

# Aarons.english Instagram Account as Vocabulary Teaching Media: Students' Perception

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## **Abstract**

*Vocabulary is one of the essential aspects of learning English. The key to being able to read, write, and speak anything in English is having a diverse vocabulary. Instagram can be utilized as an alternative learning media to get students' interest in learning vocabulary. The study aims to explore students' perceptions of using Instagram Aarons. English as a medium for learning vocabulary. This study was conducted at SMP PGRI 1 Buduran Sidoarjo used a qualitative case study approach. The data were taken from grade 9<sup>th</sup> students through interviews with six students, observation, and documentation. Thematic analysis is used to analyze the data in this study. The results of the study revealed that Aarons. English Instagram account is very influential for students. Students get many benefits when learning vocabulary using Aarons. English such as students become interested and also motivated to continue learning vocabulary because of Aarons. English's way of explaining material well and fun, easy to understand, and detailed. Apart from learning vocabulary, students also get other knowledge from these Aarons. English Instagram account in the form of students knowing various kinds of new vocabulary such as phrasal verbs, the second form of verbs, adverbs, and how to pronounce English words correctly.*

**Keywords:** *Instagram, Vocabulary, Students' Perception*

## INTRODUCTION

Learning vocabulary is a basic component of learning English. Knowing more vocabulary can help us become skilled in English, such as listening, reading, writing, and speaking anything in English. According to Dian et al., (2021) expressed vocabulary is very important for students to learn, because knowing various kinds of English vocabulary will make it easier for them to be able to read, write and speak English. This shows that it is very important for students to be able to master vocabulary so that their English skills improve. This is also evidenced by the statement from (Faliyanti, 2015) states that mastering vocabulary is very important.

For students, mastery of vocabulary is not easy. Many problems are found when students learn vocabulary, such as students still need help remembering unfamiliar words they have heard or read texts, they have difficulty understanding the meaning of unfamiliar words and do not know what

they mean when the teacher explains the material in English, they did not know how to recognize spelling a word and finding the meaning of vocabulary based on the text. The students felt bored or uninterested when the teacher only delivers the material using conventional teaching, in which the students only used the textbook as their guidance. These problems arise because when learning vocabulary in class, teachers still use media that are less attractive and not innovative (Trianasari, 2017).

Therefore, regarding these problems the English teacher needs an alternative teaching technique that is more innovative, fun and involves students in teaching vocabulary in the classroom. Social media can be used as a modern teaching equipment to encourage students to pursue independent learning, because social media is currently being used more by the community, including students. One of the media that can be used is Instagram. Instagram can be used as an alternative source, especially to increase

students' vocabulary (Rokhmawati & Mastuti, 2019). Moreover, Ramdhany, (2017) said that students might be aware of or not be aware of various vocabulary related to their habits. He added that reading Instagram posts, updating statuses, and uploading images and videos to Instagram are all ways for students to acquire vocabulary. In addition, there are many content creators on Instagram who provide specific content to teach students vocabulary. Many students today are interested in learning vocabulary through content creator accounts on Instagram. An example of a content creator account sharing English vocabulary such as Aarons English, Guruku Mr. Dannis, Kampung Inggris LC etc.

However, there are still a few researchers who focus on examining the use of Instagram in terms of teaching vocabulary to students. For example, in research conducted by Sallamah and As Sabiq, (2020) which revealed that students' writing skills in recount text can be influenced by Instagram. In addition, research conducted by (Putri et

al., 2021) focuses more on using Instagram to improve students' reading skills. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to explore students' perception about using Instagram whether it can improve students' vocabulary skills through one of the educational creative content creators, especially those who share content regarding vocabulary discussions in English, namely Aarons.english.

Aarons.english is a social media account on Instagram owned by Aaron O'Brien, a native speaker from Australia who provides content for learning about English.

One of the reasons researcher use the Aarons.english Instagram account as a research media for teaching vocabulary to students is because there are still few researchers who research using this Aarons.english Instagram account.

### ***Vocabulary***

Vocabulary is one aspect that facilitates students' learning of English because it impacts the four abilities to listen, read, write, and speak.

Vocabulary refers to knowing words, what they mean, and how to use them effectively to communicate. It is an essential part of the language. Being able to converse with others more easily comes from having a large vocabulary. Vocabulary can be interpreted as sounds that express meaning and form clear units in language (Muttahidah, 2011). Vocabulary can be said to be the smallest unit of language that is related to individual meanings to speak and can be used in interaction with each other, and vocabulary can be said to be a group of words in a particular language as part of learning to understand one another teaching foreign languages.

These definitions lead to the conclusion that a vocabulary is a group of terms that are intimately connected to the use of language for conversation.

### ***Instagram as Vocabulary Teaching Media***

Instagram is a social media website, mobile app, and video-sharing platform that lets users upload and share pictures and videos (Juditha, 2018). According to

another definition, Instagram is a well-known social network and mobile photo-sharing platform with more than 300 million active users as of right now. Instagram allows users to easily connect to other social networking platforms (ex., Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr) to share captured images, and they can apply filters to their pictures (Kamal, 2015). The two claims lead to the conclusion that Instagram is a social networking tool that enables users to share images and videos. Photos and videos shared on Instagram can also be shared on other social networks automatically. The Instagram social network is equipped with various features and advantages that allow users to be creative through these facilities. Features found on Instagram such as camera, Instagram story, Instagram filters, direct message, caption, and Instagram live.

Furthermore, (Rahman, 2021) stated that alternative media such as Instagram can be applied to learn English. On Instagram, there are interesting photo or image posts for learning English vocabulary material. In

addition, Due to its compatibility with learning techniques, Instagram can also enhance the quality of education provided to students. Instagram is a powerful educational instrument with strong motivation to enhance English learning. Teachers must therefore adopt new teaching strategies that are imaginative and inventive in order to increase students' motivation to learn (Min & Hashim, 2022). In this case, a teacher should attempt to combine traditional and modern learning methods because today's students prefer visually exciting things to reading books. Furthermore Instagram can be used anywhere, anytime, making it simple for students to study at home.

Additionally, (Lasmiasih, 2019) mentioned Instagram is the most effective medium for learning vocabulary. Through several posts on Instagram, students can find lots of new vocabulary.

### *Instagram of Aarons.english*

Aarons.english is the Instagram account name for Aaron O'Brien. He is

native speaker from Melbourne, Australia. currently, Aaron has around 800 thousand followers on his Instagram account named Aarons.english. He is an influencer who focuses on teaching English to his followers. Aaron is currently active as an English tutor for content via Instagram. Apart from that, Aaron also offers online classes for his followers who want to learn deeper about English via Whatsapp. Furthermore, Aaron also sometimes holds outdoor learning activities with his followers to learn English together. The learning content provided by Aaron English on Instagram is very short, concise and clear to learn. The content he creates mostly shares about English vocabulary, English slang related to Indonesian terms. He shared about vocabulary related to Indonesian slang, common mistakes, and some tips to increase students' speaking skills.

### *Students' Perception*

Perception is the process of entering messages or information into the human brain. Humans continue to communicate

with their environment through perception. This relationship is manifested through the five senses, namely sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell (Prasetyo, Fiki Adi; Mastuti, 2022). From this definition of perception, it can be concluded that what is meant by perception is a response or acceptance of someone in knowing the outside world which can be in the form of objects, qualities, events, and preceded by the senses then the response is forwarded to the brain, then a psychological process occurs, so that the individual understands and understands what has been sensed.

## **METHOD**

The researcher used a case study approach and qualitative type for this research. The researcher choose qualitative research because it is very effective to examine attitudes and behavior as well as social processes in a particular community (Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research with case study aims to find facts observed from the participant's point of view. A case study

is an in-depth, detailed, focused, and in-depth research design that focuses on the study of a problem or phenomenon.

This research was conducted at SMP PGRI 1 Buduran Sidoarjo when the researcher did an PLP (*Pengenalan Lapangan Persekolahan*) in October-December 2022. The subjects in the research were 9<sup>th</sup> grade students with a total of six students. The data obtained in this research were in the form of student statements from interview.

## **Data Collection**

For the data collection techniques in this study were collected by observation, interview, and documentation. The observation in this study used non-participant observation. The reason for used a observation was because researcher in her research did not take part in all kinds of observed activities. Semi-structured interviews are the type of interviews used in this study, where students will be interviewed to express their perception about using Instagram Aarons.english as a medium for learning vocabulary. To get a more complete data,

the researcher used documentation in the form of photographs taken during interview process with students.

### **Data analysis**

The researcher used thematic analysis as data analysis. The researcher used the triangulation technique to check validity data. Technical triangulation is one of the triangulation methods used to test data credibility by verifying information from the same source using different techniques. For example, data obtained from observations, then checked by interview.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The main purpose in this study was to explore students' perceptions of using Instagram Aarons.english as a medium for learning vocabulary. After conducting interviews with students, researcher found four kinds of perceptions about using the Aarons.english Instagram account as a medium for learning vocabulary. The perceptions are:

1. A joyful learning media for learn vocabulary

Aarons.english is one of Aaron O'Brien's Instagram social media accounts. He is a native speaker from Melbourne, Australia. Aarons.english is an educational account that shares knowledge about English. Among them are knowledge of English vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation, English slang associated with Indonesian terms, common mistakes, and some tips to improve students' speaking skills.

Based on the interview results, the researcher found that the students enjoyed learning English, especially vocabulary using this Instagram account from Aarons.english. The reason is that it is very easy for students to understand the delivery of material delivered by Aaron.

In addition, students also liked Aarons' way of delivering material which was very fun, simple, and detailed. That is what makes

students are excited and happy in learning vocabulary using Aarons.english. It is also stated by Heru, one of the students who was the research respondent during the interview. He said, "Learning vocabulary using his Instagram account Aarons.english is very fun and the explanation of the material presented is also very easy to understand".

Apart from Heru, there was also another respondent from a student named Herlina who said learning vocabulary using Aarons.english was very interesting and fun because Aarons provided material assistance in a good and easy-to-understand way. She said, "It's very interesting, because it's easier for me to understand the delivery of material from the account Aarons.english".

Based on the statements of the two respondents, it can be concluded that the Aarons.english Instagram account supports the process of learning English, especially for

learning vocabulary. Because the content provided is interesting, easy to access, easy to understand, enjoyable, and simple. Also, the learning material is well presented. This statement bears some resemblance to this theory; there are four factors owned by Instagram as a mobile learning medium namely, simplicity, accessibility, interest and feelings of happiness. (Kamal, 2015).

2. Help student to enrich vocabulary  
In this era of globalization, learning English is important. Because in today's globalized world, the importance of English cannot be denied and ignored because English is the most widely used language everywhere. To be fluent in English, learning vocabulary is the main component that must be mastered. Because it affects four skills, namely speaking, listening, reading and writing. According to (Surmanov & Azimova 2020), an important part of becoming fluent in any

language is vocabulary. By knowing a lot of vocabulary, we will easily communicate with other people. If we have a limited vocabulary, we will not be able to learn English better, and it will not be easy for us to communicate with other people.

However, based on the interview data obtained by the researcher, there were still a few students who had vocabulary in English. This was proven when the researcher taught vocabulary using Instagram Aarons.english, the researcher showed vocabulary material from Aarons.english such as phrasal verb, verb 2 (simple past), and adverb '-ly' and many students did not know about the material. That is as expresses by one of the research respondents during the interview namely, Fira. The researcher asked her whether she previously knew about phrasal verb, adverb '-ly', and verb 2 (simple past) then she said, "No. I just knew and understood

verb 2 (simple past), phrasal verb, and adverb '-ly' when miss displayed the Instagram video from Aarons.english".

Besides, Fira there were respondents from other students who said the same thing, her initial name is Dinara. Dinara said, "Maybe for the verb 2 (simple past) I already know, but for the pharasal verb and adverb -ly, I just found out what a pharasal verb and adverb '-ly' are and how to use it in English from the Instagram account Aarons.english when miss displayed the video in class".

The conclusions that can be drawn from the two statements above are Instagram Aarons.english can enrich students' vocabulary, which before they did not know pharasal verb, verb 2, and adverb '-ly' after they learned from Aarons.english they came to know pharasal verb, verb 2, and the adverb '-ly' and how to use it in English.

3. Help student to know pronunciation

Pronunciation is an important part of learning English. Learning pronunciation is very important. In general, pronunciation can be defined as the process of giving words the true letter sound, and correct accent and syllable count. More specifically, pronunciation means a process of creating sounds and ways of pronouncing words that are appropriate and understandable to listeners. This allows listeners to hear clearly the ideas or intentions conveyed by the speaker without misinterpreting them (Roki, 2020). In the current era of globalization, many media provide content related to teaching pronunciation in English. One of them is Aarons.english Instagram social media. When the researcher conducted research using Instagram media from Aarons.english to teach vocabulary, the researcher obtained data from several students who were research

respondents who said that the Aarons.english Instagram account gave them other benefits, namely, besides the vocabulary knowledge they got, they also gain knowledge about the correct pronunciation of English words. This is as stated by Mirza, one of the students who was the research respondent. Mirza said, "Besides learning vocabulary, I can also know how to pronounce English words properly and correctly".

Apart from Mirza, there were also student respondents who said the same thing that this Aarons.english account could provide them with other benefits besides knowledge of vocabulary, his name is Abizard. He said, "I can find out how to pronounce English words correctly like how to pronounce different English words like leave, leaf, live, live, life".

From the statements made by the students it can be concluded that students get other benefits from

learning English using Aarons.english in the form that they know how to pronounce English words correctly.

4. Motivate student to learn vocabulary more

In the teaching and learning process, motivation plays a very important role. With the motivation of the learning process, it will be very interesting for students and also have a positive influence on the attitudes and willingness of students to take part in learning. In learning English, if there is no motivation to learn, it will have a negative impact. For example, in developing the ability and mastery of students' English vocabulary. Students will feel unenthusiastic about learning if they do not have the motivation in learning.

Based on interviewed with students, the Instagram account of Aarons.english can motivate students to be passionate about learning English, especially vocabulary. At the time of the

interview, many students said that they liked the style or way of delivering the material delivered by Aarons.english. The style or way of delivering the material is very fun and easy to understand by Aarons. English, which makes students excited to learn more vocabulary.

This, as stated by one student who became a research respondent, namely with the initials Heru. Heru said, "The delivery of the material provided on his Instagram account Aarons.english easy to understand and fun. So, I more enthusiastic in English especially vocabulary".

There were other research respondents who said the same thing as Hendra. His initial name is Fira. She said, "I am motivated to learn vocabulary even more enthusiastically after learning with Instagram Aarons.english".

## CONCLUSION

According to the results and discussion of research on students' perceptions of using Instagram Aarons.english as vocabulary teaching media, it can be concluded that the use of Instagram Aarons.english is very influential for students. This can be shown from the results of the data that has been obtained that the use of Instagram Aarons.english in learning vocabulary has several benefits such as students becoming interested and also motivated to continue learning vocabulary because of the way in which Aarons.english explains the material in a good and fun way, easy to understand, and in detailed. Apart from learning vocabulary, students also get other knowledge from this Aarons.english Instagram account in the form of students knowing new vocabulary such as phrasal verbs, verb 2, adverb -ly and how to pronounce English words correctly.

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