

Learning English is Fun with Aarons English's Instagram Account

Racha Hafiez Sururi¹, Nurul Hasanah Fajaria²

As-Syafi'iyah Islamic University

Corresponding Email: rachahafiezh@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In the 5.0 era, we can learn through social media, one of it is Instagram. Through Instagram students are able to use social media to learn anything, including English. There are many sources and materials as well as tutors who can help students to learn like Aaron O'Brien's Instagram account (@aarons.english). This is a qualitative study with descriptive method. Observation and interview were used to find students' opinions of Aaron English's Instagram account. The sixth semester students of English Education at As-syafi'iyah Islamic University Jakarta who are following @aaron.english become participants of this study. The result shown that they like @aaron.english as a medium for learning English since it has a good and fun way presented in every video. Based on the findings of the interview above, it can be concluded that students enjoy watching content from Aaron English's Instagram account. Further, it can help students improve their English knowledge. After watching the videos, they believe that English learning materials are easy to understand and help them in learning English as a foreign language.

Keywords: Social Media, Learning English, Instagram, Online Learning

First Receive:

10 October 2022

Revised:

10 December 2022

Accepted:

01 March 2023

Final Proof Received:

20 May 2023

Published:

01 June 2023

How to cite (in APA style):

Sururi, R.H., & Fajaria, N.H. (2023). Learning English is Fun with Aarons English's Instagram Account. *ELITE Journal*, 5 (2), 275-282.

INTRODUCTION

According to Tamrin & Yanti, (2019) English is the language that has the most speakers, otherwise known as the lingua franca. In this 5.0 era, the importance of English is undeniable and neglected because English is the most commonly spoken language in the world. Thus, English is a useful language and even needs to be known because if we can master English, it will be easier for us to communicate with almost everyone in the world and with that we can build networks with people in this world (Sri Handayani, 2016). Learning English is important and people all over the world decide to learn it as a second language or as a foreign language. English is the language of science, aviation, computers, diplomacy and tourism. (Ilyosovna, NA 2020, p. 22-24).

The internet has changed the way people communicate, conduct research, and make it easier for everyone to access the learning process. Previously someone had to go in and out of the library to look for information or study materials, now someone only needs an internet network to access any information whenever needed. The rapid development of technology is directly proportional to the development of social media. This has an impact on the learning process of students in the classroom. According to McGraw-Hill, President

of Higher Education, learning effectively – and with the right types of technology – is one of the best ways to ensure students succeed in the classroom, and student focus is key (Belardi, 2013).

Social media is an alternative learning media. In academia, social networking sites (SNS) are considered very useful in language learning because their community-centered designs support the spread of native languages and encourage interactions that occur outside the classroom. The popularity of social media has a huge impact on students. One of the popular social media is Instagram. Students spend more of their time using Instagram through their smartphones. Therefore, this can be adapted by teachers or educators to develop certain activities that use social media, especially Instagram in language learning. Teachers or educators can actively use Instagram to stay connected with students (Zhang, 2013). The use of social media as a learning medium has supported a classical theory on social learning theory.

Instagram is a social media that has various features, so users can share photos and videos with other users. Currently, the number of Instagram users is more than 200 million and more than 20 billion photos have been shared (Ting, 2014). Ideally, students can use social media to learn anything, including English. Because there are many sources and learning materials as well as tutors who can help students to learn it. One of them is Aaron O'Brien's Instagram account (@aarons.english). There are various videos that can help students to improve their English skills, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, sentences, and other tips and tricks.

Aaron O'Brien or Aaron English was born in Melbourne, Australia. He is a renowned and fun English teacher who currently teaches thousands of students on a regular basis from kindergarten to adult level. Aaron also enjoys working with other English teachers in seminars and workshops where he collaborates with various communities and institutions to implement innovative teaching methodologies and practices across Indonesia. A passionate entrepreneur, Aaron has set up his own English course which is one of the fastest growing in Indonesia. Aaron also has his own English learning platform on Instagram that is @aarons.english, which has over 192,000 organic followers in just 10 months.

Whereas in this century many students use social media only for entertainment that can make them laugh, sad and angry. Some students preferred over opening websites or watching useful videos which can improve self-skills and self-quality. Some use it as a medium to convey information, obtain entertainment, promote products, simply convey daily activities by uploading pictures and videos, even just to pour out users' hearts on social media accounts. The negative impact of social media activities, including those that can trigger crime, wasting time productive for daily activities such as updating status for students can interfere with the learning process (Sriwahyuni, 2019, p. 54-63).

The factor why students don't use Instagram for learning is weak student motivation (Cahyani, 2020, p. 123-140). Besides, being strengthened by the opinion of several high school teachers, that the learning motivation of high school students has indeed decreased during this pandemic situation. Students assume that learning is only in schools and learning institutions, whereas currently learning can be done using smartphones and can be done anywhere. Another factor is the lack of knowledge about websites, or other learning resources on the internet or social media. According to Fujiawati (2021), utilization of social media to attract students' interest in learning is not yet used by many teachers. A lot of students know about Instagram only as an entertainment medium, even though there are lots of useful accounts for learning English and others.

There are many possibilities that students' ability to communicate in English is weak, but Aisha Bibi (2002:2) states that one of the main reasons for learning English grammar is

not considered too important. Even though it is still considered important, English grammar is still taught separately and sufficient training is not given in an integrated manner with the four language skills (speaking, listening, writing, and listening). In addition to being guided by the principles of foreign languages in general, in learning English one must know receptive skills and productive skills. According to Iskandar (2012) receptive skills include listening skills and reading skills while productive skills include speaking and writing skills. Both receptive skills and productive skills need to be developed in the process of developing English language learning. Another thing that is not less important is the problem of speech or pronunciation and intonation, in English intonation has a very important role in communicating.

Based on the pre-observation on @aaron.english Instagram account, it can be seen that followers can apply speaking and pronunciation skills by repeating and imitating what Aaron said in the video. Vocabulary can be applied by memorizing foreign vocabulary mentioned in the video. Writing skills can be applied by answering the quiz on the video in the comment's column. Reading skills can be applied by reading the caption column and comments and writing in the video. Listening skills can be applied by listening to what Aaron has to say in the video. We can apply our speaking and pronunciation skills by repeating and imitating what Aaron said in the video. Vocabulary can be applied by memorizing foreign vocabulary mentioned in the video. Writing skills can be applied by answering the quiz on the video in the comment's column.

Regarding the explanation of social media and Instagram above, the authors found reasons that could be considered for making Instagram a learning medium based on research from Bexbeti, (2014, p. 90-94); (1) supports teaching for lifelong learning, instagram can be used by every level of education, (2) instagram authorizes students to create their own digital content and publish it online, besides that it can stimulate student and educator activities in teaching, (3) Instagram enables collaboration between students and educators on specific projects or assignments for learning purposes. Thus, this paper would like to answer these following questions.

Research question

1. How do the students perception on the aarons.english's Instagram account?
2. What are the benefits of the aarons.english's Instagram account to help students learn English?

Research purposes

The aims of this research are:

1. To describe the students' perception on the aaron.english Instagram account.
2. To find out the advantages of the aaron.english's Instagram account.

METHOD

This research was conducted using a qualitative descriptive method. The complexity of human thought and action is explored in qualitative research (Gray, 2017, p. 34). Qualitative research produces descriptive data from the observed research topic, such as sound, action, or writing (Hadi, 2017, p. 74). This research is focused on a very specific interest, the researcher uses a case study. This study aims at the element of interaction with context. The object of this research are several other participants. The participants are five sixth semester students of English education at As-syafi'iyah Islamic University Jakarta who actively use Instagram and follow Aaron English on Instagram and often watch and learn from this account. This research was conducted on 27 June 2022 at the As-Syafi'iyah Islamic University, Jakarta.

This study focuses on students' opinions and the benefits of Aaron English's Instagram accounts in helping them learn English. The data collection technique that the authors use were through observation and interview. According to Miles and Huberman in (Alhojailan & Ibrahim, 2012, p. 12) data analysis consists of data collection, data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing.

1. Data collection

Data collection is the first step in data analysis. Observations and interviews were used to obtain raw data. Such as the results of observations, interview transcripts, and video recordings of student narration after watching content from Aaron English's Instagram account to learn English.

2. Data Reduction

The next step in data analysis of this research is data reduction. This act of selecting, categorizing, and summarizing the items that the authors believe is valuable and pertinent to this investigation is known as data reduction. Data reduction for the author includes the categorization of data and information obtained during the early stages of data analysis. The author will condense the data and focus on subjects related to the impression of students of the English Education Study Program on learning English by watching content from Aaron English's Instagram. The purpose of data reduction is to make it easier for the author to analyze the data and proceed to the next step.

3. Data Display

Elaboration of data resulting from the results of data reduction and presented in a narrative form is known as data display. The data is structured precisely, in detail, and clearly in the data view, so that it is easy to understand what is being examined. The results of observation and interview data reduction are included in the data display. The data or information will then be briefly summarized to provide an overview of all information about the perceptions of students of the English Education Study Program towards learning to speak by viewing Aaron English's Instagram account.

4. Conclusion Image

The stage of drawing conclusions from the data analysis technique of this study is the last stage. In descriptive qualitative research, conclusions are new findings that have never been observed before. Findings can be descriptions of previously dull or dark objects that become visible after investigation, causal relationships or interactions, hypotheses, or theories. The author looks for meaning and makes arguments based on the material obtained and processed previously in data processing. This conclusion was also tested during the research to ensure that the findings were correct and valid, and that this research could answer the research problem formulation of the English Education Study Program students' perspective on watching Aaron English's Instagram account as an English learning medium. Observing Aaron English's Instagram account and then reviewing the entire account and then documenting it as evidence. The next way is an interview. The author interviewed the participants about their views on whether an Aaron English account could help them to learn English or not.

FINDING

Based on the results of interviews, it is found that social media can be used as a learning medium, including learning English. Because on Instagram, there are many content creators who create educational content related to English, both in the form of photos and videos. Further, it is believed that learning English through Instagram really helps participants to gain new knowledge and repeat what they have learned on campus. They often say that "the material is simple" related to learning from Instagram. Indeed, the English learning materials available on Instagram are very simple because the features on Instagram are limited, unlike when learning in class in general. Educational content on Instagram is enjoyable since the time limitation on posting photos and videos. It becomes a weakness and an advantage at the same time because the material being taught is straight to the point, without much ado. The summary of the participants opinion of @aaron.english can be seen through the following table.

Participants' Opinion	
1.	It provides simple material.
2.	It is easy to be understood.
3.	The material provided is relevant to the daily life.
4.	It includes learning pronunciation, grammar, and speaking.
5.	It is suitable for beginner.
6.	The way of delivering material is unique.

After conducting interviews with the participants, the authors found several reasons for using Instagram as a medium for learning English. Three out of five participants often watch educational content through Instagram because the material is simple and easy to understand. The other two participants answered because the material provided was very relevant to everyday life, both in terms of sentences, vocabulary, and terms in English. In addition, the reason why one of them prefers to learn languages through Instagram is because from Instagram we can immediately get a lot of things, be it correct pronunciation, content about grammar, speaking skills by repeating words or sentences contained in the educational content.

In addition, it be said that Aaron English's Instagram account is very good to be used as a medium for learning English because the material is easy to understand even for people whose English skills are still beginners. Because Aaron is a native speaker, it is very good for learning correct pronunciation and also good for practicing listening skills. Aaron's way of delivering the material is also very unique. Aaron has lived in Indonesia for a long time, his master of the Indonesian language is good enough. Then Aaron delivered his material about English sentences by first mentioning a sentence in Indonesian, after that Aaron translated it into English so that it was easier for the audience to understand and the audience felt more related to the sentences so it was easier for the audience to put it into practice. Then three out of five participants said that they liked how Aarons put the writing in the video and they found it very helpful to understand the material presented by Aaron.

Further, aaron.english Insragram account provide some benefits to his followers. It can be seen in the following table.

Some benefits of @aaron.english account	
1.	Gain new vocabulary.
2.	Improve pronunciation.
3.	Improve self-confident.
4.	Improve listening skills.
5.	Improve writing skills.

Three out of five participants stated that the benefits they get after watching educational videos on Aaron English's Instagram are that their vocabulary and some English sentences that are commonly used daily increase, their pronunciation gets better and they become more confident to pronounce them, so their pronunciation increased although not significantly. Then, the remaining two answered about the benefits they got after watching videos on Aaron English's Instagram is that their listening skills improved because Aaron is a native speaker so his pronunciation when pronouncing words in English is very good and they pay close attention to Aaron's writing and pronunciation when mentioning word in English. Their writing skills were also trained through Aaron's content by answering questions asked by Aaron to the audience and then the audience answered them in the comment's column. Based on the findings of the interview above, it can be concluded that students enjoy watching Aaron English's Instagram account because it is interesting to watch and the lessons that Aaron conveys in each video are related, understandable, and fun. Students who use Aaron English's Instagram account like to repeat words or learn to pronounce vocabulary correctly and answer the questions Aaron gives in the comment's column. As a result, students who use Aaron English's Instagram account find it easier to understand.

DISCUSSION

Learning English through Aaron English's Instagram account can be an effective way of learning in a short time because they focus on observing short video. Although the video content is very short, the information on it is very dense and to the point so that students can focus on watching and studying the video. In line with McGraw-Hill's opinion in the literature above, he stated that students' focus is a key Belardi, 2013).

In addition, @aaron.english content it's unique because he tried to translate the sentences from Bahasa Indonesia into English. In order of content, he explains how to pronounce the word, explains how to use English words well, such as how to use on, at, and in, and so on. Aaron's delivery is very good so that students are interested in deepening the content or videos such as how Aaron asks questions and asks the audience to write the answers in the comment section. Aaron indirectly invites the audience to improve their writing skills. We can practice some English skills such as speaking, pronunciation, listening, writing and reading when we watch his contents on Instagram. The participants look interest to answer the question and explain their experience while they watch and learn from the content of Aaron English. It means that learning English through instagram is enjoyable (Bexbeti, 2014). Learning through Instagram accounts is indeed good and teachers should be able to use social media to help improve the quality of learning for students. This is in accordance with Zhang (2013) he stated that teachers or educators can actively use Instagram to stay connected with students.

During the interview process, it is found that participants looked very enthusiastic and eager to answer the questions. This happened because they already felt the benefits of learning through Instagram. These participants proved not only to use Instagram as an entertainment medium but also to be used as an effective learning medium, which is short and concise so that students can focus on observing and taking knowledge from the educational content provided on Instagram, one of which is Aaron English's Instagram account.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, the conclusions are described below:

1. Aaron English's Instagram account can help students improve their English knowledge to help them learn English. Students like to watch videos on Aaron English's Instagram account to learn English more because the videos are very fun and Aaron's delivery is very impressive and doesn't get bored easily. After watching videos on Aaron English's Instagram account, they believe that English learning materials are easy to be understood and they can do it in their spare time.
2. The advantages of @aaron.english account are; easy-to-understand pronunciation, good grammar, have a lot of vocabulary, speak fluently, speak confidently, improve their listening skills, help participants in writing.
3. Creative and innovative media for learning English is needed to attract students' interest and motivation. The last but not least, that media must be able to help students improve their English competence because technology will continue to evolve.

REFERENCES

- Alhojailan, M. I., & Ibrahim, M. (2012). Thematic Analysis : A Critical Review of Its Process and Evaluation. WEI International European Academic Conference Proceedings, 1(2011), 8–21.
- Belardi, B. (2013). Texting While Studying: New Study from McGraw-Hill Education Reveals That Technology Can Be Students' Best Friend and Worst Enemy.
- Bexheti, L. A., Ismaili, B. E., & Cico, B. H. (2014, March). An analysis of social media usage in teaching and learning: The case of SEEU. In Proceedings of the 2014 International Conference on Circuits, Systems, Signal Processing, Communications and Computers (pp. 90-94).
- Bibi, A. (2002). The comparative effectiveness of teaching English grammar with the help of textbook and by using group work activities (Doctoral dissertation, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad).
- Cahyani, A., Listiana, I. D., & Larasati, S. P. D. (2020). Motivasi belajar siswa SMA pada pembelajaran daring di masa pandemi covid-19. IQ (Ilmu Al-qur'an): Jurnal Pendidikan Islam, 3(01), 123-140.
- Cheung, T. T. (2014). A study on motives, usage, self-presentation and number of followers on instagram.
- Fujiawati, F. S., & Raharja, R. M. (2021). Pemanfaatan media sosial (instagram) sebagai media penyajian kreasi seni dalam pembelajaran. JPKS (Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kajian Seni), 6(1).
- Gray, M. (2017). Applied Qualitative Research Design: A Total Framework Approach. In Nursing Standard (Vol. 32, Issue 15). <https://doi.org/10.7748/ns.32.15.34.s28>
- Hadi, S. (2017). Pemeriksaan Keabsahan Data Penelitian Kualitatif Pada Skripsi. Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Negeri Malang, 22(1), 74–78. <https://doi.org/10.17977/jip.v22i1.8721>
- Handayani, S. (2016). Pentingnya kemampuan berbahasa Inggris sebagai dalam menyongsong ASEAN Community 2015. Jurnal Profesi Pendidik, 3(1), 102-106.
- Ilyosovna, N. A. (2020). The importance of English language. International Journal on Orange Technologies, 2(1), 22-24.
- Iskandar, I. (2012). Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Conversation Pada Siswa Kelas VI Sd Negeri Jabung 01 Kecamatan Plupuh Kabupaten Sragen Tahun Ajaran 2009/2010 (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta).
- Sriwahyuni, W., Unde, A., & Sadjad, R. S. (2019). Analisis Pemanfaatan Media Sosial dalam Menunjang Proses Pembelajaran Siswa SMUN 1 Makassar. MEDIALOG: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi, 2(1), 54-63.

- Sudaryono. 2002. Ketaksaan dalam Komunikasi Verbal, Telaah Bahasa dan Sastra. Jakarta: Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa.
- Tamrin, A. F., & Yanti, Y. (2019). Peningkatan keterampilan bahasa Inggris masyarakat pegunungan di Desa Betao Kabupaten Sidrap. *Transformasi: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 15(2), 61-72.
- Wahyu, W. (2001). Manajemen Bahasa. Jakarta: Gramedia.
- Wiratno, T., & Santosa, R. (2014). Bahasa, fungsi bahasa, dan konteks sosial. Modul Pengantar Linguistik Umum, 1-19.
- Zhang, L. (2013, September). Mobile phone technology engagement in EFL classroom. In 2013 International Conference on Software Engineering and Computer Science (pp. 171-174). Atlantis Press.