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EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE USE OF ENGLISH LEARNING CONTENT ON INSTAGRAM FOR IMPROVING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS

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a b s t r a c t

This study explores the use of Instagram as a digital platform for English language learning among students at UIN Walisongo, particularly focusing on its impact on their speaking skills. Based on the responses of 86 EFL students, the research explores Instagram usage patterns, motivations, and perceived benefits. The findings reveal a positive inclination towards English learning accounts, interactive learning, and connecting with English-speaking users. The study reveals regular engagement with speaking skills through Instagram content, highlighting its potential for language practice. While students generally view Instagram positively, challenges such as limited practice time and content relevance are acknowledged. Recommendations for improvement include more interactive tools and diverse content. The study provides valuable insights into the use of Instagram for language learning and offers practical recommendations for increasing the platform's effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

In the digital connectivity-dominated era, the language learning domain is undergoing a paradigm shift with the widespread influence of social media. In such an era, the integration of mobile devices with educational purposes will be a useful tool to provide language learning facilities through several types of tools such as YouTube, Instagram, etc. The Method of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL), (Tavassoli & Beyranvand, 2023), can support learning by offering a unique language learning experience independent of time and place. It can provide convenient, real-time, and contextualized learning opportunities for students to more easily adapt to the academic environment. (Mortazavi et al., 2021)

A popular social networking platform, Instagram offers a unique space for users to share photos and videos accompanied by captions and hashtags (Lailiyah & Setiyaningsih, 2020). This platform provides a valuable opportunity for language learners to improve their English language skills. The interesting and relatable nature of Instagram can motivate language learners, foster a sense of community, and provide access to native speakers and authentic materials (Gonulal, 2019). Therefore, Instagram is one of the tools that can be used as a medium to learn English (Rizal & Farikhah Z, 2021) because Instagram has positive effects on improving the reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills of the students, as well as enriching their vocabulary and providing enjoyable learning experiences. (Abdullah Al-Garawi, 2019)

In English language learning, speaking has become a measure of students' proficiency in the language they are learning (Azlan et al., 2019), However, there are a few problems with students speaking English, such as low self-confidence, lack of vocabulary and grammar knowledge, and ineffective teaching methods, which can limit students' ability to speak English (Nguyen Xuan Hong, Et Al., 2023). Speaking English is often a challenging aspect for students to manage. Due to their limited vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, students are often nervous and afraid of making mistakes when asked to speak English in front of the class (Deny et al., 2022). However, integrating Instagram into English language classes can be an effective way to improve students' speaking skills, especially for those learning English as a foreign language (Devana & Afifah, 2020).

Instagram Vlogs in Reels have been found to enhance learners' speaking proficiency, including students' pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, syntax, and overall use of the language (Marsakawati et al., 2022). Instagram can also aid students in improving students fluency, acquiring new vocabulary, and boosting their confidence and motivation levels. (Wulandari, 2019). According to (Wijipratiwi & Lolita, 2023) Instagram helped students in the improvement of language skills in terms of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, confidence, and fluency. The use of Instagram then allowed students to practice speaking skills and create high-quality videos. When students had mispronunciations of words and grammar errors, students would revise the mispronunciations and grammar errors (Kusmaryani et al., 2019).

Instagram provides a platform for students to connect, share, and learn. It also helps boost students' confidence and motivation to learn English. Most students agree that Instagram helps students stay in touch with friends (Abdulaziz Al Fadda, 2020). Students can view friends' posts, chats, likes, and InstaStories. Furthermore, Instagram helps students practice using the English language both directly and indirectly (Mat Ishak & Yaacob, 2022). Speaking through Instagram is more comfortable for passive students in the classroom (Mutiara et al., 2021). Feedback on students' speaking videos on Instagram is also very helpful in training students' self-confidence in facing any comments from the lecturer or others. (Utomo & Bastiar, 2020a).

This study shows that regular use of Instagram can considerably improve language proficiency, increase vocabulary, and boost self-esteem and motivation among students. A study was conducted to investigate the perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students regarding Instagram as a tool for English language acquisition. The research found that students found Instagram to be a valuable resource for improving language skills, increasing vocabulary, improving grammar, and improving pronunciation. Students also found Instagram to be a source of useful linguistic insights.

The study used a survey questionnaire method and focused on EFL students at UIN Walisongo. By exploring the experiences and perceptions of the students, the research aims to contribute to the ongoing discussion on the use of digital platforms, such as Instagram, in EFL education. The findings of this study are expected to provide insights into the use of Instagram-based learning content in enhancing English-speaking competencies among EFL students. (Utomo & Bastiar, 2020)

METHOD

This study aimed to investigate the use of Instagram as a digital platform for English language learning. The research question focused on how English learning content on Instagram can contribute to improving English speaking among students of UIN Walisongo. According to (Wilson, 2010), questionnaires have several advantages, such as providing an effective and

reliable means of gathering feedback that can be both qualitative and quantitative. Survey questionnaires can provide accurate and relevant data through thoughtful design, testing, and detailed administration (McClelland, 1987). The questionnaire was carefully crafted to prioritize clarity and avoid ambiguity. Technical terms and inappropriate language were excluded to ensure accessibility for all respondents. Leading questions, complex wording, and double-barreled questions were eliminated to avoid bias and confusion. Multiple choice sections and rating scales were constructed with distinct, mutually exclusive categories to minimize misinterpretation. Finally, each question was carefully vetted to ensure that it wouldn't provoke anger, irritation, or any perceived threat to respondents' privacy or well-being.

For this study, an online survey was created on Google Forms to answer the first research question, using a set of questionnaires consisting of 16 close-ended questions about students' attitudes towards the use of Instagram for learning to speak English. The study had 86 participants, who were EFL students. The data obtained from the questionnaire was displayed in the form of narrative text and analyzed selectively based on the research problem. The data was then transformed into frequency and percentage tables, which were strictly analyzed using qualitative description techniques. During the research process, ethical considerations were upheld. This study provides valuable insights into the use of Instagram-based learning content in improving speaking English language competence among EFL students.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

The objective of this study is to investigate the perception of EFL students regarding the use of Instagram as a tool for improving speaking skills. A Google form was distributed to gather responses from 86 EFL students of UIN Walisongo. The questionnaire consisted of 16 close-ended questions and 2 open-ended questions. The data collection scale was divided into three sections:

Section 1: Demographic information and Instagram usage habits of the participants.
Section 2: Close-ended questions about the use of Instagram for English learning and speaking skill improvement.
Section 3: Open-ended questions about participants' opinions regarding English learning content on Instagram that can help improve speaking skills.
The findings of the study are presented based on these three sections.

Section 1. Demographic information and Instagram usage habits of the participants.

In the survey, 86 participants were included, out of which 79% were female and 21% were male. All respondents confirmed that they have an active Instagram account, and 87% of them stated that they use Instagram regularly. Furthermore, 63% of participants claimed that they use Instagram as a tool for learning English, while 35% were undecided and 2% stated that they do not use Instagram to learn English. The details of Instagram usage for learning English are displayed in Figure 1,

Students' frequency of using Instagram for english learning
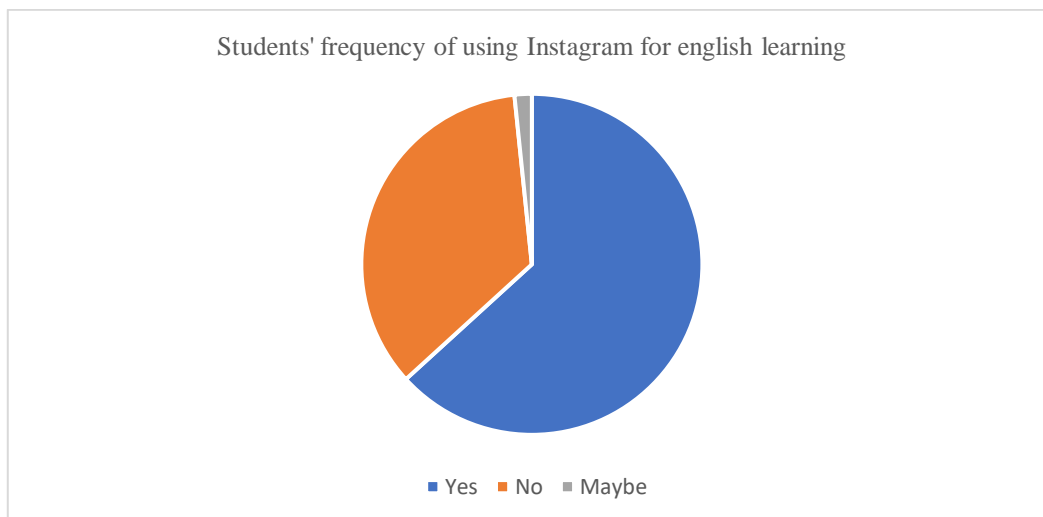
■ Yes ■ No ■ Maybe

Figure 1.

It is evident from the data that some participants have used Instagram as a medium to learn English. Therefore, issues such as overcoming the use of Instagram as a learning tool and enhancing speaking skills through knowledge of learning content can be resolved.

Section 2. Close-ended questions about the use of Instagram for English learning and speaking skill improvement.

The data obtained from the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire focused on students' attitudes and perceptions towards using Instagram for English learning activities, specifically for speaking skills. To answer the research questions, the items for each section, attitude, perception of English Learning using Instagram, and Improving English Speaking Skills on Instagram were analyzed.

Students' Frequency of Daily Access onto Instagram

■ Less than 1 year   ■ 1-2 years

■ 3.5 years   ■ More than 5 years
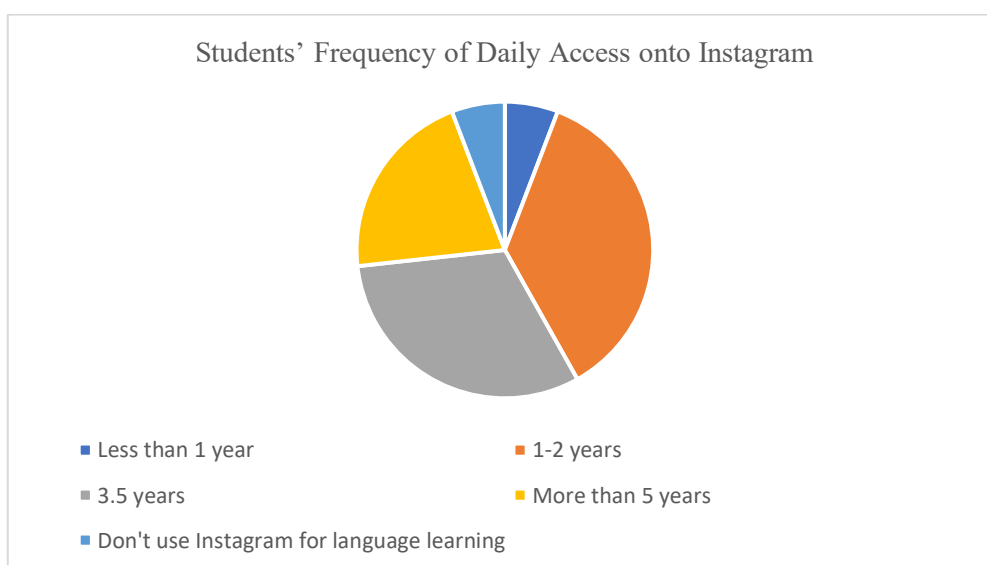
■ Don't use Instagram for language learning

Figure 2.

The analysis of students' Instagram usage patterns for language learning revealed a spectrum of engagement duration, ranging from short-term users (less than 1 year) at 6% to long-term users (more than 5 years) at 21%, with the majority of users in the 1-5 years range. Notably, 6% of respondents explicitly stated that they did not use Instagram for language learning, and the majority of students were users in the 1-2 years and 3-4 years range.
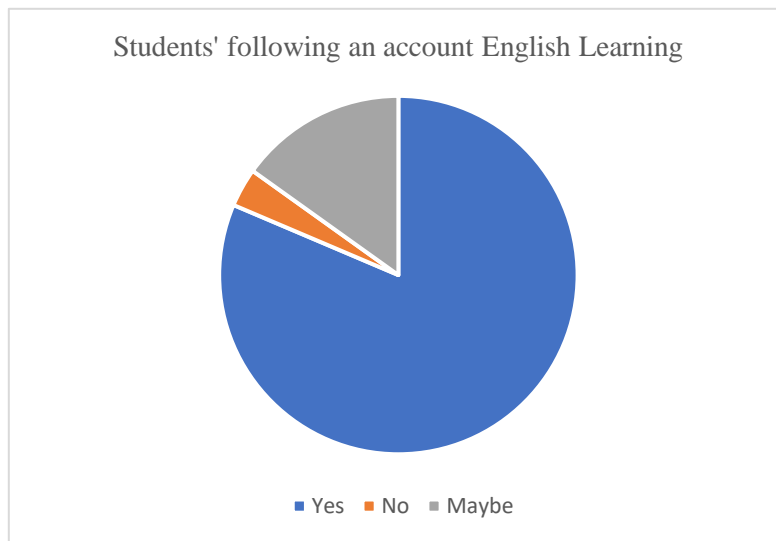

Figure 3.

Analysis of students' responses regarding following an English learning account on Instagram reveals a significant interest in such content, with a clear majority of 81% affirming that they follow such accounts. A moderate 15% express a potential interest by stating "maybe," while a comparatively small 4% state outright that they do not follow English learning accounts.
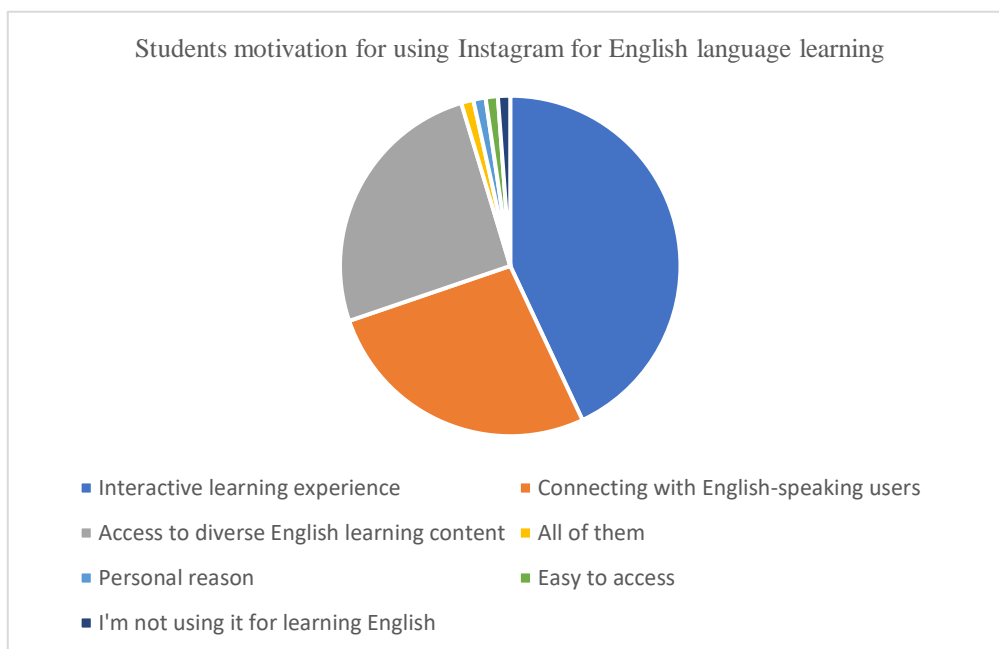

Figure 4.

Several key preferences emerge when analyzing students' motivations for using Instagram for English language learning. A significant 43% prioritize interactive learning, suggesting a strong preference for engaging, participatory educational content on the platform. Interacting with English speakers is the second highest motivation at 27%, emphasizing the social and communicative aspects of language learning. In addition, the importance of diverse and comprehensive resources is emphasized by 26% of students who express a preference for access to diverse English learning content. Only 1 percent said they used Instagram for personal reasons or non-language learning, underscoring the platform's versatility.
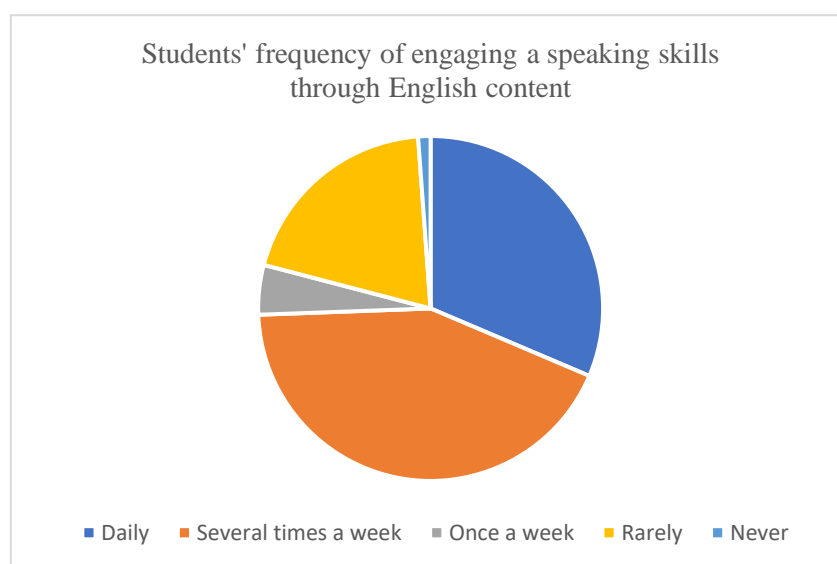

Figure 5.

The analysis of the frequency with which students engage in speaking skills through English content on Instagram shows a significant level of regularity and active participation. The majority of students, 31%, engage in speaking skills daily, indicating consistent and frequent practice. In addition, 43% participate several times a week, reflecting a high overall engagement rate. A notable 20% engage infrequently, suggesting that some students may face challenges or have less motivation for regular speaking practice. Meanwhile, 5% engage once a week, and only 1% never engage in speaking skills through English content on Instagram.

Table 1. Students' responses to rating the use of the content on Instagram to English Learning

Categories		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Students believe that the English learning content on Instagram has contributed to improving their speaking skills	1	1	1%
	2	6	7%
	3	26	30%
	4	40	47%
	5	13	15%
Students rate the quality of English learning content available on Instagram	1	1	1%
	2	3	3%
	3	24	28%
	4	40	46%
	5	18	21%
Students feel confident in their speaking abilities after engaging with the English learning content on Instagram	1	1	1%
	2	5	6%
	3	34	40%
	4	33	38%

		Frequency	Percentage
	5	13	15%
Students rate the accessibility of English language learning resources on Instagram	1	1	1%
	2	3	4%
	3	26	30%
	4	39	45%
	5	17	20%
Students likely are to continue using Instagram to improve their speaking skills in the future	1	1	1%
	2	3	4%
	3	23	27%
	4	41	48%
	5	18	30%

An analysis of student responses regarding the impact of Instagram on English learning shows an overall positive perception. 76% of students believe that Instagram has a positive influence on speaking skills. However, 15% of students were neutral, indicating the need for further exploration. Only a small fraction (1%) expressed negative perceptions, highlighting the importance of addressing specific challenges or concerns. Regarding the quality of English learning content on Instagram, 74% of students have a generally positive view. 47% rated it as 4 and 21% rated it as 5. However, 4% of students gave a neutral rating, suggesting areas for potential improvement.

Students' confidence in their speaking abilities after engaging with Instagram content is overwhelmingly positive at 78%. Then 38% of students gave the highest rating of 5. However, 15% provided a neutral rating, indicating a moderate level of confidence. Identifying reasons behind neutral responses is crucial for potential enhancements. In terms of accessibility, the majority of students 75% find Instagram highly accessible for English language learning resources. While 15% of students rated it as neutral, exploring their reasons is crucial for improvements.

Most students 69% express a positive inclination toward continuing the use of Instagram for improving speaking skills. However, 15% provided a neutral rating, emphasizing the need to understand reasons for potential improvements. Overall, students view Instagram as a valuable resource, but addressing neutral and negative responses can enhance its effectiveness.

Table 2. Students' findings are most helpful for improving their English speaking skills on Instagram.

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Language learning challenges	49	57%
Live interactive sessions with language experts	31	36%
Pronunciation and phonetics tutorials	51	59%
Conversational practice videos	56	65%
Daily life content using English	1	1%
QNA about grammar	1	1%
English quote	1	1%
Slang word	1	1%

According to feedback from students, conversational practice videos are the most helpful content for improving English speaking skills on Instagram. Most students (65%) prefer practical and interactive language use. Pronunciation and phonetics tutorials are highly valued by 59% of students, emphasizing the importance of mastering the foundational elements of

language expression. Nearly 57% of students recognize the significance of addressing specific difficulties encountered during the learning process. Live interactive sessions with language experts are appreciated by 36% of students, showcasing their interest in real-time engagement and guidance. However, only 1% of students expressed a preference for daily life content using English, Q&A about grammar, English quotes, and slang words, indicating a lower preference for these types of content. Overall, the findings suggest that diverse content that addresses various aspects of language acquisition is needed, with a strong emphasis on practical and interactive language learning materials.

Table 3. Students' challenges to improve English speaking skills on Instagram.

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Limited time for consistent practice	35	41%
Difficulty in finding appropriate content	37	43%
Inadequate interaction with native speakers	17	20%
Technical issues with the platform	17	20%
Limited content variety	26	30%
Difficulty in finding suitable learning materials	35	41%
Lack of interactive learning opportunities	32	37%
None of the above	0	0
Addiction, can't stop playing	1	1%

Based on the responses of students' experiences in improving their English speaking skills on Instagram revealed that limited time for consistent practice was the most commonly reported challenge (41%), followed by difficulty in finding appropriate content (43%), inadequate interaction with native speakers and technical issues with the platform (20%), limited content variety (30%), difficulty in finding suitable learning materials (41%), and a lack of interactive learning opportunities (37%).

Importantly, none of the respondents chose "None of the above," indicating that all students face some challenges in their efforts to improve their English speaking skills on Instagram. One student (1%) mentioned addiction, suggesting the need for support in managing time spent on language learning activities. These findings provide valuable insights into the multifaceted challenges students encounter on Instagram, underscoring the importance of addressing these issues to optimize the language learning experience on the platform.

Table 4. Students' suggestions for enhancing the English language learning experience on Instagram.

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
More interactive learning tools	58	67%
Diverse content targeting different proficiency levels	36	42%
Enhanced search and filter options for relevant content	41	48%

Some valuable insights have been revealed based on the analysis of students' feedback regarding the English language learning experience on Instagram. The most common suggestion is an urgent need for more interactive learning tools. Around 67% of students have emphasized the significance of incorporating engaging and interactive features to facilitate language learning. This suggests a strong interest in dynamic and participatory learning experiences that go beyond traditional content consumption. Furthermore, 42% of students have suggested that diverse content targeting different proficiency levels should be included to cater to learners at various stages of language proficiency. Moreover, 48% of students have expressed

the need for enhanced search and filter options for relevant content, indicating the importance of user-friendly tools to streamline the discovery of content aligned with individual learning goals. These suggestions collectively highlight the importance of customization, interactivity, and diversity in optimizing Instagram's English language learning experience.

Table 5. Students' finding of features on Instagram for the English learning journey.

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Stories and posts	61	71%
Reels	67	78%
Live sessions and webinars	17	20%
Hashtags and search features	9	11%

The analysis of students' preferences for Instagram features in their English learning journey provides valuable insights. According to the findings, the most widely used features are Stories and posts, with 71% of students utilizing them. This suggests that the static content format of Stories and posts is a popular choice for English language learners on Instagram. Reels, a short-form video feature, is also highly utilized, with 78% of students engaging with this dynamic content format. The popularity of Reels indicates a strong inclination towards short, visually appealing language learning content.

Live sessions and webinars are not as widely used as static posts and Reels but still have a notable engagement of 20%. This suggests that a substantial portion of students value real-time interactions and live learning experiences on Instagram. Finally, only 11% of students use hashtags and search features, indicating a relatively lower reliance on these tools for language learning purposes.

Based on the survey results, it can be concluded that most students prefer using static and dynamic content formats, such as Stories, posts, and Reels for their English learning journey. A smaller, yet significant portion of students engages with live sessions and webinars. The use of hashtags and search features, on the other hand, appears to be less common among the surveyed students. These findings highlight the diverse ways in which students utilize Instagram features to enhance their English learning experience, demonstrating the platform's adaptability to cater to various learning preferences.

Section 2. Open-ended questions about participants' opinions regarding English learning content on Instagram that can help improve speaking skills.

The ways English learning content on Instagram helps to improve speaking skills.

From the provided responses, it is evident that Instagram's English learning content has played a significant role in enhancing students' speaking skills through various methods. The students engage with diverse content formats such as reels, stories, live sessions, and quizzes. Pronunciation practice is a common theme, with many mentioning the value of watching videos to learn the correct way to pronounce words. The shadowing technique, where students imitate and practice content in their daily conversations, is also prevalent. Additionally, exposure to real-life conversations, especially those involving native speakers, contributes to improved pronunciation and confidence in speaking. Vocabulary expansion is another benefit, as students gain new words, idioms, and alternative expressions. The interactive nature of Instagram

content, including short quizzes and conversations, allows students to apply and reinforce their learning actively. The platform's entertainment aspect, seen in reels and trending content, keeps students motivated and engaged in the learning process. Overall, Instagram's English learning content provides a dynamic and multifaceted approach that combines education with entertainment, catering to diverse learning preferences and contributing to the continual improvement of students' speaking skills.

The recommendation of Instagram accounts or content creators for English learning

Here is a compiled list of recommended Instagram accounts and content creators for English learning based on the responses:

1. @jagobahasacom
2. @dailybahasainggris
3. @english.learning.tips
4. @nasdailyindonesiaofficial
5. @thewizardliz
6. @zelynafah
7. @the.billieenglish
8. @gurukumrd
9. @annisafitridamayanti15
10. @basicenglishcourse
11. @budihar7o
12. @aaronsenglish
13. @englishcenter
14. @englishlab.id
15. @englishbygiovana
16. @giovana.gogola
17. @mr.d.english
18. @usembassyjkt
19. @zulfazida
20. @kelasbahasa.id
21. @bangjoeofficial
22. @britishenglishidn
23. @zeline
24. @englihwithlisa
25. @simsalabimenglish
26. @thegoodquote
27. @kampunginggrislc
28. @englishacademy
29. @britishenglishidn
30. @zelyn
31. @englishwithlisa
32. @toefl.warrior
33. @jayfujiwara
34. @mike.thechameleon

The recommendations include various accounts such as language schools, individual teachers, and content creators. These accounts offer a variety of English learning materials that cover pronunciation tips, grammar lessons, vocabulary building, and discussions on different English accents. Students appreciate engaging and informative content that supports their language learning journey. The list represents the diversity of resources available on Instagram for anyone looking to improve their English language skills.

DISCUSSION

This study contributes to the existing research by aligning with the positive sentiments expressed in previous studies on Instagram's role in language learning. Consistent with (Gonulal, 2019), (Rizal & Farikhah Z, 2021), and (Abdullah Al-Garawi, 2019), the findings highlight the positive impact of the platform on various language skills, with a particular focus on improving speaking skills. The study confirms the potential of Instagram as a valuable resource for language learners, in line with previous literature that highlights the motivational and engaging nature of the platform.

The study addresses the challenges associated with speaking skills and is consistent with (Nguyen Xuan Hong, Et Al., 2023), learning how Instagram is effectively addressing common challenges, including low confidence and limited vocabulary, through features like reel and live sessions. This study highlights the potential of Instagram not only as a supplemental learning tool but also as a platform capable of addressing specific hurdles faced by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. In addition, it contributes to the ongoing discourse on mobile-assisted language learning and supports the claim made by (Tavassoli & Beyranvand, 2023). The text supports the idea of (Mortazavi et al., 2021) that mobile-assisted learning, such as

Instagram, provides a practical, immediate, and contextualized approach to language acquisition.

The study explores contextual insights and addresses the challenges faced by EFL students. This is consistent with (Devana & Afifah, 2020) identification of barriers. The literature highlights broader issues that resonate with the challenges faced by language learners, such as limited time for consistent practice, difficulty finding appropriate content, and inadequate interaction with native speakers. Teachers and researchers can use this nuanced understanding of challenges to design interventions and support mechanisms.

The study's focus on diverse and interactive content aligns with (Marsakawati et al., 2022) recognition of the significance of varied and engaging materials in language learning. The study contributes to the ongoing conversation about the optimization of digital platforms for language learning through the identification and reinforcement of these principles. By analyzing survey findings, the study identifies specific learner engagement patterns and preferences. The use of dynamic and visually engaging content, such as reels and stories, is in line with (Gonulal, 2019) emphasis on the importance of visually stimulating elements in language learning. The preference for interactive learning tools and diverse levels of content also supports (Abdullah Al-Garawi, 2019) call for personalizing and diversifying language learning materials.

The findings of this study are consistent with and contribute to the existing literature on Instagram as a tool for language learning. The positive impact on speaking skills, the challenges that were identified, and the recommendations for effective language learning on Instagram provide valuable insights for educators, researchers, and language learners. The study enriches the ongoing discourse on the role of digital platforms in language learning by both confirming the potential benefits of Instagram and adding specific contextual nuances.

CONCLUSION

The study provides comprehensive insights into the positive impact of Instagram on English language learning, particularly speaking skills. It highlights the importance of interactive and diverse content, identifies student preferences, and addresses challenges that require attention. Students' recommendations provide valuable guidance on how to improve the platform's effectiveness in facilitating language acquisition. As Instagram continues to evolve, incorporating these insights can contribute to the platform's role as a valuable tool in English language learning.

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