

MANUSCRIPT (NASKAH PUBLIKASI)

**“STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF USING TWITTER FOR ENHANCING
READING SKILLS IN HIGHER EDUCATION”**

***“PERSEPSI MAHASISWA TERHADAP PENGGUNAAN TWITTER DALAM
MENINGKATKAN KEMAMPUAN MEMBACA DI PERGURUAN TINGGI”***

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**ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION PROGRAM
FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH KALIMANTAN TIMUR**

2023

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Higher Education”**

***“Persepsi Mahasiswa Terhadap Penggunaan Twitter Dalam Meningkatkan
Kemampuan Membaca Di Perguruan Tinggi”***

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Samarinda, 11 September 2023

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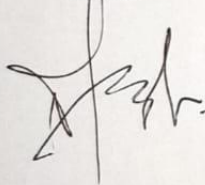
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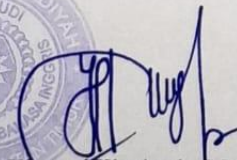
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NASKAH PUBLIKASI

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(Anggita Maisha)



Students' Perceptions of Using Twitter for Enhancing Reading Skills in Higher Education

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Abstract

Learning is becoming easier, quicker, and more rapid in the digital era. Students, in particular, who frequently utilize information technology, can use these resources for purposes that are more beneficial, such as advancing their education, communicating more effectively, or promoting a cause. Social media is one type of information technology that when used by a student has a good effect on them. The purpose of this study is to describe students' perceptions while using Twitter as one of media learning for enhancing their reading skill as an English Language Foreign (EFL). This research was conducted using a qualitative descriptive method, a case study. The subjects of this research are students from the English Education Department at Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan Timur (UMKT) who share certain characteristics, such as subjects have a Twitter app, have Twitter account, used Twitter more than a year. This research conducted a questionnaire and semi-structured interview to know how they enhance reading skill with Twitter. The result showed that in students' perceptions towards Twitter, explain that Twitter allows people to interact and engage with others who have similar interests. Students can start conversations and make connections with people who are interested in reading or related topics by asking questions and receiving responses, also Twitter can be fun and full of enjoyment, it's an effective way to learn reading skills, because there is no pressure or even coercion. Furthermore, there is some features on Twitter, can be utilized and have the potential to improve reading skills in English.

Keywords: Learning Media; Perception; Reading Skill; Social Media; Twitter

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1. INTRODUCTION

Learning is becoming easier, quicker, and more rapid in the digital era. Students, in particular, who frequently utilize information technology, can use these resources for purposes that are more beneficial, such as advancing their education, communicating more effectively, or promoting a cause. Social media is one type of information technology that when used by a student has a good effect on them. Especially, using social media as a tool for education, for example to learn English as a foreign language (Bandjar et al., 2018).

Despite a doubt, social media is a platform that is a part of our lives. However, perspectives on the benefit of social media in terms of improving English abilities are varied (Helan & Tamilarasan, 2022). According to Paliath & Evangeline, (2022) says that academics, lawmakers, corporate executives, and consultants have been interested in the concept of social media for decades. In 2013, French and China sparked the idea of a new way of learning language. Twitter is a platform that can be utilized to learn a language. It enables users to share a quick message with the community by posting it as a message (Utimadini et al., 2015). Twitter is called a micro-blogging site. Twitter was originally intended to be a platform that would enable users to send messages to all of their friends, coworkers, and family members. Also, Twitter has elements that have little in common with several other social media such as Facebook, Email, Texting, Blogging and RSS social network (Bandjar et al., 2018).

Additionally, research suggests that Twitter is advantageous for English language learners. According to Bandjar et al., (2018), Twitter is one of the media for enhancing one's English vocabulary. Through Twitter, they can gain new insight like new vocabulary and other knowledge. For example, students learn slang words such as slang and idioms, also some knowledge they get on Twitter that they cannot learn in the classroom. Twitter's setting might encourage users to read and write in order to interact with others and support communicative proficiency in English learning (Borau et al., 2009). From a learning point of view, Twittering improves engagement among learners by strengthening their critical-thinking abilities by compressing what they write on tweets because of the character limitations (Borau et al., 2009; Junco et al., 2010).

Research done by Hamidon et al., (2013), proved that Twitter can be a tool for reading fluently in the target language, which will undoubtedly help to accomplish the objective mentioned earlier. As a result, Twitter is thought to be the best learning tool for community university students who want to utilize the target language naturally and successfully outside of the classroom. Through the use of Twitter, where responses are prompt, communication is interactive, and individuality can be seen by individual tweets, teachers can determine and see indirectly which of their students has already mastered reading skills, comprehended the text studied in class, and developed their own meaning and perception of the text (Hamidon et al., 2013). Although reading and writing in these new virtual environments may not be entirely unique or distinctive, they do involve some recycling and remixing, which Greenhow & Gleason, (2012), confirmation plays an important part in how young people produce new texts (Alvermann, 2008).

Therefore, the aim of this study is focused on the use of Twitter, one of social media platforms, as a learning media of EFL, according to the perspective or perceptions of students who use Twitter as a media that they believe can help them to improve their English reading skills. Researchers are interested in studying students in higher education because, in this digital era, everyone enjoys using social media in their daily activities, even students in higher education must have phenomenal social media accounts, including Instagram, Facebook, Telegram, Pinterest and many of them use Twitter to communicate, find information and to use Twitter as a learning media of English. Based on the reasoning stated in the preceding context, the researcher desires to know:

1. How do students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan Timur (UMKT) perception about using Twitter as a social media platform to enhance reading skills?
2. How does Twitter enhance students of Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan Timur (UMKT) reading skill?

Researchers hope that this research can be useful both in the academic field and in education. Theoretically, the researcher believes that this research can provide useful information and important data for institutions, also will be useful reference in the future because, in this digital era learning English becomes easier, one of which is using social media platforms. This research is anticipated to produce

information, knowledge, and new insights in the field of education. Particularly in English which may be implanted in the future.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study is qualitative descriptive case study because this research is aimed to uncover the various language learning activities in Twitter. In particular, this study proposed to investigate how students function Twitter to enhance reading skills in English. It is necessary to pay attention to the activities and benefits that students get in using Twitter to enhance their reading skills in English as a foreign language. Therefore, Patel, (2012) states that applying a qualitative research strategy, researchers can examine in-depth individual behaviors, social and organizational traits, and their significance.

This study focused on a group of students from Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan Timur (UMKT) especially in the English Department. Concerning which class to investigate, the researcher participants are selected based on the following requirements:

1. Subjects have a Twitter app
2. Subjects have Twitter account
3. Subject used Twitter more than a year
4. They are actively posting at least 10 tweets a day

The study had sample of 26 males and 48 female who participated in answering the questionnaires. This provides a total sample size of 74 respondents; the participants were recruited from Semester 2nd and 4th in the English Department at Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan Timur (UMKT). Researchers used semi-structured interview, 5 participants who took part to be interview respondent in this study. The average interview time was approximately 10 minutes per person through zoom meeting and WhatsApp voice note as media.

Data gathering techniques that were used by researchers included questionnaires and interviews. The first instrument is a questionnaire. In this instrument, the researcher provided questionnaires directly in the classroom in order to know participants' perspective in how they enhance reading skill with Twitter. The questionnaires adapted from Fewell, (2014) that consist of 21 items. The questionnaires covered four categories, which are communication, learning,

motivation, and social cohesion. To gather more accurate information, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview. The gathered information was conveyed in writing or captured in audio, video, or audio-visual format and by using zoom meeting also WhatsApp voice note. This is the code for the participant who has conducted this research interview, which shown below:

Table 2 1. Participant Data Coding

Name	Semester	Participant Code
SA	2 (second)	P1
AA	4 (fourth)	P2
SJS	2 (second)	P3
PEFA	8 (eighth)	P4
RCK	8 (eighth)	P5

The process of selecting interview respondents was carried out by collecting participants who answered the previous questionnaire. Prior to proceeding, the researcher administered questionnaires to the participants. Afterwards, the researcher selected 5 participants based on the characteristics described in the subject of the study. Beyond the total of 5 participants, 3 participants reported that they have been using Twitter for more than five years, and they are familiar with all the features and additional things towards Twitter. Following that, 1 participant has been using Twitter for more than two years, participant really likes Twitter and thinks that Twitter is one of the useful tools. And last, there is 1 more participant, who has been using Twitter for less than a year, unlike the other 4 participants, this participant enthusiasm towards Twitter is a little lower. However, these selected participants were then approached and asked about their willingness to participate in this research interview.

The analysis of questionnaires and interviews results was carried out through data analysis. In the process of data reduction, the researcher would collect all information from questionnaires and interviews results, and all the collected data was then classified as extremely important, less important, and insignificant. After that in the process of data coding, researchers organize the results from both instruments so that the researcher can understand the underlying signals portrayed by the data results. Next int the process of data display, for the questionnaire result

researcher displaying data into four categories, which are communication, learning, motivation, and social cohesion. For interview result researcher displaying data in narrative text, therefore the result would be presented in descriptive. Lastly, researchers conclude data based on the theory and strengthened with data and detailed information from the analysis of questionnaire and interview as well. Researchers would revisit the data many times and do cross-check to verify the conclusions. Then, the researcher described the conclusion of the study.

3. FINDINGS

Students' perception of using Twitter for enhancing their reading skills in this study was obtained from questionnaire and interview. This section presents information of students' perceptions from questionnaires and interviews results to answers research questions in this study.

3.1 Questionnaires

This study utilized a modified questionnaire based in part on a survey conducted by Fewell, (2014). The survey has been modified to communication, learning, motivation, and social cohesion categories. Regarding the Likert format used in the questionnaire, statements were set at a four-point scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (SD) to 'strongly agree' (SA).

Table 3.1 Communication Aspect in Twitter

NO.	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	The learning experiences on Twitter made this a more interesting course for me	15%	51%	27%	7%
2	Because of using Twitter, I put more time with my gadget that in a regular English reading class	8%	39%	30%	23%
3	My reading skill in English have improved because of Twitter	5%	46%	35%	14%
4	Reading tweets with language mistakes in them doesn't help me learn	5%	43%	42%	9%
5	I looked forward to reading tweets	16%	53%	20%	11%
6	Information I read from other tweets help contribute to a greater sense of class community	4%	51%	31%	14%

MEAN	9%	47%	31%	13%
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(Source: Student response, 29th May 2023)

From table 4.1 The data indicates that respondents have an impression of Twitter as a communication platform, particularly for academic/educational purposes. There are six statement items that seek to investigate information emphasizing the various ways Twitter contributes to communication on its platform.

There are 51% of respondents who agree that the learning experience on Twitter is very interesting for them. On the other hand, 27% of respondents stated that learning through Twitter was not interesting to them. 39% of respondents agreed that because of Twitter, they spend more time on their devices than in a normal reading class. However, 30% of respondents argued that they disagreed because of this. A total of 46% of respondents agreed that their reading skills in English improved because of Twitter, but 35% of respondents disagreed that their reading skills in English could improve through Twitter. In the fourth statement, that reading a tweet with language errors in it cannot help them in learning, it was justified by 43% of respondents responding that they agreed, and the other 42% respondents did not justify it. About 53% of respondents agreed that they often read tweets. However, another 20% of respondents argued that they rarely read a tweet on Twitter. 51% of respondents agreed with the statement that the information they read from other tweets helps contribute to a greater sense of class community, and 31% of respondents responded that they disagreed if a tweet they read could help contribute to a greater sense of class community.

Table 3.2 Learning Aspect in Twitter

NO.	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	Reading tweets helped build my ability in reading skill	16%	57%	19%	8%
2	I was able in activating prior knowledge while dealing with the new (online) content	4%	64%	26%	7%
3	I was able in relating different ideas and pieces together to build up a meaningful structure	5%	61%	28%	5%

4	The information I read from tweets contributed to my knowledge about English context	8%	62%	20%	9%
5	I was able to identifying the author's purpose, intention and/or goal	11%	57%	26%	7%
6	I was able to infer meaning from tweets according to the context/conversations	14%	61%	20%	5%
MEAN		10%	60%	23%	7%

(Source: Student response, 29th May 2023)

Regarding aspects of learning through Twitter in table 4.2 there is data that respondents gave significantly more positive responses to Twitter. And there are six statements of items that broadly want to find out information highlighting the diverse ways in which Twitter contributes to learning within its platform.

The statement that reading tweets can help them build their reading skills is justified with 57% of respondents agreeing. On the other hand, 19% of respondents thought that reading tweets could not help them build reading skills. Most respondents, 64%, agreed that they can activate prior knowledge when dealing with new (online) content, and 26% of respondents disagreed with the statement. It turns out that 61% of respondents agreed that they were able to connect different ideas and pieces to build a meaningful structure, while the other 28% of respondents disagreed that they were able to connect different ideas and pieces to build a meaningful structure. And in one of the statements, most respondents, 62%, agreed that the information they read from a tweet contributed to their knowledge of the English context, and 20% of respondents stated that they disagreed that reading tweets could contribute to their knowledge of the English context. While 57% of respondents agreed that they could identify the author's intent, intention and/or purpose, 26% responded that they disagreed. 61% of respondents agreed with the statement that they can infer the meaning of a tweet according to the context/conversation, and only 20% of respondents agreed that they cannot infer the meaning of a tweet/conversation on Twitter.

Table 3.3 Motivation Aspect in Twitter

NO.	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	The tweets contributed greatly to my knowledge of reading skill	23%	54%	14%	9%

2	Twitter helped me better understand communicative interaction in English	15%	50%	28%	7%
3	Twitter increased my motivation in learning reading	9%	47%	34%	9%
MEAN		19%	52%	21%	8%

(Source: Student response, 29th May 2023)

Regarding motivation in table 4.3, the use of Twitter seemed to have a positive impact for the respondents. There are three statement items in which is, 54% of respondents agreed that a tweet could help them in reading skills, and 14% of respondents responded that a tweet could not help them especially in reading skills. Furthermore, 50% of respondents responded that they agreed that Twitter could help them understand communicative interactions in English. On the other hand, 28% of respondents stated that Twitter could not help them in understanding communicative interactions in English. 47% of respondents responded that they agreed Twitter could increase their motivation in learning reading. However, according to another 34% of respondents, they disagree that Twitter can increase their motivation in learning reading skill.

Table 3.4 Social Cohesion Aspect in Twitter

NO.	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	I was able to use of cues to identify relevant and important ideas	12%	53%	26%	9%
2	I found myself wanting to post tweets	11%	26%	41%	23%
3	I enjoyed sharing information about my daily life	5%	18%	32%	45%
4	I enjoyed rereading past tweets of others	15%	47%	27%	11%
5	I enjoyed rereading past replies of others	19%	45%	26%	11%
6	I enjoyed rereading past conversations of others	18%	53%	18%	12%
MEAN		13%	40%	28%	18%

(Source: Student response, 29th May 2023)

From table 4.4 the data shows that respondents give an impression of Twitter in terms of social cohesion. There are six statement items that broadly want

to explore information highlighting the diverse ways in which Twitter contributes to social interaction within its platform.

53% of respondents agreed that they could use cues to identify relevant and important ideas. On the other hand, 26% of respondents responded that they did not think Twitter enabled them to use cues to identify relevant or important ideas. Only 26% of the respondents agreed that they wanted themselves to post a tweet, whereas 41% of the respondents believed they did not want to post a tweet. Furthermore, only 18% of respondents agreed that they enjoy sharing information about their daily life on Twitter, while on the other hand, 45% of respondents strongly disagreed with sharing information about their daily life on Twitter. The perception that they enjoy rereading old tweets from others was agreed by 47% of the respondents, while the other 27% of the respondents responded that they disagreed and did not enjoy rereading old tweets from others. 45% of the respondents thought that they agreed that they enjoy rereading replies from people on Twitter, but there were 26% respondents who disagreed with this. 53% of respondents stated that they agreed and enjoyed rereading past conversations with others on Twitter, but there were 18% who disagreed and did not enjoy reading past conversations with others on Twitter.

3.2 Interviews

This interview explains the perception of using Twitter for academic purposes also, how to enhance reading skills through Twitter that have an impact on respondent's perspectives. The excerpts can be observed in the appendix. The interview results explain the weaknesses, features and accounts on Twitter that have potential to learn and improve reading skills according to the answers that respondents have given.

The current study requires the categorization of the utilization of Twitter into distinct themes and subthemes. The first theme focuses on a perception of the use of Twitter, which encompasses subthemes such as "Attitude of Using Twitter". Attitude of using Twitter in a perception the use of Twitter refers to how they view Twitter after using the application. Here are some sample excerpts in the subtheme:

"Twitter is like a forum or a place where for example we have questions about reading that we can ask directly on Twitter, so if we have questions there will

be several people who respond to us, and that becomes input for ourselves. So, our interaction with anyone with our questions about reading itself becomes more accessible through Twitter.” (P2)

Participants are implying that they are emphasizing the advantages of using Twitter as a forum for asking questions and obtaining responses from a diverse group of people. Furthermore, the participants agreed that Twitter allowed them to interact with others. Twitter allows people to interact and engage with others who have similar interests. They can start conversations and make connections with people who are interested in reading or related topics by asking questions and receiving responses.

“...like reading the writing of peers. The language and delivery on Twitter are very easy to understand, straightforward and not too theoretical...” (P1)

According to the participant, Twitter is not often a place for in-depth scholarly conversation or theoretical talks. Instead, it promotes more realistic, everyday dialogues. The emphasis is on expressing ideas, opinions, and personal experiences in a clear and approachable manner.

“...learning reading skills through Twitter application I think is very smooth, it feels like we are not really learning and there is no pressure. Maybe because we read on Twitter with enjoyment, without coercion or pressure from anyone.” (P4)

Participants are implying that while using Twitter can be fun and full of enjoyment, it's an effective way to learn reading skills, because there is no pressure or even coercion.

“.... for Twitter itself, it is one of the large forums, which has many fictional stories or AU (Alternative Universe) using both Indonesian and English. And that is one of the reasons for me to enhance my reading skills through Twitter.” (P3)

Based on what is stated above, Twitter can be an effective application to learn reading skills, but not in serious way, participant implying that she enhances her reading skill through fictional stories with mixed language.

Based on the second subtheme, “Inappropriate tweets and the lack of Twitter,” it relates to the shortcomings and negative things on Twitter. Example that supports this subtheme are:

“...in my opinion, is that sometimes the place is too informal, then sometimes it's a bit distracting for me if there are users who don't have manners, for example toxic or doxing, bullying, that could happen there....” (P2)

“...I often found vulgar or toxic word on Twitter, and it is one of the things that I do not like while I'm using Twitter.” (P3)

The statements indicates that the lack of Twitter are some users use inappropriate language and it is sometimes uncontrollable, because Twitter is one of the largest forums.

Furthermore, the third subtheme, “Twitter in academic purposes,” explains that the features in the Twitter application can be utilized in academic purposes, especially reading skill in English. Here is the example that support this subtheme:

“...there are many forums that we can choose ourselves. The first is there is a “base” that we can join, secondly there is a feature called “space” such as a discussion forum via live audio and, we can choose the base using Indonesian or English, or simply can also be a collection of writers....” (P2)

“It is useful tool for improving reading because we can read threads from people who tweet about ielts or toefl tips there. Also, we can learn new vocabs too...” (P4)

Based on the results of the interview above, Twitter has features that are useful for improving reading skills. And they can utilize these features for academic purposes.

In addition, from the table in the appendix explained about “Duration in Using Twitter”. Here are the examples that support this subtheme:

“I have been using Twitter since elementary school, but not as often as now.” (P2)

“I have been using Twitter for about 10 years, but to be really active it is from high school until now.” (P4)

This explains that 4 out of 5 respondents have been using Twitter for more than 2 years. And explains that respondents are quite familiar with the Twitter application from a long time ago. There is a potential that all this time their reading skills has unconsciously improved due to the use of Twitter for a long time.

The subtheme, “The Advantage of Using Twitter Features,” relates to the features on Twitter, such as base/menfess, threads, AU (Alter Universe) stories, also the space feature which has the potential to improve reading skills. The example that supports this subtheme is:

“...on Twitter there are many accounts that share about learning, especially learning English is also quite a lot there. I have used it and even found it helpful with the threads that were made...” (P1)

“...improving skills is more about vocabulary and reading, for reading I usually also read something called Alternative Universe (AU) on Twitter. I usually read bilingual ones, mix of Indonesian and English...” (P5)

“There are menfess/base discussing about grammar and others, from there I learned quite a bit, especially in English, whether it is reading or writing. Because starting from there I am more aware about grammar and vocabulary in English and about reading skills.” (P2)

It explains that the advantages of Twitter features really have potential to help them to enhance their reading skills.

Furthermore, the subtheme about, "Twitter accounts that enhance reading skills," describes accounts that can potentially enhance academic matters, especially reading skills in English. Examples that support this subtheme is:

“The account called “Englishfess_....” (P2)

For these reasons, respondents stated that not only do we learn through the discussions on the account, but we can also ask questions if we don't understand. For other reasons, other respondents stated as below:

“...because if the fiction stories or novels are like relate to our lives, so for the use of language like our daily language, there are no heavy terms, even if there are only one or two, so in my opinion I can add vocab as well as learn reading too.” (P1)

4 out of 5 respondents mentioned the same account, it's called @Englishfess_, this explaining that this account really has potential to help and have chance to improve reading skills and become a place to ask a question to diverse out of group people.

4. DISCUSSION

Based on the results of questionnaire that have been conducted to college students who have been using Twitter in order to find out student perception. There were four categories, for instance communication, learning, motivation and social cohesion categories, and most participants ticked 'Agree' boxes in the Likert scale, which indicates that they agree to the items stated. The participants have positive perceptions on Twitter, especially reading skills.

The findings of communication category revealed that, 46% agreed 'that their reading skills improved because using Twitter.' While the findings of learning motivation category showed that, there is 62% of respondents who agreed that 'the information they read from tweets contributed to their knowledge about English context'. And 54% of respondents also agreed that 'the tweets contributed greatly to their knowledge of reading skill'. Furthermore, the findings of social cohesion category admitted that there is 53% of respondents also agreed that 'They enjoyed rereading past conversations of others. This statement is in line with a study conducted by Mustaffar et al., (2019) stated that living in a globalization world, using Twitter could help the students to improve their reading skills through the interface and features available.

The positive perception of using Twitter in reading skill was also revealed from the interview of participants. They admitted that Twitter can be a useful tool or application for academic purposes, especially reading skills. Many Twitter features are useful and can be a way of learning, especially learning English. Interestingly, some of the disadvantages of Twitter are just that it cannot be controlled because it's a large platform. For illustrate, the disadvantages because Twitter is a largest platform, and some users use inappropriate language, and it is sometimes uncontrollable. This is also supported by statement from Dr. Hao-Yuan & Dr. Nai-Ying, (2019) that Twitter also has the capacity to expand the students' reading materials by providing the external links. The instructors could use the platform for supplementing extra materials. Mostly important, the entertaining interface on Twitter provides the students with relaxing learning atmosphere while the learners could read a lot of authentic materials and reply to their thoughts in

response to the tweets. This interactive function stimulates real social interaction in terms of the learners could use their target language as their communicative tools.

5. CONCLUSION

The study aims to identify students' perception and the way students enhance their reading skill through Twitter. Based on the researcher described above and subsequent discussion, the researcher has reached the conclusion that the utilization of Twitter as a social media to enhancing reading skill results in a significant proportion of respondents expressing agreement that, Twitter allows people to interact and engage with others who have similar interests. Students can start conversations and make connections with people who are interested in reading or related topics by asking questions and receiving responses, also Twitter can be fun and full of enjoyment, it's an effective way to learn reading skills, because there is no pressure or even coercion. Furthermore, the features on Twitter, such as base/menfans is like a community that likes the same thing and they create an account on Twitter, for threads it is one of the features on Twitter that can create a continuous Tweet, AU (Alter Universe) stories itself is a name for fictional stories created by writers on Twitter that use two languages such as Indonesian and English, and space is a feature on Twitter that is live but only voice-based, and can be listened free for anyone who has an account on Twitter. Those are some of the features on Twitter that can be utilized and have the potential to improve reading skills in English.






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