

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of background of the study, the formulation of research problem, research objective, research hypothesis, significance of the research, scope and limitation of the research, and definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Study

English has evolved as a global language that holds immense significance in areas such as education, commerce, science and technology, and foreign affairs. In the present era of globalization, English proficiency has become a necessity rather than a choice, particularly for students at the university level. Of all the fundamental elements of language knowledge, vocabulary learning stands out as a prime factor, vocabulary is the basis of language ability, and students whose lexical knowledge is restricted most likely to struggle to understand information as well as communicate proficiently.¹

With the swift growth of digital technology, ways of learning English have dramatically changed. Young learners, especially university students, no longer depend only on classrooms or textbooks; instead, they interact directly with the language in many social media sites. Statistics from We Are Social & Meltwater show that Indonesia has around 139

¹ Imaai Masaki, "Learning Vocabulary in Another Language," *BMC Public Health* 5, no. 1 (2001): 1–8, <https://ejournal.poltektegal.ac.id/index.php/siklus/article/view/298%0Ahttp://repositorio.unan.edu.ni/2986/1/5624.pdf%0Ahttp://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jana.2015.10.005%0Ahttp://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/12/58%0Ahttp://ovidsp.ovid.com/ovidweb.cgi?T=JS&P>.

million social media users now, representing 50.3% of its total population.² Of these sites, Instagram remains very popular, with approximately 99.9 million active users, primarily between the ages 18–24, consisting of university students and young adults. This indicates Instagram's vast potential as a relaxed and engaging means for English language acquisition.

As a visual content platform, Instagram provides opportunities to creators to develop learning content, i.e., English learning content. Among such popular creators is Aaron O'Brien, who is an influencer who posts English learning content periodically in the form of short clips, grammar explanations, and vocabulary tips on a daily basis. His contextual, concise, and informative content provides easy learning opportunities for learners to learn English, particularly vocabulary, compared to traditional methodologies.

Past studies have also discussed the benefits of social media for English learning. For instance, Prastyo, Zulkarnaen, & Farhana found that students taught vocabulary through Instagram captions achieved significantly better mastery compared to those taught via conventional methods.¹ However, most of these studies have examined social media in general, without isolating the contribution of a single content provider.³ Moreover, the relationship between students' frequency of usage of English

² Likha Sari Anggreni et al., "Ikatan Sarjana Komunikasi Indonesia" 8, no. 1 (2023): 85–100.

³ Yanuar Dwi Prastyo, Zulkarnaen Zulkarnaen, and Siti Farhana, "The Effect of Using Instagram Caption on Students' Vocabulary Mastery At Twelfth Grade of Sma Al-Azhar 3 Bandar Lampung.," *Journal of English Educational Study (JEES)* 5, no. 2 (2022): 122–31, <https://doi.org/10.31932/jees.v5i2.1600>.

learning content on Instagram and their vocabulary accomplishment is yet to be well-studied, particularly if focus is put on a single content supplier like Aaron O'Brien.⁴

A majority of the past studies were founded on perceptions or qualitative data, while quantitative correlational studies that actually measure the relationship between the frequency of watching some Instagram material and vocabulary mastery are scarce. This implies a clear research gap that must be addressed with the implementation of measurable variables such as "the frequency of watching Aaron O'Brien's Instagram material" as the independent variable and "students' vocabulary capacity" as the dependent variable.

Another problem of learning vocabulary is learner motivation and engagement. The majority of learners find traditional learning of vocabulary to be dull and unengaging. As there is more use of short, informative, and easily accessible Instagram videos, learners can be more engaged in learning vocabulary in interesting and interactive ways. But the actual utility of such exposure must be empirically established by systematic quantitative research. In the context of English Education students in UIN SATU Tulungagung, vocabulary mastery is essential since they are going to be language practitioners and teachers in the future. Nevertheless, most of the students are still constrained in both theoretical and practical vocabulary.

⁴ Racha Hafiez Sururi and Nurul Hasanah Fajaria, "Learning English Is Fun with Aarons English's Instagram Account," *Instagram Account. ELITE Journal* 5, no. 2 (2023): 275–82.

Considering the massive usage of Instagram among university students, analyzing the relationship between watching Aaron O'Brien's educational videos and their vocabulary ability becomes more relevant and significant.

Therefore, this study aims to fill the existing research gap by empirically examining the correlation between the frequency of watching Aaron O'Brien's Instagram content and students' English vocabulary ability at UIN SATU Tulungagung. This research is distinct in that it focuses on one single content creator, employs a quantitative correlational method, and is carried out on English Education students in the Indonesian tertiary education context, which is as yet unexplored.

The primary focus of the present study is to examine whether there is a significant correlation between the frequency of watching Instagram content videos by Aaron O'Brien on Instagram by the English Education Department students of UIN SATU Tulungagung and their English vocabulary mastery. Given the insights provided by background of the study and the considerations mentioned above, the researcher is motivated to investigate the relationship between the frequency of exposure to Aaron's English Instagram content and student English vocabulary ability. This leads to the formulation of a research study untitled:

"The Correlation Between the Frequency of Watching Aaron O'Brien Instagram Content and English Vocabulary Ability among English Education Department Student at UIN SATU Tulungagung"

B. Research Question

Based on the background of the study, which 3 the formulated research problem:

1. Is there a correlation between the frequency of watching Aaron O'Brien's Instagram content and the English vocabulary ability of English Education Department Student at UIN SATU Tulungagung?

C. Objective of the Research

Based on the research question above, of the study is to find out whether there is a correlation between the frequency of watching Aaron O'Brien's educational Instagram content and the English vocabulary ability of students in the English Education Department at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung.

D. Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis is tentative answer of variable in which the truth must be tested, based on the previous statement. To get the answer of the question, the reearcher should propose alternative hypothesis (H_1) and null hypothesis (H_0). Those are explained as below:

1. H_a (alternative hypothesis)

There is a significant correlation between the frequency of watching Aaron O'Brien's Instagram content and the English vocabulary mastery of English Education Department students at UIN SATU Tulungagung.

2. H₀ (null hypothesis)

There is no significant correlation between the frequency of watching Aaron O'Brien's Instagram content and the English vocabulary mastery of English Education Department students at UIN SATU Tulungagung.

E. Significance of The Research

This study is expected to contribute to knowing the student's frequency of watching Aaron English Instagram content and the improvement of English vocabulary skills. Therefore, the significant of the research such as:

1. This research explores followers Aaron O'Brien instgram account and the potential of social media, particularly Instagram, as a tool for English vocabulary learning.
2. The findings of this research can inform educational strategies in educational institutions.
3. This research can provide insights into how students can use this media for independent language learning.
4. The results of this research can help in developing more engaging English language teaching methods.

F. Scope and Limitation of The Research

This study focuses on the relationship between the frequency of watching Aaron O'Brien's Instagram content and the English vocabulary

ability of English Department students at UIN Satu Tulungagung. The study will involve students in the English Department at UIN Satu Tulungagung during the academic year 2024-2025. Data will be collected through a combination of surveys, where students will report the frequency of their engagement with Aaron O'Brien's Instagram content, and vocabulary tests to assess their language proficiency. The study will specifically focus on the vocabulary related content shared by Aaron O'Brien on his Instagram, including but not limited to vocabulary tips, pronunciation exercises, and interactive lessons.

The research will be limited to the English Student Department at UIN Satu Tulungagung. Therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to other student populations, such as those from different universities or departments. The frequency of engagement with Aaron O'Brien's Instagram content will be measured through self-reported data from the participants. This may introduce biases or inaccuracies, as students might overestimate or underestimate their actual social media usage. While the study focuses on social media usage and vocabulary ability, other factors influencing students' English vocabulary development. Given the limited timeframe for data collection, this study may not be able to capture long term effects of social media engagement on vocabulary acquisition or account for fluctuations in students' engagement with social media over time.

G. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding of the concept used in this study, it is necessary for the researcher to provide some definition of the terms used in this research. Those are:

1) Correlation

Correlation is a statistical measure that expresses the extent to which two variables are linearly related. It indicates both the strength and direction of the relationship between variables.

2) Frequency

The rate at which something occurs or is repeated over a particular period or in a given sample.

3) Instagram Content

Visual and textual material posted on the social media platform Instagram, which may include photos, videos, stories, reels, and captions.

4) English Vocabulary Ability

The extent of a person's knowledge of English words, including their meanings, usage, and application in various contexts.

5) Aaron English

Based on the context, this seems to be a specific Instagram content creator who focuses on English language content.