

INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF “@AARONS ENGLISH” INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT IN DEVELOPING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS

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Abstract: This study discusses the influence of Instagram Reels, particularly the @Aarons.english account, in improving English-speaking abilities of the students of State Junior High School 2 Pasawahan. It aims at comprehending how social media can be utilized to enhance vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and confidence. Through a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected from classroom observations, interviews, documentation, and speaking tests with seven students chosen by purposive sampling, then analyzed through thematic coding and conclusion drawing. The findings show that @Aarons.english Reels improved students' speaking performance by improving vocabulary through authentic exposure, pronunciation and fluency through imitation, and confidence. Instagram Reels also supported independent learning outside the classroom. The research adds to English language teaching by showing how social media motivates and enables speaking practice and illustrating the potential of Instagram Reels especially @Aarons.english in improving Indonesian junior high school students' speaking skills.

Keywords: Instagram Reels, @aarons.english, *Speaking Skills*, *Vocabulary*, *Motivation*, *Qualitative Research*

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, English has become one of the most important skills for global communication and academic success. As an international language, English helps people access information, share ideas, and take part in a global community (Richards, 2021). Among the four English skills, speaking is considered the most essential but also the hardest to master, especially for students from non-English-speaking countries like Indonesia (Sarosa et al., 2020). Speaking fluently requires not only vocabulary and grammar knowledge but also

confidence and regular practice in real situations. Unfortunately, many students still struggle with speaking because they rarely get opportunities to practice, often feel bored with traditional classroom activities, and lack engaging media that can motivate them (Amelia, 2022).

The fast development of technology and social media has changed how people communicate and learn languages. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are no longer used only for entertainment but also as useful tools for learning and practicing languages interactively (Wong, Chai, & Poh Aw, 2019). Among these platforms, Instagram has gained special attention because it is visually attractive, easy to use, and very popular among young learners. Its features, like Stories, Reels, and Live, allow users to see real examples of English being used in daily life (Smith & Anderson, 2020). For this reason, many teachers have started using Instagram in their teaching to create more engaging, student-centered learning environments that motivate students and encourage them to participate more actively.

Many studies have shown that social media can support English language learning effectively. Smith and Brick (2020) found that Instagram can improve students' speaking skills by providing more opportunities to express themselves and interact with others. Similarly, Suhendri and Faulina (2023) found that watching English videos on Instagram helps students build vocabulary and improve pronunciation because they are often exposed to authentic language use. In Indonesia, Lodya and Najibah (2023) discovered that students who practiced English using Instagram felt more confident, comfortable, and motivated to speak. Sahira and Inaeni (2024) also found that regularly using social media helps students become more confident and skilled through interactive activities such as commenting and imitating videos. Altogether, these studies suggest that social media encourages students to learn languages in a more independent, fun, and engaging way.

However, most of these studies focused on university students or general English learners. There is still limited research on how Instagram Reels can improve speaking skills among junior high school students, especially those in rural areas who use social media frequently but not for learning. This gap is important because today's young learners are "digital natives" who spend much of their time online. They are naturally drawn to visual and interactive content, which makes Instagram a powerful tool for language learning if used correctly (Kukulska-Hulme & Viberg, 2022).

To respond to this issue, the current study focuses on the Instagram account "@Aarons.english", created by Aaron O'Brien, an Australian English teacher known for his creative and contextual approach to teaching. His short videos provide examples of real English use, pronunciation practice, and cultural information that are easy for Indonesian learners to understand. The content not only helps improve vocabulary and fluency but also increases students' cultural awareness and engagement. This approach fits the principles of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), which promotes flexible, authentic, and self-directed learning through mobile technology (Burston & Giannakou, 2022). In addition, according to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), students are more likely to use a learning technology if they find it easy to use and useful (Davis, 1989; Al-Maroofof et al., 2021). Since most students are already familiar with Instagram, using it as a learning tool feels natural and effective for them.

The study also draws on Constructivist Learning Theory, which emphasizes that knowledge is actively built through experience and social interaction (Piaget, 1970; Vygotsky, 1978). Instagram Reels support this idea because they allow students to listen, repeat, and practice English in real communicative situations. Previous research by Hapsari and Dewi

(2023) and Yusuf and Sari (2024) showed that learning through short videos helps students understand better and gain confidence, as they are exposed to real-life language use. Through visual learning, imitation, and social interaction, students become active learners rather than passive listeners.

The originality of this study lies in its focus on how the educational Instagram account “@Aarons.english” can help junior high school students improve their English-speaking skills. While most previous studies looked at adults or university students, this research explores how social media can be used as an effective tool in secondary education, especially for young learners in Indonesia. It examines not only improvements in vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency but also how Instagram use can boost students’ confidence and motivation. Furthermore, the study provides real evidence on how Instagram’s interactive features can connect formal classroom learning with informal digital learning, offering a more complete picture of language development in the digital era.

The main problem addressed in this study is the lack of opportunities for junior high school students to practice speaking English in an interesting and meaningful way. Although students at State Junior High School 2 Pasawahan are active users of social media, they mostly use it for entertainment rather than learning. This study seeks to change that habit by exploring how Instagram Reels can become a practical and motivating platform for language practice. It focuses on two key questions: (1) how the “@Aarons.english” account helps students improve their English-speaking skills, and (2) what challenges and opportunities appear when using Instagram Reels in English teaching.

Therefore, this study aims to find out how the “@Aarons.english” Instagram account can help improve students’ English-speaking skills at State Junior High School 2 Pasawahan. It examines how Instagram Reels expose students to real English use, help them imitate native pronunciation, and enhance their fluency and confidence. The study also explores how social media can be applied in the classroom and provides suggestions for teachers who want to use digital platforms to make learning more engaging and effective.

In conclusion, this research shows that social media, particularly Instagram, can be a valuable tool for English learning. Instagram is not only a place for communication but also an interactive space that helps students develop language skills and confidence when used properly. By exploring how Instagram Reels affect students’ speaking performance and motivation, this study provides meaningful insights for teachers, curriculum developers, and policymakers to improve English teaching in today’s digital world.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative descriptive method to explore how the Instagram account “@Aarons.english” helps improve students’ English-speaking skills. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to understand students’ real experiences, feelings, and opinions in depth rather than focusing on numbers or scores (Creswell, 2018). The descriptive design helped describe how Instagram Reels were used as a learning medium and how students perceived their influence on vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and confidence.

The study was based on content analysis, which focuses on understanding the meaning behind messages and behaviors. In this case, the researcher analyzed students' interview responses, classroom activities, and audiovisual materials related to their use of the @Aarons.english account. The goal was to identify key themes that describe how Instagram supports students in learning to speak English. This approach fits the purpose of the study to provide a detailed description of how social media can support English learning rather than measuring its effect statistically.

The research was carried out at State Junior High School 2 Pasawahan, located in Kuningan, West Java, Indonesia. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, which means they were chosen based on specific criteria relevant to the study (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). A total of 20 ninth-grade student took part in the research. These students were chosen because they actively used Instagram and followed the @Aarons.english account, making them appropriate for exploring how the platform supports English language learning. Before conducting the study, the researcher obtained permission from the school principal and the English teacher. The students were informed about the purpose of the study and how their data would be used. Participation in the study was voluntary, and all students provided their consent. The researcher also ensured that all information shared by the students remained confidential and was used solely for academic purposes. To collect the data, the researcher used three main methods: semi-structured interviews, audiovisual observations, and field notes. These methods helped gather a complete picture of how students used Instagram for learning and how they felt about it.

1. Interviews

The main data came from semi-structured interviews with the 20 students. Each interview lasted around 15–20 minutes and was done individually. The researcher used an interview guide with open-ended questions about the students' experiences using @Aarons.english. The questions focused on how they used the Instagram account, what kinds of videos they watched, and how it helped them improve their speaking. The interviews were conducted in both English and Indonesian, depending on which language the students felt more comfortable using. All sessions were audio-recorded with the students' permission.

2. Audiovisual Observation

The researcher also observed several Instagram Reels from @Aarons.english that were frequently viewed by the participants. The purpose was to understand what kind of learning content they were exposed to such as pronunciation tips, vocabulary lessons, or short speaking tasks. In addition, the researcher observed how students tried to imitate or apply what they saw in those videos during classroom practice.

3. Field Notes

During both interviews and observations, the researcher took field notes to record the students' behavior, reactions, and classroom interactions. These notes included details such as how engaged students were, how they responded to the videos, and any spontaneous comments or reflections they made about using Instagram for learning.

By combining these three methods, the researcher was able to collect data from different perspectives and ensure that the findings were rich and accurate (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The data were analyzed using the model developed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which includes three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

1. Data Reduction

After collecting all the interviews, observation results, and field notes, the researcher began by organizing the data. Repetitive or irrelevant information was removed, and the important points were coded based on themes such as vocabulary improvement, pronunciation practice, confidence, and learning motivation.

2. Data Display

The coded data were then organized in tables and summarized according to themes. This helped the researcher identify patterns and connections between students' experiences. For example, many students mentioned that watching @Aarons.english videos helped them pronounce words correctly and gave them confidence to speak English in front of others.

3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification

The final step involved interpreting the findings and verifying them. The researcher reviewed the data several times to ensure the conclusions truly reflected what students said and experienced. To make sure the results were trustworthy, member checking was used—students were asked to confirm whether the researcher's interpretation of their answers was accurate.

Although no specific software was used, the researcher organized the data manually with careful attention to detail. Discussions with a peer reviewer and the academic supervisor were also conducted to check the consistency of the coding and the validity of the themes. To maintain the credibility and reliability of the study, several strategies from Lincoln and Guba (1985) were applied. Credibility was achieved through triangulation, by comparing data from interviews, observations, and field notes. Transferability was ensured by describing the research context, participants, and procedures in detail so that future researchers could replicate the study in similar settings. Dependability and confirmability were maintained by keeping an audit trail of all research activities, ensuring that the research process was transparent and well-documented.

In summary, this research used a qualitative descriptive approach with content analysis to understand how the @Aarons.english Instagram account supports students' English-speaking development. Through purposive sampling, interviews, observations, and field notes, the researcher collected rich data that reflected students' real experiences with social media-based learning. The analysis followed Miles and Huberman's framework to identify key themes and draw meaningful conclusions about how Instagram can be used as an effective and motivating tool for improving speaking skills in junior high school students.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Research Results

This study examined in depth how the Instagram account @Aarons.english supports students in improving their English-speaking skills at State Junior High School 2 Pasawahan. The research focused on understanding how social media, particularly

Instagram Reels, contributes to the development of learners' oral proficiency in a real educational setting. Data were obtained through several qualitative techniques, including classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and speaking performance tests involving seven purposively selected students. These data collection methods were designed to capture both students' learning behaviors and their perceptions of using Instagram Reels for language learning. The findings revealed that Instagram Reels played a significant role in helping learners develop essential speaking aspects such as vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and self-confidence. Students were not only exposed to authentic English expressions but also encouraged to imitate and practice them in a natural and engaging way.

Overall, the majority of students expressed highly positive attitudes toward using Instagram Reels as a learning aid. They described the short, interactive videos as easy to follow, enjoyable, and effective in helping them understand and remember new words and phrases. For instance, one participant (S1) explained, "Learning English from Instagram is fun because the videos are short but full of helpful words and expressions." Another student (S4) commented, "It's not boring because the videos are funny and easy to understand." These responses demonstrate that students perceived Instagram not only as a form of entertainment but also as a useful and enjoyable educational platform. The informal and visual nature of the Reels allowed them to stay focused and motivated while learning.

Based on classroom observations, the students showed noticeable progress in their speaking abilities over time. Many of them spoke more smoothly and confidently, constructed grammatically correct sentences, and demonstrated clearer pronunciation compared to their earlier performances. Several students (S1–S5 and S7) appeared comfortable and enthusiastic when participating in speaking activities, while only one student (S6) still displayed a bit of nervousness during oral communication. Additionally, the researcher observed that students developed independent learning habits; for example, they actively searched for unfamiliar words or expressions from the videos using both printed and digital dictionaries. This shows that students were not only passive viewers but also actively engaged learners who sought to improve their comprehension and speaking accuracy.

In summary, the findings confirm that the integration of Instagram Reels through the @Aarons.english account offers an effective, motivating, and enjoyable way for junior high school students to enhance their speaking skills. The combination of visual learning, entertainment, and authentic language exposure created an engaging learning experience that made English practice more natural and accessible beyond the traditional classroom environment.

Table 1: Observation Summary of Students' Speaking Skills

Student	Fluency	Pronunciation	Grammar	Vocabulary	Confidence
S1	Fluent	Clear	Few minor errors	Adequate	Confident
S2	Fluent	Clear	Minor errors	Rich	Very confident
S3	Moderate	Clear	Some errors	Good	Confident
S4	Fluent	Clear	Minor errors	Good	Confident
S5	Fluent	Clear	Minor errors	Excellent	Confident
S6	Slightly hesitant	Clear	Some errors	Good	Slightly nervous
S7	Fluent	Clear	Few errors	Good	Confident

The results of the speaking test also supported these findings. Most students received good scores, with an average above 80. The greatest improvement was seen in vocabulary and pronunciation, while grammar and fluency still needed some work. Students who regularly practiced by repeating words and sentences from the videos or by recording themselves speaking showed better progress than those who did not.

Overall, using the “@Aarons.english” Reels helped students in two important ways: first, it improved their language skills particularly vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency and second, it supported their psychological growth by increasing their motivation and confidence in speaking English.

B. Discussion

The findings of this research show that Instagram Reels can be a suitable platform for learning English speaking. The findings support Smith and Brick's (2020) findings that Instagram provides students with more opportunities for English communication and self-expression. The students in the current research were more motivated to practice speaking as the Reels reflected real-life examples of English being utilized in authentic communication. This finding is also consistent with Qian (2020), who confirmed that exposure to regular use of language multiple times allows the students to acquire communicative competence naturally.

The learning experience in this study also illustrates Constructivist Learning Theory, as pioneered by Piaget (1970) and Vygotsky (1978). The theory is concerned with the fact that knowledge is actively constructed through experience and communication. The learners also did not passively view the videos but practiced the expressions, mimicked the pronunciation, and used the phrases acquired in class discussions. This kind of learning experience developed fluency and confidence more than traditional methodology.

The other important thing in this study is that learning was more enjoyable and interactive with Instagram Reels. Students said that learning was enjoyable, easy to understand, and less stressful compared to learning from textbooks. This supports Feroza's (2022) theory, who believed that multimedia content such as short videos had the ability to make learners more involved and interested. If learning is enjoyable, learners will be interested and practice daily.

However, the study also revealed several challenges faced by the students. Although their pronunciation and vocabulary showed noticeable improvement, some students still struggled with sentence structure and grammar accuracy. This finding aligns with the results of Lodya and Najibah (2023), who reported that students using social media demonstrated better pronunciation and vocabulary development but continued to make grammatical mistakes in their speech. These findings indicate that while Instagram Reels can effectively support students in improving their fluency, pronunciation, and overall speaking confidence, grammar learning still requires direct guidance through classroom instruction and corrective feedback from teachers.

Another significant finding of the study was how the use of Instagram Reels helped bridge the gap between formal and informal learning environments. Students were no longer restricted to practicing English only during class hours; instead, they could engage in English learning beyond the classroom by watching Reels in their free time or during

daily activities. This outcome supports the statement of Kukulska-Hulme and Viberg (2022), who highlighted that mobile-assisted learning enables learners to study independently and manage their own learning pace. The availability of Reels provided students with authentic English input that could be accessed anytime and anywhere, transforming their typical social media use into a productive and educational habit.

Moreover, one of the most remarkable benefits observed in this research was the boost in students' self-confidence when speaking English. Many students expressed that they felt more comfortable and less anxious about making mistakes after regularly watching and imitating content from the @Aarons.english account. The videos served as an interactive reference point, allowing learners to rehearse pronunciation, intonation, and expressions in a natural and contextual manner. This finding supports the work of Suhendri and Faulina (2023), who stated that consistent exposure to authentic video materials significantly improves learners' oral fluency and speaking confidence. The informal and approachable teaching style used in the @Aarons.english videos also played an important role in motivating students. It made them feel that learning English was not something intimidating or overly difficult but rather an enjoyable and achievable process.

In summary, while Instagram Reels contributed greatly to improving students' pronunciation, vocabulary, and self-confidence, the findings also suggest that grammar learning still depends heavily on structured classroom activities. Nonetheless, the platform successfully created a meaningful connection between digital entertainment and education, allowing students to practice English naturally and continuously outside school hours

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to discover how the @Aarons.english Instagram account helps students improve their English-speaking abilities at State Junior High School 2 Pasawahan. Based on the results and observations collected throughout the research, it can be concluded that the objectives of the study were successfully achieved. The integration of Instagram Reels from the @Aarons.english account proved to be an effective and engaging learning tool that supported students in enhancing several aspects of their speaking skills particularly in terms of vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. After consistently watching and practicing with the Reels, students demonstrated noticeable progress in how they expressed themselves in English. They also reported feeling more confident, motivated, and enthusiastic about speaking because the videos were short, creative, and presented authentic examples of everyday language use. The casual tone and visual presentation of the content made it easier for students to understand and imitate natural speech patterns, helping them practice pronunciation and intonation in a comfortable way.

Furthermore, the findings showed that the use of Instagram Reels not only improved students' linguistic competence but also fostered a positive learning attitude. Students expressed that learning through social media was more interesting and enjoyable than traditional classroom activities. The visual and interactive nature of Instagram created an engaging environment that made learning English feel less formal and more relevant to their daily lives. This digital approach allowed students to relate classroom lessons to real-world communication, bridging the gap between academic study and social experience. The videos also encouraged students to practice speaking English more frequently, both during lessons and independently outside school hours. As a result, many students developed the habit of rewatching Reels, repeating phrases, and even recording their own short videos to test their pronunciation and fluency. This process supported independent learning and active participation, helping them take greater responsibility for their own progress.

In conclusion, the @Aarons.english account functioned as an innovative and practical learning medium that successfully connected traditional classroom learning with modern digital learning practices. Its integration brought a fresh and dynamic approach to English teaching by making lessons more interactive, flexible, and student-centered. The study demonstrates that when used appropriately, social media platforms like Instagram can become powerful educational tools that not only improve students' language performance but also build their confidence, creativity, and enjoyment in the learning process. Therefore, English teachers and curriculum designers are encouraged to incorporate such platforms into their teaching strategies as a creative and effective means to strengthen students' speaking skills and engagement in language learning.

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