



## THE ROLE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS IN DEVELOPING THE PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE OF ENGLISH STUDENTS

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### **Abstract:**

This study aims to investigate the access and use of social networks by students majoring in English Studies with a high-quality program in developing pragmatic competence. The quantitative research was carried out at Can Tho University (CTU), one of the most prestigious universities in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. The participants were 90 English-majored students of the Department of English Studies (courses 44 to 47) who studied Pragmatics. The questionnaire was used to measure students' use of social networks during class and self-study of students majoring in the English Language – a high-quality program for developing pragmatic competence. The findings showed that most participants use social networks to improve and develop their pragmatic abilities. The most commonly used social networks for improving pragmatics were Facebook and Youtube. They also pointed out that the most common pragmatics knowledge on social networks was about conversational implication, speech acts, and politeness. The results of this study were suggested to help English language students understand the context of utterances, convey exactly what they want to say to their listeners, and overcome the barrier of ambiguity based on the manner, position, and time of utterance.

**Keywords:** pragmatic competence, social networks, English students, strategies

### **1. Introduction**

In recent years, the development of social networks has had many positive impacts on the lives of people all over the world. In the era known as "The World is Flat", in the view of Friedman, author of the book *World is Flat*, no one can deny the benefits of social

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networks. Besides many benefits that social networks bring to users, such as fast information and a rich volume of constantly updated information, there are many entertainment utilities. There is also an important aspect that is drastically changing the form of communication between individuals, groups, and countries; that is the ability to connect. Thus, social networks have become popular with various features that allow users to connect, share, and receive information quickly and effectively.

Moreover, studying the benefits and use of social networks for students can help suggest valuable recommendations for supporting the education and training of students, particularly young people in general, in the current industrial revolution 4.0 era. In particular, many domestic articles show the rapid development of social networks and their role in supporting the process of learning English in general (and pragmatics in particular) for students majoring in Linguistics and English Studies.

Nguyen (2006) emphasized that the quality of higher education must be put first by equipping students not only with classroom knowledge and textbook knowledge but also by introducing them to practical reference books, useful and relevant search pages on the Internet, and long-term study and study methods. According to journalist Tu Anh (2020), the use of social networks as a tool to help develop the general foreign language learning process of English language students is now very common in the 4.0 technology era. There are many benefits that social networks bring in learning English, such as being able to communicate, connect with native speakers, participate in English groups to learn and exchange experiences, as well as follow useful websites dedicated to learning English will make learning more interesting and comfortable. This makes the learning process not only confined to the four walls of the classroom but expands to communities of English enthusiasts anywhere, anytime.

According to Dao Xuan Phuong Trang, Nguyen Minh Tri (2021), the process of integrating social networks to assess foreign language learning by project improves students' ability and increases their learning motivation and critical thinking skills, as well as their self-study spirit and interest in learning foreign languages. Crandall and Basturkmen (2004) believe that textbook conversations cannot provide adequate pragmatic input. Ybarra & Green (2003) suggest that learners who are trying to learn English as a second or foreign language need extra language support. It is necessary to practice listening, reading, speaking, and writing to develop the necessary experience and skills. According to Lyth (2008), learners use different tools and programs like Line, WhatsApp, and Telegram to learn languages easily and effectively to meet these requirements. Although assisted language learning with the aid of electronic devices has been around for a long time, the studies that provide remarkable evidence of its effectiveness in second language acquisition are new.

According to Jones and Bronack (2008), social networking tools encourage socialization and interaction with language in socially and pragmatically appropriate ways. These tools are web-based services through which individuals can maintain and develop social relationships with people in their personal networks in a multi-faceted and multi-sensory environment. Many social networks have provided technologies to

facilitate second language learning. Blake (1998) observes that "*technology can play an important role in promoting language acquisition by enhancing learners' electronic exposure to a wide range of authentic materials*" (p. 210).

A social network is a type of social environment created for learners who want to interact with people from other countries to learn languages easily (Godwin-Jones, 2008; Sturgeon & Walker, 2009). It allows second or foreign language learners to communicate directly with native English speakers. Creating language is the most important factor in creating interpersonal relationships for self-expression and social communication. According to Mealman (cited in Abidin, Ahmad, & Kabilan, 2010, p.185), second language learners increase their language ability, self-knowledge, self-confidence, and lifelong learning. They improve their life skills by using different social media platforms, which allow learners to promote their positive tendencies towards learning English. The interaction based on social networks such as Facebook, Twister, et al. helps learners use a large amount of information that is always available. Language learners can stay in touch with everyone, especially with their families, friends, and even their teachers, whenever they want. Second language learners can also learn a variety of skills and become familiar with the laws of different cultures. Language and culture are dependent, and understanding second language cultures improves language comprehension (Chen & Yang, 2007).

In the era of technology 4.0, social networks have become popular for everyone, especially the younger generation, who use social networks not only for entertainment but also as a tool for learning. For students majoring in English language learning, the role of social networks in learning, especially in pragmatics, is being noticed and studied to provide benefits and methods so that students can apply social networks as an effective tool to improve their pragmatics. With the above theoretical foundation, it is clear that social networks have the potential to help students learn languages by developing pragmatic knowledge. However, researchers still do not have much research on this topic. That is why we chose this topic for our research.

Finally, focusing on these advantages of pragmatism, the researchers believe that social networks also play an important role in enhancing students' pragmatic knowledge. Therefore, the researchers wanted to conduct a study in which two questions were posed as follows:

- 1) To what extent do students of English Studies use social networks to improve pragmatic knowledge?
- 2) What are the perceptions of English Studies students toward the use of social networks for improving pragmatic knowledge?

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 Social networking**

Social networking can be defined in a variety of ways. Wang, Chen, and Liang (2011) describe it as "*the connection between a group of people.*" According to Barkhuus and Tashiro

(2010), "*online social networks enable individuals to interact and discuss their ideas with each other across long distances*". Online social networking has become a new trend that crosses boundaries and makes it possible for people to join collaborative online networks. While most people deem social media and social networking sites to be similar, there are some distinctions between them. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) stated that "*social media is an innovative new trend that should be of interest to businesses that operate online or in any other field.*" as opposed to "*social networking sites seem to be applications that allow users to interact by making personal information profiles, inviting coworkers and friends access to those profiles, and sending emails and texting messages to each other.*" In particular, social media is used to give information to many people, demonstrating that every individual has access to the information. Besides, social networks give information to a group of people with similar interests. In general, the term "social media" covers a broader range of things than "social networking sites."

According to J. A. Ryan (2008), the definition of "*virtual community*" was first introduced in Howard Rheingold's (1993) classic work novel of the same name, though he would later suggest the more apt term "*online social network*" (2000). Scholars employ a wide variety of terms related to social networking sites. Internet Social Networking refers to the phenomenon of social networking on the internet. As a result, the concept includes all activities undertaken by People using the internet in order to expand or maintain their social network, according to Richter et al, (2009). According to Marcus Marcus and Krishnamurthi (2009), social networking services are online groups that concentrate on helping to bring together people who share similar interests or who are interested in discovering the interests and activities of many others. Moreover, there are numerous definitions of social networking websites. Boroughs (2010), for example, believed that social networking sites enable users to express interests and engage with others. According to Barsky and Purdon (2006), social networking sites gather information about participants and store user information that is intended for sharing. These sites are free to use and allow users to easily create personal profiles with information, including images, music, and videos. These social networks can also consider sharing websites with peers and finding new friends with similar interests. Boyd and Ellison (2007) reported that social networking sites allow individuals to: (1) build a public or semi-public profile in a restricted system. (2) list other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and browse their list of connections and those established by other people in the system. They also mentioned that the features and membership of these websites vary. Some sites allow sharing of photos/videos, whereas others allow blogs and messages. According to Tayler-Smith and Lindner (2009), blog participation is considered social networking because blogs facilitate social connection formation through blog-roll activities. In addition, Jones and Conceicao (2008) expressed that Wikis, blogs, chat rooms, instant messengers, message boards, and social bookmarking are examples of technology applications that have been used to assist member interaction and are thus considered social networking tools. Still, rather than

social networking, sites including YouTube and Flickr were described as the main ones for sharing videos and images (Hottman, 2009).

## 2.2 Pragmatics

Pragmatics is the research of the link between the structure of a semiotic system (most notably language) and its usage in context, and it is part of the general theory of meaning, along with semantics. In the theory of meaning, pragmatics is specifically interested in implicit meaning, inference, and the unsaid, as well as how language structure trades on the background of the presumed and the inferred. Pragmatics has evolved to play a crucial role in general linguistic theory, in part because it has substantial intrinsic subject matter, in part because it promises explanations for other linguistic phenomena, and in part as a response to over-idealization in contemporary grammatical theory. Not only that, but pragmatics has also emerged as a topic of interdisciplinary interest, with valuable findings from a philosophy of language, linguistics, psychology, and language sociology. The term "pragmatics" is used in modern semiotics to refer to the philosophical work of C. S. Peirce and R. Carnap, which is reflected in C. Morris' (1938) three divisions of semiotics, the study of sign systems, including syntax, which investigates the relationship of signs to signs; semantics, which investigates the relationship of signs to the things referred to; and pragmatics, which studies the relationship of signs to users. According to Crystal (1987:62-5), pragmatics is concerned with the aspects that organize the language for what we want to choose from a pool of language that could satisfy whenever it is used in social interaction and its effects on others. Therefore, the pragmatic factors that influence our choice of grammatical construction are the sound pattern and the meaning that we produce by presenting the lexicons through the intended procedure as a means of communication (Crystal, 1987:62-5). Therefore, the pragmatic study tends to establish a link between the meaning of words that people use in their social situations and the choice of words in a context.

Moreover, Robin (1964: 23) indicated that the aspect of pragmatics is defined as a meaning-related phenomenon that revolves around the various factors of a speech situation. Scurms (1984: 10 - 11) defined Pragmatics as the study of the relationship between signs and their significance to users. According to Leech (1989: x), pragmatics can be described as the study of how utterances have meaning in contexts when events occur. The term 'pragmatics' is attributable to the philosopher of language, Charles Morris (1938), who defined pragmatics as "*the science of the relations of signs to their interpreters*". Furthermore, pragmatics has numerous definitions, but "*pragmatics is the study of language use*" (Levinson, 1983, p. 5; Verschueren, 1999, p. 1) is probably the most straightforward and least controversial definition. Next, Leech (1983) redefined pragmatics for the purposes of linguistics as "*the study of meaning in relation to speech situations*" (p.6). According to Thomas (1983), pragmalinguistics refers to linguistic forms and functions, whereas sociopragmatics is related to appropriate social behaviors. This dichotomy of pragmalinguistics versus sociopragmatics is important as it looks at

language use at two levels: how to use language grammatically correctly and how to use it socially appropriately.

In addition, the more important aspects of pragmatics have shown that the study of meaning is bound up with the situation of speech. In the pragmatic field, the five essential aspects which are primarily concentrated were discussed below:

- 1) Addressees or addressers (hearer and speaker)
- 2) In an utterance in context, Leech agreed to say that the relevant utterance was in the social and physical setting. However, he placed greater emphasis on the basic knowledge that is related to the context.
- 3) Leech defines the purposes of an utterance as well as the meaning of the intent to enunciate it.
- 4) The utterance is a type of activity or an act; in pragmatics, verbal utterances can also be performed as acts to meet the needs of a specific situation.
- 5) The utterance that is in the form of enclosed verbal acts tends to identify a sentence or token tagging that is not in their true sense sentences but similarly can be the piece of language that classifies as a short and long single sentence.

### **2.3 Impact of social networking on pragmatics study**

Pragmatics is concerned with how utterances are employed by a speaker in a certain context and how a listener perceives them. Pragmatics plays an important part in becoming a communicatively competent speaker; it assists language learners in understanding the language forms and functions that are suitable to the many situations in which a language is used. In other words, pragmatics improves language learners' capacity to choose the most suitable verbal-linguistic acts for various contexts (Bouton, 1996; Deda, 2013; Mugheri, Qureshi, & Mugheri, 2018).

The use of technology in the language learning classroom has created numerous opportunities for teaching pragmatics because it allows students to engage in meaningful and authentic exchanges in the target language and exposes them to a broader range of discourse functions and meaningful interactions that can help them learn better.

Several studies have been undertaken to investigate the impact of technology on the development of pragmatic competence in EFL students (see Cunningham, 2016; Cunningham, 2017; Furniss, 2016; Liu, 2007; Yang, 2016). Furniss (2016) investigated the effect of a corpus-referenced educational website on the acquisition of nine Russian routine formulae by native English learners. According to the findings, the intervention had a long-term effect on learners' knowledge of the target routine formulae and reduced auditory identification of nonsensical formulas. Yang (2016) investigated the efficiency of a self-access website as a tool for teaching expressions of thankfulness to Mandarin Chinese learners. The results showed that the teaching had a good effect on the learners' metapragmatic evaluation and pragmatic awareness at two distinct competence levels. Similarly, in an earlier research, Liu (2007) evaluated the impact of explicit pragmatic training on the acquisition of requests by college-level EFL learners in Taiwan. The efficiency of presenting pragmatics via two delivery modalities was compared: face-to-

face, in-class activities and computer-mediated communication (CMC) via e-mail and WebCT. According to the findings, explicit pragmatic training had a good influence on EFL learners in both face-to-face activities and CMC groups. Learners who received explicit pragmatic teaching outperformed those who did not on the Discourse Completion Task posttest. The findings also suggested that technology might be an effective tool for teaching pragmatics.

### 3. Material and Methods

Quantitative research was used in the current study. Quantitative research is collecting, analysing, and interpreting large amounts of statistical data to gain insight into a specific phenomenon of interest. This study used a questionnaire as the main instrument for data collection. McLeod (2018) defines a questionnaire as a research tool consisting of questions to collect information. Its advantage is that it provides a relatively inexpensive, time-saving, and efficient way to obtain large amounts of data from many agents. The questionnaire consists of a set of multiple-choice questions to survey the use of social media for pragmatic competence by English-language students and to explore the websites most used by students. Furthermore, three open-ended questions ask students to explain the benefits of social networking for the development of pragmatic competence and to propose ways to help students develop pragmatic competence. In other words, the questionnaire is designed with 15 questions divided into two main categories:

- 1) The level of students' use of social networks in improving pragmatic ability.
- 2) The approaches to improving students' understanding and improvement of pragmatics through social networks.

There were ninety English-majored students, comprising twenty-six males and sixty-four females, in the standard and advanced quality programs at CTU who took part in this survey. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 20 was employed for the quantitative data analysis.

### 4. Results

#### 4.1 The extent to which major English students use social media to improve their pragmatic knowledge

The researchers first looked at how English majors apply social networks to improve their pragmatic competence. The researchers surveyed the frequency of time students use social networks for their pragmatic learning to investigate the relationship between students' use of social networks and their ability to improve their pragmatic knowledge. In addition, this section allows researchers to determine whether students' time studying through social networks helps them develop their understanding of pragmatics.

Regarding the frequency of students using social networks in learning pragmatics, students who spend an hour using social networks for pragmatic learning accounted for 56 percent of the total, while students who spend two hours studying accounted for 24

percent. Besides, 10% of students have studied for three hours. However, a small percentage of students (6%) have spent more than 3 hours learning pragmatics through social networks. It is evident that students spend an hour to three hours using social networks to study pragmatics, and this is also a productive time for learning.

**Table 1:** Sources that students usually adopt to learn pragmatics

Social networks used by students	Frequency	Percent (%)
Facebook	77	85.6
Youtube	69	76.7
Tiktok	47	52.2
Instagram	46	51.1
Twitter	10	11.1
Snapchat	3	3.3
Others	5	5.6

The sources that students usually adopt to learn pragmatics are depicted in Table 1. It shows that 85.6 percent of students use "Facebook" to learn and search for information about Pragmatics, which has the highest percentage compared to other elements and is considered the principal source for students in Vietnam. It is followed by "YouTube," which accounted for 76.7 percent. Tiktok and Instagram are less popular, with 52.2 percent and 51.1 percent, respectively. Besides, 11.1 percent of students use "Twitter" to search for information, which is a small percentage of the total. Furthermore, with 3.3 percent, almost all minor students use "Snapchat" to learn about pragmatics, while 5.6 percent learn from other sources such as "newspapers" and "applications."

**Table 2:** The frequency of ways used by students to develop pragmatic learning

The frequency of ways used by students to develop pragmatic learning	Frequency	Percent (%)
Watch the videos to learn how to use the English language in the proper context.	72	80
Read the comments for contextual English usage.	56	62.2
Read articles for contextual use of the English language.	55	61.1
Read the news to learn how to use the English language in the proper context.	45	50
Texting to understand how to contextualise English language usage.	30	33.3
Others	1	1.1

The graph clearly shows us the frequency and habits of students using social networks for studying as well as studying pragmatics. We can see the percentage of students' uneven distribution among habits such as: watching videos, reading articles, reading comments, reading news, and using pragmatics to text each other. Most students were interested and focused on the habit of watching videos on social networks to study, research, learn, and improve their knowledge of pragmatics, accounting for 80% of the total. Typically, the video will provide students with a better understanding of the subject. Next, the habit of reading articles and comments with student participation is



roughly 60 and 62.2 percent, respectively. Besides, reading articles and comments on social networks will help students feel more excited about the subject, and have the ability to debate and share pragmatic knowledge with each other through comments and discussion on social networks. The third thing is that the percentage of students reading and following news sites is 50% and the use of pragmatics to communicate and text each other is 33.3%. It shows that these two activities are still present and there are a number of students who are still interested. Reading news related to the subject will help students acquire more knowledge about pragmatics, and expand their knowledge of new knowledge and how to use it in applying pragmatics in texting and chatting with other students. And finally, the 1.1% of the total number of students outside of that routine is very small.

#### 4.2 The perceptions of English Studies students toward the use of social networks for improving pragmatic knowledge

**Table 3:** Students' perspectives on using social networks for pragmatic learning

Students' perspectives on using social networks for pragmatic learning	Frequency	Percent (%)
Necessary	79	87.
Unnecessary	11	12.2

Table 3 depicts students' perspectives on using social networks for pragmatic learning; almost all students believe that using social networks is one of the most important factors in developing pragmatic competence, with 87.8 percent of students responding that using social networks for pragmatic learning is necessary. In comparison, 12.2 percent of the students considered this unnecessary. Furthermore, based on their perceptions, it is evident that the role of using social networks in pragmatics is crucial to students. From that, it can be said that using social networks for pragmatic learning will help students learn more effectively, and students can easily find many references about pragmatics through social networks.

**Table 4:** Elements of pragmatic knowledge can be found on social networks

Pragmatic knowledge can be found on social networks	Frequency	Percent (%)
Politeness	61	67.8
Conversation implicature	61	67.8
Speech acts	60	44.7
Performative and constative	40	44.4
Presupposition	36	40.0
Felicity condition	27	30.0
Directiveness	26	28.9

The data in Table 4 clearly shows the percentage of students who see and learn the knowledge from the pragmatics subject. The data shows that the distribution is uneven and there is a difference between the corresponding knowledge objects such as: Politeness, conversation implicature, Speech acts, Performative and Constative,

Presupposition, Felicity and Directiveness. The majority of students account for a large number of three knowledge items, namely Politeness, Conversation implicature, and Speech acts, which are quite high, accounting for 67.8%, 67.8%, and 66.7%, respectively. The acquisition of knowledge is quite important, and it must be easy to understand and apply, as well as find interest in the knowledge of the field of pragmatics. Besides, Performative and Constative, Presupposition accounted for a relatively large proportion of the sample, 44.4% and 40.0%. Finally, students rarely exploit two knowledge objects, Felicity Condition and Directiveness, which account for 30.0% and 28.9%, respectively.

**Table 5:** The benefits of social networks for improving students' pragmatic study

The benefits of social networks for improving students' pragmatic study	Frequency	Percent (%)
Social networks helps me apply many skills of context analysis in communication.	71	78.9
Social networks helps me collect a lot of documents and information.	58	64.4
Social networks make it easy for me to exchange and connect with people.	57	63.3
Social networks have many illustrative, easy-to-understand examples.	52	57.8
Social networks help me use the correct language in communication situations.	46	51.1

The table clearly shows the benefits of social media for improving students' learning of pragmatics. We can see that the ratio between the benefits that social networks bring to students in learning pragmatics is quite even, such as: applying many skills of context analysis in communication, collecting a lot of documents and information, exchanging and connecting with people, easily understanding examples and using correct language in communication situations. The chart shows that social networks help students apply many context-analysis skills in communication, with the highest percentage – 78.9%. Through social networks, students know how to be more aware of the context in communication and understand how to use words in different situations, thereby helping students to be more delicate in communicating with people. Next, social networks help students collect a lot of documents and information and easily exchange and connect with people, accounting for nearly equal proportions, 64.4% and 63.3%, respectively. Social networks have provided a lot of useful information for students in learning pragmatics with articles, comments, and many hot topics recently. Finally, accounting for the least proportion of those benefits is the fact that social networks have many illustrative examples and help students use language correctly in communication situations, accounting for 57.8% and 51.1%, respectively.

## 5. Discussion

The result of this study is the same as the previous studies to investigate the impact of technology on the development of pragmatic competence in EFL students (see

Cunningham, 2016; Cunningham, 2017; Liu, 2007; Yang, 2016). The study of Yang (2016) investigated the efficiency of a self-access website as a tool for teaching expressions of thankfulness to Mandarin Chinese learners. The results showed that the teaching had a good effect on the learners' metapragmatic evaluation and pragmatic awareness at two distinct competence levels. Similarly, in earlier research, Liu (2007) evaluated the impact of explicit pragmatic training on the acquisition of requests by college-level EFL learners in Taiwan. The efficiency of presenting pragmatics via two delivery modalities was compared: face-to-face, in-class activities and computer-mediated communication (CMC) via e-mail and WebCT. According to the findings, explicit pragmatic training positively influenced EFL learners in both face-to-face activities and CMC groups. Learners who received explicit pragmatic teaching outperformed those who did not on the "Discourse Completion Task" posttest. The findings also suggested that technology might be an effective tool for teaching pragmatics. Likewise, the results of this study are the same as the study of Azad, M., Alipour, M., & Talebi, P. (2018), as their findings indicate the effects of using social networks on developing EFL learners' pragmatic competence through speaking accuracy and fluency. As a result, this study found that Iranian EFL students should possess pragmatic knowledge to promote the growth of their pragmatic competence. The study also indicated that social networks were likely to impact EFL students. Social networks are alluring because they give users a chance to learn a foreign language, in addition to giving them access to a new environment where they can make friends and unwind. The research conducted shows that the internet and computer-mediated communication are quickly emerging as significant tools of communication not only for cross-cultural cooperation but also for enhancing learners' language proficiency based on the findings of this study and related studies in the field of language teaching and learning due to the increasing demand for English language instruction almost everywhere.

On the other hand, in this study, the researchers discovered some different things compared to previous studies that found Facebook and Youtube to be students' most prominent social networks for learning pragmatics. More than half of the students spent at least an hour honing their pragmatic skills. Researchers are still focused on finding the best strategy for promoting the pragmatic development of English as a foreign language (EFL) students. Moreover, in this study, researchers discovered that some pragmatic knowledge can be found by participants through social networks during their learning, including about "Presupposition", "Conversational implicature", "Speech acts", "Felicity condition", "Performative and constative", "Politeness" and "Directiveness", in which "Politeness", "Speech acts", and "Conversational implicature" accounted for the highest found percentage. Furthermore, this study also indicated that learners often use social networks to watch videos, read articles, read comments, or read news about things that happen in life to learn how to use the English language in the proper context. Some people often use social networks to text with friends in English or chat with foreigners to understand and master the appropriate use of English in the context. Most students believe that choosing a social networking site with the participation of many prestigious

and international people will help students have a more prosperous and more diverse source of language exploitation. Making friends and interacting with foreigners, especially native speakers with English as the main language, is a great idea to improve pragmatic skills. In addition to pragmatic competence, social networks significantly impact the growth of learners' pragmatic competence.

## 6. Conclusion

This report aims to study the role of social networks in the learning of pragmatics of students at Can Tho University majoring in English (standard programs and high-quality programs, courses 44 to 47). The researchers concluded three main points based on the research questions regarding the study results and discussion. Firstly, a majority of participants used social networks to help develop pragmatic competence, and all participants admitted that social networks had a positive impact on their pragmatic learning. In addition, social networks also play a significant role in helping students find more valuable information sources and easily exchange ideas with other people. Among the social networking tools, Facebook and Youtube are the two most chosen social networks by students for learning languages, followed by Tiktok and Instagram. They often use social networks to watch videos, read articles, read comments, or read news about things that happen in life to learn how to use the English language in the proper context. Some people often use social networks to text with friends in English or chat with foreigners to understand and master the appropriate use of English in the context. Besides, they also join groups on social networks about using language, such as "Trại tâm thần đa ngôn ngữ, Nghiện từ vựng, etc...". Secondly, a majority of perceptions of English Studies students towards the use of social networks for improving pragmatic knowledge are necessary because of the benefits that social networks bring to them in the process of learning pragmatics.

On the contrary, some people find it unnecessary to use social networks for pragmatic learning, maybe for a number of reasons such as wasting time or not being effective, but only a few people perceive it as so. This shows that social networks still play an important role in improving pragmatic learning. Besides, participants found knowledge about pragmatics through social networks during their learning, including about "Presupposition", "Conversational implicature", "Speech acts", "Felicity condition", "Performative and constative", "Politeness" and "Directiveness", in which "Politeness", "Speech acts", and "Conversational implicature" accounted for the highest found percentage. In addition, participants also pointed out the benefits of social networks for the development of pragmatic skills, such as how social networks help students apply many skills of context analysis in communication, collect a lot of documents, and learn many foreign words, phrases, or slang through videos and movies, so that they can better understand how to use and apply the meaning of that sentence. Moreover, social networks can help learners access many sources and channels that teach how to use English naturally and appropriately in context and can help students learn more practical

knowledge. Finally, technology development in today's world constantly supports students' studies and deepens their understanding of pragmatics through social networks. However, social networks have not been proven to be completely reliable sources of information, so students should consider and find reliable sources or websites shared on these platforms to serve them for study. Besides, researchers also believe that schools or educational institutions are the most reliable sources of learning in addition to social networks. Their teachers tend to use modern teaching methods, carefully explaining the meanings, functions, and specific definitions of pragmatics to students. Therefore, researchers offer approaches for students to expand their pragmatics as well as for teachers to make their lectures more lively and supportive.

## 7. Recommendation

The researchers completed this project as an overview of the extent to which CTU English students use social media to develop their pragmatic competence. One result is concluded that students' awareness about developing pragmatic competence through social networks is necessary and plays an important role. This study is a reliable reference for future researchers and creates a boost for those who have a great passion for linguistics in general and pragmatics in particular. As a recommendation for further researchers, the authors suggest observing or investigating the way people learn pragmatics or why they favour using social networks in their learning process in other intensive studies.

## Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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