### Types of Paralinguistic and Graphics Features

Types	Online Form	Standard Form
Emoticon usage		:)* :~ :x
Excessive punctuation	I do!!!	I do!

In terms of paralinguistic and graphic features, there were 2 types of features found. The explanation of each type can be seen as follows:

Emoticon usage. The students used a lot of emoticon to show their emotion while chatting with their teacher. The emoticon shows an illustration of character expressions, such as punctuation marks, letters, and numbers. It serves as a person's revelation of feelings or mood, or shorthand time saving. Some of the emoticon showed that the students are happy and show their smile (:D and :) and their laugh (XD) . the students also express their shock trough emoticon (:O) ,the students also used emoticon while thinking and also when giving a wink to the teacher.

Excessive punctuation. The students used excessive punctuation to emphasize their words such as I do!!! .The excessive punctuation here function as a mean to show the students' excitement about the matter discussed in the chat room. The students type 'I do' by using excessive punctuation, in this case double exclamation mark in respond to the jokes and it emphasized that she would do sweep cleaning.

## 6. Other features

The other linguistic features found in this research is written out laughter. Written out laughter represents the sound of the students' laughter. Instead of using smiley or emoticon, the students 'type'their laughter into a word hahaha and wkwkwk .

### Written Out Laughter

Online forms	Standard form
. Wkwkwk	Ha-Ha
Hahaha	Ha-Ha
Hehe	Ha-Ha

By analyzing the students' written discourse in online learning, we can see that there were many unique features that appeared in the chat room such as the eccentric spelling of the words and the omission of word in ellipsis. Those features can be a problem for the students formal writing as Kadir et al (2012:280) asserted that the nonconventional spelling used fosters educational anxieties as educators are uptight that such writing might emerge in their formal written text. However, further studies are needed to support the claim.

The written discourse over the internet is unique and can be said that it creates a new form of language that is different from standard language that we used in our daily life. The features found in the analysis were abbreviation and ellipsis that make the students sentence shorter, the use of emoticon that represent the emotions and psychical activity that cannot be done through the chat room, The use of words, lower and upper case to represent the sound and the intonation

of the student's sentences, the abandonment of convention of capitalization of proper nouns and the initial words from the sentences, and the artistic orthography of few words.

Saalek (2015:135) stated that the revolution in the electronic communication may give rise to new modes of communication. Electronic discourse is a new variety of language that leads to significant variations in the written structure of language. The new variety of the students' written discourse in online learning has a unique characteristic that makes it distinctive

### **7. Students' Perception on Learning English in Online Context**

By analyzing the students' written discourse in online learning, we can see that there were many unique features that appeared in the group chat. The written discourse over the internet is unique and can be said that it create a new form of language that is different from standard language that we used in our daily life.

There were many perceptions why students used WhatsApp in daily activities related to their academic life, namely: (1) Addiction to social networking was a problematic issue which affect their academic life, (2) Online network did not distract them from their studies, (3) Hours spent online could never be compared to the number they spent reading, (4) There was improvement in their grades since they became engaged into these social networking sites, (5) Unlimited access to online network did not affect their academic performance negatively, (6) Engaging in academic discussion on Twitter did not improve their academic performance, (7) WhatsApp was used to disseminate knowledge to their classmates, (8) They did not solely rely on information gotten from Wikipedia to do their assignments without consulting other sources, (9) The usage of Wikipedia had helped improving their grades, (10) Engaging in academic forums on Yahoo! did not reduce their rate of understanding, (11) They used materials gotten from blogging sites to complement what they had been taught in class, (12) They would perform well in their academics even if they stopped using social media, (13) Males are more effective at using social networking sites for nonacademic purposes, (14) Female students used social networking sites more to explicitly foster social connections, (15) Gender determined the level of social media

network usage, (16) Male and female students used social media networks differently in different frequencies, (17) age had impact on the use of social media, (18) Social media became boring as they grow older, (19) social media was relevant to people of older generation, and, (20) Younger generation were the most active users of social media.

### **8. The students' responses on WhatsApp in learning English**

Using WhatsApp in learning English made students active and motivated such as making sentence, dialogue, giving opinion, getting correction, commenting to pictures, and being confident to ask and answer questions. This was shown by the students' responses to the use of WhatsApp to learn English where 30 out of 33 students (90.9%) responded positively that learning through WhatsApp are beneficial for them. However, there were 3 students (9.1%) who responded the opposites. Moreover, 30 students who had a tendency to respond positively had reasons as follows: getting correction easily, asking and discussing more relaxed, and learning more efficient. On the other hand, the students who responded negatively said that it was not easy to learn as sometimes they did not understand sentences.

### **CONCLUSION**

In the online learning, especially in WhatsApp group, the students used six linguistic features namely, lexical features (interjection of vocabulary, abbreviation, word letter replacement, word combination, code mixing and code switching), orthographic features (words spelling and capitalization), grammatical features (ellipsis, passive, and personal pronoun), discourse features (interactional features and the stream of consciousness) and paralinguistic and graphics features (emoticon usage and excessive punctuation ) and other features (written out laughter) .

The features that appear during the course were different from the standard form of the language that makes the students' written discourse in online learning is unique. The uniqueness found can be seen in the way the students typed their word.

The features in the chat room allowed the students to express their intention, emotion and to emphasize the words in unique way. The student sometimes used

the abbreviation, emoticon, word letter replacement, and abandonment of convention of capitalization of proper nouns and the first words of sentences. The students also could express their emotion and also adding the 'sound of their conversation' in the chat room such as the sound of the laughter. The student also represented the psychical activity such as hugging, yawning, and kissing through emoticon and uniqueness can be seen in the creation of creative orthography found in this study that is eccentric spelling by adding additional letter to emphasize the meaning of the words. These features have their own function to express intention, meaning, or emotion in the chat room. The features can be categorized as a new mode of communication and writing that has its own features.

The future researcher may study the features that are not only focused on the five linguistic features but the other aspects of linguistic features. Related to the errors that the student made in online classes such as the misspelling and unconventional spelling that may affect the students formal writing, the further studies are clearly needed to conduct and related to the limitations of this study, the researcher suggest to the future researcher to study the linguistic features in online learning with a large number of sample.

These students' perceptions are in line with the research by Peter (2015). The result showed that Students' addictiveness to social network has a significant influence on their academic performance; Student's exposure to social media network has significant influence on students' academic performance; Use of social media has significant influence on the academic performance of the students; there is a significant influence on student's usages of social media network by age.

In general, students' perceptions show that even though addiction to social networking sites is a problematic issue to students, yet, it also has advantages. For instance, materials gotten from blogging can enrich the students' understanding and also to complement what the students have been taught in the class. Moreover, they also can use social media to disseminate knowledge to their class mates. Creating group discussion in the form of online communities serves to make project, and to keep in touch with fellow students.

This information can also benefit the practitioners, such as teachers, lecturers or instructors. The advanced technologies can take place in teaching and learning, such social networking sites, or e-learning. This also suggests that lecturers can maximize the use of social media in the classroom without neglecting the government's adequate control of social media among students and lecturers.

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