

# Investigating Saudi EFL University Students' Perceptions of Instagram Reels to Improve Speaking Skills

Lujain Amin Alghanmi

English Language Institute, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Abeer Ahmed Madini

English Language Institute, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Received: April 5, 2025    Accepted: April 26, 2025    Published: April 28, 2025

doi:10.5296/ijele.v13i1.22824    URL: <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijele.v13i1.22824>

## Abstract

This study aimed to investigate Saudi English as a foreign language (EFL) university students' perceptions of using Instagram Reels to enhance their speaking skills, with a particular focus on fluency and pronunciation. It employed a quantitative method using a questionnaire completed by 101 female students enrolled in the English Language Institute at King Abdulaziz University. The Findings revealed that students emphasized the significant impact of Instagram Reels on their ability to speak English, as the application provides an informal learning tool to support repeated practice, builds confidence, and exposes them to authentic language use. Additionally, the participants showed a significantly positive reaction toward the platform's ability to improve speaking skills, with specific reference to its efficacy in improving fluency, pronunciation, and exposing learners to different spoken English content. Based on these findings, this study offers practical implications for language educators and curriculum designers to integrate engaging digital content to enhance teaching practices. Finally, it makes recommendations for future research, particularly on using social media platforms like Instagram Reels in language learning.

**Keywords:** Instagram Reels, speaking skills, fluency, pronunciation, Saudi EFL learners

## 1. Introduction

The transformation of language learning has witnessed an exponential growth in the world today, offering EFL students access to authentic language content, e.g., live dialogues and instant messages. Instagram is one of these platforms which has gained its popularity especially among young people due to its user-friendly interface that focuses primarily on sharing photo and audiovisual materials rather than texts (Kukulska-Hulme & Viberg, 2017). In 2020, Instagram introduced a new 30–60 seconds video feature called Reels. These videos can be exploited for different purposes, socially, educationally, linguistically and so forth.

In Saudi Arabia, English language enjoys a superior status as it is presented at all educational levels. Throughout these academic years, students are exposed to international textbooks which focus on all language skills and components. However, many Saudi EFL students still struggle with speaking fluently and find it difficult to hold a simple conversation in English due to the limited exposure to authentic language and lack of real-life communication opportunities (Alsiyat, 2021). Therefore, Instagram Reels seems promising for such EFL students to improve their speaking ability by listening to fluent native speakers, imitating their pronunciation, and practice speaking in a low-pressure setting through content creation and interaction.

### *1.1 Statement of the Research Problem*

Speaking remains a crucial language skill which enables students to communicate effectively in real-world settings, yet Saudi EFL students face significant challenges, especially fluency and pronunciation due to minimal exposure to authentic English outside classrooms (Alrabai, 2016; Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). This deficiency of real-world practice hinders their ability to develop fluency and achieve clear pronunciation, which negatively affecting their academic and professional development. Several studies have revealed that Saudi EFL students encounter numerous challenges when speaking English. These include, the students' low motivation, limited use of English in ordinary life activities, their lack of self-confidence, besides conventional methods of language (Alsiyat, 2020). In addition, Alrasheedi (2020) indicated other factors which could negatively affect Saudi students' speaking fluency such as the fear of making errors, negative feedback from peers, and fear of social interaction with their peers and teachers.

Instagram Reels offer students a low-stakes environment wherein they can interact with authentic material and practice repeatedly (Kress 2003). Despite its potential, there are limited research in the filed on whether Instagram Reels is an effective tool for developing speaking skills, particularly fluency and pronunciation among Saudi EFL students. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by exploring how Saudi EFL university students perceive Instagram Reels in improving fluency and pronunciation.

### *1.2 Research Aims and Questions*

The primary aim of the current study is to explore the overall perceptions of Saudi EFL university students toward Instagram Reels, including their general attitudes toward the platform and its potential as a tool for language learning. Additionally, it aims to investigate their perceptions of Instagram Reels as an effective tool for improving their speaking skills,

specifically focusing on fluency and pronunciation. To fulfill these objectives, this study attempted to answer the following research questions:

RQ1. What is the overall perception of Saudi EFL university students toward Instagram Reels?

RQ2. What perceptions do Saudi EFL university students have toward Instagram Reels as a tool for enhancing their speaking skills, particularly in terms of fluency and pronunciation?

### *1.3 Significance of the Study*

The significance of the study is scientific and practical. It scientifically contributes by focusing on Instagram Reels in Saudi EFL speaking skills, particularly to improve fluency and pronunciation for previously understudied learners. Given this gap about both tool usage and specific ability development, invaluable information is provided based on student perception and experiences in the Saudi Arabian context. Finally, the results yielded from the current research are highly beneficial for both policymakers to assist them in designing appropriate curricula, materials, training programs, and so forth. Besides, understanding the students' feelings and perspectives toward Instagram Reels can help language teachers decide whether to accept it or reject it in their speaking lesson plans.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Speaking Skill: Concept and Components*

Speaking is a complex ability that involves real-time production of meaning in spoken discourse. It is a combination of different abilities in language, cognition, and sociocultural aspects among others that help in expressing thoughts, ideas or feelings effectively within any communication setting (Burns & Siegel, 2018). Among the six primary components of speaking, namely accuracy, fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and discourse management, fluency and pronunciation are central to effective communication and achieving academic and professional success. While fluency is the ability to carry on speaking without noticeable efforts of thinking or pausing (Segalowitz, 2010), pronunciation entails articulating sounds, features of stress and intonation to make the utterances understandable to listeners (Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011). Many Saudi EFL learners struggle with fluency and pronunciation due to limited opportunities for authentic communication and high levels of language anxiety (Alrabai, 2014; Alshahrani & Saud, 2024). Traditional classroom settings in Saudi Arabia prioritize reading and writing over speaking, restricting students' exposure to real-life spoken English (Abdalgane & Idris, 2020). These factors contribute to difficulties in maintaining speech continuity, reducing hesitation, and achieving clear articulation. Instagram Reels, with their engaging, short-form video format, provide an opportunity for students to listen to and imitate authentic speech (Handayani, 2016; Alotaibi, 2023).

### *2.2 Social Media in EFL Learning*

Social media has revolutionized education by creating dynamic, engaging, and interactive learning environments. Platforms like Instagram have been increasingly used to supplement

traditional language instruction, particularly in improving fluency and pronunciation. Research by Ansari and Khan (2020) suggested that social media enhances collaborative learning and motivation among students, which are essential for developing speaking skills.

Instagram, in particular, offers features that allow for real-time interaction, making it a valuable tool for language learners. Its visual and interactive nature supports pronunciation practice through imitation of native speakers and fluency development through regular, low-pressure speaking activities (Rohaizat, Ang, & Yunus, 2021). However, limited research explores its impact on fluency and pronunciation specifically, highlighting a gap that this study seeks to address.

### 2.2.1 The Role of Instagram Reels in Speaking Development

Instagram Reels were introduced in August 2020; they are brief videos of 30–60 seconds that users may create utilizing diverse creativity tools such as music, effects, and voice overlays. This tool has been increasingly recognized for its potential to support language learning, particularly the improvement of speaking skills (Tabassum, 2022). Both language students and educators find this platform appealing because of its emphasis on image-based contents and opportunity for interaction (Utomo & Bastiar, 2020).

Various studies have investigated how Instagram Reels could be utilized in language learning, particularly to improve students' speaking proficiency. For EFL students, Instagram Reels, with their engaging, short-form video format, provide an opportunity for students to listen to and imitate authentic speech (Alotaibi, 2023). Exposure to native and proficient speakers can enhance students' pronunciation, helping them develop a sense of natural rhythm, stress patterns, and connected speech (Reed & Levis, 2015). Additionally, the repetitive nature of short videos encourages students to practice and refine their fluency, reducing hesitation over time. Moreover, Karim and Sudiro (2022) revealed that Indonesian EFL students found Instagram Reels attractive and effective and improve fluency, pronunciation and creativity in English speaking skills. Besides, they promote learner autonomy, self-expression and collaboration.

### 2.3 Previous Studies on Instagram Reels for Speaking Skills

Several studies have explored the use of Instagram Reels in language learning, particularly in the development of speaking fluency and pronunciation. Alotaibi (2023) analyzed language learning strategies of Saudi EFL students in which students would use Instagram to improve their vocabulary and pronunciation. The study's findings showed that Instagram significantly promoted vocabulary acquisition and accurate pronunciation among students. Similarly, Firmansyah and Widiastuty (2024), conducted a study on college students to explore their attitude towards using Instagram to improve their English Key Pronunciation Feature Skills. The results showed that the students found Instagram as an original and efficient instrument to improve pronunciation. The emphasis was on the dynamic aspect of Instagram for English language learning, particularly its helpful role in phonetics.

To conclude, these studies reflect learners' favorable attitudes toward using Instagram Reels for language practice. More importantly, they show how EFL learners perceive these tools as

supporting autonomy, reducing speaking anxiety, and promoting sustained engagement in oral communication

## *2.4 Theoretical Framework*

This study is guided by two complementary theoretical frameworks: Connectivism and Learner Autonomy, both of which support the use of digital platforms like Instagram Reels in language learning.

### *2.4.1 Connectivism Theory*

Connectivism theory focuses on learning through digital networks and connections (Siemens, 2005). It shifts the focus from teacher-led instruction to a learner-driven approach, where knowledge is constructed through engagement with digital resources and social connections. When it is particularly applicable to Instagram Reels, it could be very helpful in fostering the English communication skills of Saudi students and engaging them with authentic texts and cultures across the world. In fact, this type of language learning is not taught in a class, but it is picked up. This being the case, learners' speaking ability within the target language is mostly influenced by a variety of speakers, accents and language forms and therefore, helps them to appreciate the language and improve their communication skills in different language activities or situations (Reed & Levis, 2015). Finally, Instagram Reels provides an opportunity for the learners to practice speaking on their own without the standard pattern of teaching controlled by the teacher (Al Arif, 2019). In other words, it is the learners who can study the language and so the power is in their hands. Instagram Reels also allow ready access to a rich pool of oral language exposure resources, such as various audio and other materials for speaking practices that they can use to improve their fluency and pronunciation (Couros, 2010).

### *2.4.2 Learner Autonomy*

The concept of Learner Autonomy means that learners can manage their studying by deciding on the aims to pursue, choosing appropriate strategies, keeping a check on their progress as well as determining the outcomes (Benson, 2011; Holec, 1981). Concerning the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) process by individuals, Little (1991) argues autonomy is all about assuming responsibility over their language growth by getting involved with self-motivated, purposeful actions. The Second Language Acquisition (SLA) process is initiated and maintained by the individuals themselves without supervision from other parties like teachers or parents.

Different studies within Saudi EFL settings have investigated how independent students shape their speaking abilities or competencies. Alrabai (2017) and Ansari and Khan (2020) discovered that fostering autonomy among learners through goal setting, self-assessment and reflective practices resulted in marked advancements regarding Saudi EFL learners' speaking competence levels and their self-esteem. Finally, Instagram Reels has created new possibilities for developing learner autonomy in language learning. The reels allow learners to access real language data, independent practice opportunities and chances for interaction and collaboration with their peers as well as native speakers (Godwin-Jones, 2019). According to Ushioda (2011), an autonomous learner is likely to look for real opportunities to speak the language, engage

themselves in planned learning exercises alone and continue attempting to talk despite any difficulties.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1 Research Design

A quantitative approach was utilized to collect and analyze data from a structured questionnaire. This design allowed for the measurement of students' perceptions on a large scale, providing a broad overview of their perceptions and attitudes toward Instagram Reels.

#### 3.2 Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at King Abdulaziz University (KAU), a public university in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The research targeted Saudi EFL students enrolled in the preparatory year program at English Language Institute (ELI). For the sake of data collection, 101 Saudi female EFL students participated in the study by completing the perception questionnaire. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 26 years old. A cluster random sampling strategy was used to ensure balanced representation across different proficiency levels.

#### 3.3 Instruments

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire, adapted from past research on Instagram and language learning (Pratiwi, 2023). The questionnaire is divided into two sections: the first covers demographic information, while the second is a 30-item perception questionnaire comprising three subscales. The scales and the count of items on each scale are described in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Description of each Scale in the Questionnaire

Scale	Description	Items
General Use and Engagement with Instagram Reels	Explores students' frequency of use, engagement, and general attitudes toward Instagram Reels.	10
Perceptions of Instagram Reels as a Learning Tool for Speaking Skills	Investigates students' views on the role of Instagram Reels in enhancing their speaking skills, with a focus on fluency and pronunciation.	10
Effectiveness and Learning Outcomes	Assesses students' perceived improvements in fluency, pronunciation, and overall speaking proficiency due to Instagram Reels.	10

All the items are distributed on a 5-Likert scale, ranging from 'Strongly agree' to 'Strongly Disagree'. It was conducted in Arabic to ensure the participants' understanding of each item.



### 3.4 Procedures

The current study employed Google Forms for the sake of data collection. The participants were invited to take part through university WhatsApp groups and email distribution. The study took four weeks and went through an actual administration and a thorough review to ensure the accuracy of the procedure (Sue & Ritter, 2019). To assess the instrument's reliability and estimate completion time, a pilot study was conducted involving five female university students, who were representative of the target population. The quantitative data analysis was carried out using SPSS version 28, with the computation of descriptive statistics conducted to summarize and interpret the participants' perceptions of Instagram Reels and its role in speaking skills development.

### 3.5 Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire was sent via email to three experts in the TESOL field (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) to review the items of the questionnaire to determine content validity. Based on the experts' feedback, the items were modified to improve clarity, relevance, and coherence. As for reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to determine reliability. It was 0.969 indicating that all the scales were reliable (See Table 2).

**Table 2.** The Reliability

<i>Reliability Statistics</i>	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
0.969	30

### 3.6 Ethical Considerations

All data collection procedures were carefully considered, and ethical approval was obtained from the ELI. Participation in the survey was voluntary. To ensure anonymity, no names or personal identifiers were collected. Additionally, the participants received information about the study's aims and the academic use of data

## 4. Results

This part presents an in-depth analysis of the questionnaire results addressing the research questions.

### 4.1 Results of the First Research Question

***RQ1: What is the overall perception of Saudi EFL university students toward Instagram Reels?***

Descriptive statistics were employed to assess the participants' general attitude towards the use and usage of Instagram reels. The results that are evident in table 3 show a high agreement

among participants as expressed through an average general mean score 4.54 (SD = 0.73). This suggests a largely favorable acceptance of the participants that Instagram Reels are an entertaining as well as an informative source for English learners. Additionally, the results show that the most significant statement was the one where participants watch Instagram Reels very frequently (M = 4.61, SD = 0.75), followed by that of watching Reels with English-language content frequently (M = 4.57, SD = 0.68) and reacting to English-language Reels by leaving comments or messages (M = 4.57, SD = 0.73). Participants also found Reels to be inspiring for practicing English speaking (M = 4.54, SD = 0.66) and helpful in facilitating the improvement of listening skills using subtitles or captions (M = 4.53, SD = 0.73). Participants also noted that Reels encouraged them to repeat or reproduce sentences for practicing pronunciation (M = 4.52, SD = 0.72) and presented a fun way of finding English content (M = 4.52, SD = 0.76). Also, the results show that participants checked pronunciation and speech routines (M = 4.50, SD = 0.72) and believed they learned new words and phrases through this form (M = 4.49, SD = 0.72). Lastly, creating Instagram Reels in English was found to be a very good speaking practice (M = 4.48, SD = 0.84). These findings indicate that Instagram Reels are a valuable resource for learning languages like English as they offer a fun and interactive platform.

Table 3. General Use and Engagement with Instagram Reels

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	SD
1. frequently watch Instagram Reels.	73.3	18.8	4	4	0	4.61	0.75
2. I regularly watch Instagram Reels featuring English-language content.	67.3	23.8	7.9	1	0	4.57	0.68
3. Instagram Reels provide an engaging way to explore English-language content.	67.3	18.8	12.9	1	0	4.52	0.76
4. Watching Instagram Reels motivates me to practice speaking English.	62.4	30.7	5.9	1	0	4.54	0.66
5. I pay attention to pronunciation and speech patterns in Instagram Reels.	62.4	26.7	9.9	1	0	4.50	0.72



6. I use subtitles or captions on Instagram Reels to improve my listening and understanding of spoken English.	64.4	64.4	26.7	7.9	0	1	4.53
7. I have learned new words and phrases from Instagram Reels.	61.4	61.4	25.7	12.9	0	0	4.49
8. I sometimes repeat or imitate sentences from Instagram Reels to improve my pronunciation.	64.4	64.4	24.8	9.9	1	0	4.52
9. I interact with English-language Instagram Reels by commenting or messaging others.	68.3	68.3	22.8	7.9	0	1	4.57
10. I have created Instagram Reels in English to practice speaking.	64.4	64.4	23.8	7.9	3	1	4.48

#### 4.2 Results of the Second Research Question

##### ***RQ1: What perceptions do Saudi EFL university students have toward Instagram Reels as a tool for enhancing their speaking skills, particularly in terms of fluency and pronunciation?***

The results presented in table 4 indicate a high level of agreement among participants that Instagram Reels is a beneficial tool for improving their speaking skills, with an overall mean of 4.58 (SD = 0.68). The highest-rated statement was that watching Instagram Reels helps users speak more fluently in English (M = 4.67, SD = 0.56). Similarly, respondents found Reels effective in improving pronunciation (M = 4.63, SD = 0.65) and exposing them to authentic spoken English (M = 4.63, SD = 0.61). The short-video format was seen as useful for maintaining focus on speaking skills (M = 4.57, SD = 0.68), while watching Reels increased confidence in speaking English (M = 4.57, SD = 0.72) and encouraged more frequent practice (M = 4.57, SD = 0.66). Additionally, participants believed that using Instagram Reels reduced their fear of making mistakes (M = 4.53, SD = 0.74), provided a stress-free learning environment (M = 4.56, SD = 0.68), and made learning more enjoyable (M = 4.50, SD = 0.75).

Finally, Instagram Reels were also perceived as helpful in expressing thoughts more clearly in English ( $M = 4.53$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ). These findings reveal that Instagram Reels are widely regarded as an effective and enjoyable tool for enhancing English-speaking skills.

Table 4. Perceptions of Instagram Reels for Enhancing Speaking Skills

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	SD
1. Watching Instagram Reels helps me speak more fluently in English.	71.3	25.7	2	1	0	4.67	0.56
2. Instagram Reels help me improve my pronunciation.	70.3	24.8	4	0	1	4.63	0.65
3. Instagram Reels expose me to authentic spoken English.	69.3	25.7	4	1	0	4.63	0.61
4. The short-video format of Instagram Reels makes it easier to focus on improving speaking skills.	67.3	23.8	7.9	1	0	4.57	0.68
5. Watching Instagram Reels has increased my confidence in speaking English.	69.3	20.8	7.9	2	0	4.57	0.72
6. Using Instagram Reels for speaking practice reduces my fear of making mistakes.	66.3	22.8	8.9	2	0	4.53	0.74
7. Instagram Reels provide a stress-free environment for practicing English speaking.	66.3	24.8	7.9	1	0	4.56	0.68

8. I find learning through Instagram Reels more enjoyable than traditional speaking practice.	65.3	18.8	18.5	0	0	4.50	0.75
9. Instagram Reels help me express my thoughts more clearly in English.	66.3	20.8	12.8	0	0	4.53	0.71
10. Instagram Reels encourage me to speak English more frequently.	67.3	22.8	9.9	0	0	4.57	0.66

The results presented in table 5 indicate a strong positive perception with an overall mean of 4.60 and a standard deviation of 0.66. The highest-rated statement was that Instagram Reels provide valuable content that enhances speaking skills ( $M = 4.71$ ,  $SD = 0.554$ ), followed by the belief that Reels significantly improve English-speaking skills ( $M = 4.66$ ,  $SD = 0.652$ ) and are more effective for practicing spoken English than traditional exercises ( $M = 4.64$ ,  $SD = 0.558$ ). Additionally, respondents found Reels useful for improving fluency and pronunciation ( $M = 4.61$ ,  $SD = 0.648$ ) and exposing them to spoken English they wouldn't typically encounter in a classroom ( $M = 4.62$ ,  $SD = 0.598$ ). The fast-paced nature of Reels was also perceived as beneficial for both listening and speaking abilities ( $M = 4.54$ ,  $SD = 0.700$ ), and they were seen as an interactive and self-directed learning tool ( $M = 4.54$ ,  $SD = 0.700$ ). Furthermore, participants agreed that Instagram Reels help them learn informal and conversational English ( $M = 4.57$ ,  $SD = 0.712$ ) and recognize and imitate different accents ( $M = 4.52$ ,  $SD = 0.782$ ). Overall, these findings indicate that Instagram Reels are widely regarded as an engaging and effective tool for enhancing English-speaking skills.

Table 5. Effectiveness of Instagram Reels in Speaking Skill Development

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	SD
1. Instagram Reels offer valuable content that enhances speaking skills.	76.2	18.8	5	0	0	4.71	0.55

2. Instagram Reels are more effective for practicing spoken English than traditional classroom exercises.	68.3	27.7	4	0	0	4.64	0.55
3. Instagram Reels expose me to spoken English that I wouldn't typically encounter in a classroom.	68.3	25.7	5.9	0	0	4.62	0.59
4. The fast-paced speech in Instagram Reels improves both my listening and speaking abilities.	66.3	21.8	11.9	0	0	4.54	0.70
5. I believe Instagram Reels are a useful tool for improving fluency and pronunciation.	70.3	20.8	8.9	0	0	4.61	0.64
6. Instagram Reels help me learn informal and conversational English.	69.3	19.8	9.9	1	0	4.57	0.71
7. Instagram Reels make learning English more interactive and self-directed.	66.3	21.8	11.9	0	0	4.54	0.70
8. Instagram Reels help me recognize and imitate different English accents.	68.3	17.8	11.9	2	0	4.52	0.78
9. Instagram Reels are an important part of my English-learning routine.	63.4	27.7	6.9	2	0	4.52	0.71

1. Instagram Reels offer valuable content that enhances speaking skills.	75.2	16.8	6.9	1	0	4.66	0.65
--	------	------	-----	---	---	------	------

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Overall Perception of Instagram Reels (RQ1)

It is the aim of this study to explore Saudi EFL university students' attitudes toward the roles of Instagram Reels in enhancing their speaking skills, i.e., fluency and pronunciation, as well as the pros and cons of utilizing it in practicing speaking. The findings of this study show that Instagram Reels are commonly used as a tool for entertainment and learning by English language learners. The participants were highly active, watching and reading English most of the time, making use of subtitles most frequently and following oral content, attributing it to possibly improving pronunciation and fluency. Also, the findings prove that the Instagram Reels work very effectively to build listening comprehension using subtitles, speaking practice, and pronunciation models. These findings are in accordance with a previous study by Firmansyah and Widiastuty (2024), which theorizes the pedagogical and interactive value of Instagram Reels. Both studies emphasize how the interactive features on Instagram allow learners to listen to live spoken materials, giving them an excellent opportunity to practice fluency through imitation and repetition of native speakers' utterances.

High levels of learner participation reported by the participants also substantiate observations by Handayani (2016) and Alotaibi (2023) that Instagram Reels offer learners a low-stakes environment wherein they can interact with real-spoken material and exercise repeatedly. Also, the enhanced listening comprehension, as testified in this research, testifies to the strength of the visual and interactive quality of Instagram Reels, which supports fluency and facilitates improvement in pronunciation through exposure to various models of pronunciation, as explicated by Reed and Levis (2015). Therefore, the findings of this study support the application of social media in general and Instagram Reels, in particular as an effective tool for enhancing English-speaking capacity. The Instagram Reels also provide language learners a colorful and dynamic platform to improve their English skills.

### 5.2 Perceptions of Instagram Reels for Enhancing Speaking Skills (RQ2)

Regarding the second research question, the findings show that Instagram Reels was also considered a very useful platform for the improvement of English-speaking ability. The participants almost unconditionally agreed that the platform helps in the learning of fluency, pronunciation, through listening to actual spoken English. The short video was particularly welcomed for maintaining attention, gaining confidence, and providing room for more frequent practice. Apart from that, the results reveal that Instagram Reels can reduce learning anxiety, provide a flawless learning setting and make learning languages more experiential. The results indicate that interactivity and visuals of Reels make language learning more interesting and

enhance language speaking ability. Consistent with previous studies, the current research affirms the concept that Instagram Reels is a highly effective way of building English-speaking proficiency. In line with Handayani (2016) Instagram provides learners with the opportunity to produce their own content in the target language, which aligns with participants' conceptualization of Reels as an active speaking practice channel. The study also concurs with Alotaibi (2023) and Utomo & Bastiar (2020), where they emphasized the need for exposure to spoken language through production and practice in content, in areas like fluency and pronunciation. The findings indicate that the participants showed a high positive response towards the platform's ability to develop the speaking skill, specifically citing its effectiveness in increasing fluency, pronunciation, and exposing students to different spoken English materials. The dynamic and interactive nature of Reels was enjoyed most by the respondents, who replied that it was better suited for English spoken word practice compared to the traditional method. Besides, the results show that Instagram Reels was an informal platform for self-learning where a person can learn spontaneous and informal English and identify various accents. In summary, it was established that Instagram Reels is a good and entertaining source of information for learners who are interested in learning English-speaking skills. Like previous studies, in this study too, it was observed that Instagram Reels is a good tool to improve English-speaking skills. Abdalgane & Idris, (2020) suggested that the use of Instagram to learn the English language created a positive and engaging learning environment, which is supportive of the significant positive feedback of participants in this study. Participants particularly valued the platform's dynamic and interactive nature, which is similar to Aloraini's assertion that Instagram fosters authenticity and community building, thus contributing to increased motivation and more favorable attitudes towards language learning.

## 6. Conclusion

The findings of the current study validate the tremendous impact of Instagram Reels on Saudi EFL university students' English-speaking skills, particularly fluency and pronunciation. The interactivity of the tool allows learners to engage with the English material in an entertaining manner, thus improving learning. Students demonstrated significant interest in Reels, engaging actively with the content through viewing, listening, and mimicking native speakers. Studies have proven that increased exposure to authentic English speech with added subtitles and multiple models of pronunciation results in improved listening abilities and pronunciation accuracy. Furthermore, Instagram Reels enable learners to learn new vocabulary, thus solidifying its effectiveness as a learning platform instead of simply being a source of entertainment. Moreover, the findings confirm that Instagram Reels is a low-stakes environment for English as a foreign language learners, hence empowering them to be confident while expressing themselves in English. The short video mode was also greatly appreciated in maintaining focus and enabling plenty of practice, leading to vast improvement in terms of fluency.

### 6.1 Theoretical Implications

This research's findings confirm the Connectivism Theory, where language learning is achieved

through accessing digital content and social networks. The site further facilitates Learner Autonomy in that it allows students to select content based on their competence level and interest, control the speed of learning, and practice without supervision. Replay, imitation, and interaction with Reels reflect how technology frees learners to be accountable for language development outside of classroom constraints. Thus, Instagram Reels is a combination of conventional schooling and self-directed learning, respecting the pillars of both Learner Autonomy and Connectivism in digital language education.

### *6.2 Limitations and Future Research*

Although the current study reveals the significant contribution of Instagram Reels in enhancing Saudi EFL university students' English-speaking abilities, including fluency, pronunciation, it also pinpoints some limitations. One limitation is the focus on a single university sample, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader population of Saudi EFL students. Additionally, the variability of the content's quality, distractions based on off-topic postings, and the lack of formally constructed learning materials can influence its contribution as an extremely systematic platform for language learning. Given the quantitative approach employed, the research did not delve deeply into individual learner experiences or contextual factors that might have affected the outcomes. Future research could explore larger, more diverse samples across multiple universities, which would enhance the external validity of the findings. Additionally, studies could address how to standardize the quality of content on Instagram Reels and align it more closely with pedagogical objectives. Research can also explore the long-term impact of Instagram Reels on language acquisition, as well as its effectiveness at different levels of proficiency and cultural contexts, to further incorporate it into formal language learning programs.

### *6.3 Recommendations*

Based on the findings, this study recommends that teachers use Instagram Reels as another medium in EFL classes to aid learners' speaking skills, particularly in fluency and pronunciation. Teachers should encourage learners' utilization of the platform for interactive learning through engagement with authentic English materials since it offers a low-anxiety, independent setting for practice. In addition, schools can help students overcome the distractions and concerns of content quality by teaching them how to access relevant and structured information. It also recommends that the platform be utilized in addition to traditional means, as it bridges the gap between classroom instruction and everyday use of language, providing students with greater opportunity for practice and exposure to various accents and modes of speaking.



## References

- Abdalgane, M., & Idris, M. (2020). Challenges of pronunciation to EFL learners in spoken English. *Multicultural Education*, 6, 193–203. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4408549>
- Al Arif, T. Z. Z. (2019). The use of social media for English language learning: An exploratory study of EFL university students. *Metathesis: Journal of English Language Literature and Teaching*, 3(2), 224–233. <https://doi.org/10.31002/metathesis.v3i2.1921>
- Alotaibi, M. S. (2023). Exploring the impact of using Instagram to develop Saudi EFL learners' vocabulary. *Journal Corner of Education, Linguistics, and Literature*, 2(4), 280–294. <https://doi.org/10.54012/jcell.v2i4.141>
- Alrabai, F. (2014). A model of foreign language anxiety in the Saudi EFL context. *English Language Teaching*, 7(7), 82–101. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v7n7p82>
- Alrabai, F. (2016). Factors underlying low achievement of Saudi EFL learners. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 6(3), 21–37. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v6n3p21>
- Alrabai, F. (2017). Exploring the unknown: The autonomy of Saudi EFL learners. *English Language Teaching*, 10(5), 222–233. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n5p222>
- Alrasheedi, S. (2020). Investigation of factors influencing speaking performance of Saudi EFL learners. *Arab World English Journal*, 11(4), 66–77. <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol11no4.5>
- Alrashidi, O., & Phan, H. (2015). Education context and English teaching and learning in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: An overview. *English Language Teaching*, 8(5), 33–44. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v8n5p33>
- Alshahrani, A., & Saud, W. (2024). The effectiveness of implementing task-based language teaching in Saudi secondary schools to improve students' oral fluency. *Journal of World Englishes and Educational Practices*, 6(3), 76–91. <https://doi.org/10.32996/jweep.2024.6.3.8>
- Alsiyat, F. M. (2021). Speaking challenges of Saudi EFL learners. *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research*, 4(12), 2565–2571. <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijsshr/v4-i12-30>
- Ansari, J. A. N., & Khan, N. A. (2020). Exploring the role of social media in collaborative learning: The new domain of learning. *Smart Learning Environments*, 7(9). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-020-00118-7>
- Ansari, J.A.N., Khan, N.A. Exploring the role of social media in collaborative learning the new domain of learning. *Smart Learn. Environ.* 7, 9 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-020-00118-7>
- Benson, P. (2011). *Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315833767>
- Burns, A., & Siegel, J. (Eds.). (2018). *International perspectives on teaching the four skills in*

ELT: Listening, speaking, reading, writing. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-63444-9>

Couros, A. (2010). Developing personal learning networks for open and social learning. In G. Veletsianos (Ed.), *Emerging technologies in distance education* (pp. 109-128). Athabasca University Press. <https://doi.org/10.15215/aupress/9781897425763.007>

Firmansyah, M. W., & Widiastuty, H. (2024). Instagram as an innovative medium for enhancing English pronunciation skills: An analysis of college student perceptions. *International Seminar*, 6, 391-399. Retrieved from <https://conference.unita.ac.id/index.php/conference/article/view/213>

Foote, J. A., Holtby, A. K., & Derwing, T. M. (2011). Survey of the teaching of pronunciation in adult ESL programs in Canada, 2010. *TESL Canada Journal*, 29(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v29i1.1086>

Godwin-Jones, R. (2019). Riding the digital wilds: Learner autonomy and informal language learning. *Language Learning & Technology*, 23(1), 8-25. <https://doi.org/10.125/44667>

Handayani, F. (2016). Instagram as a teaching tool? Really? Proceedings of the fourth international seminar on English language and teaching (ISELT-4), 320–327.

Holec, H. (1981). *Autonomy and foreign language learning*. Pergamon Press. Published for and on behalf of the Council of Europe.

Karim, S. A., & Sudiro, S. (2022). Enhancing EFL learners' speaking skills through the audio-lingual method. *Journey: Journal of English Language and Pedagogy*, 5(1), 30–38. <https://doi.org/10.33503/journey.v5i1.1818>

Kress, G. (2003). *Literacy in the new media age*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203299234>

Kukulska-Hulme, A., & Viberg, O. (2017). Mobile collaborative language learning: State of the art. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 48(2), 26–47. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12580>

Little, D. (1991). Learner autonomy 1: Definitions, issues and problems. Authentik.

Pratiwi, P. Z. B. (2023). Students' perception in the use of Instagram for academic speaking skill learning. *RETAIN (Research on English Language Teaching in Indonesia)*, 11(3), 61–70. ISSN 2356-2617.

Reed, M., & Levis, J. M. (2015). *The handbook of English pronunciation*. John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118346952>

Rohaizat, N., Ang, F., & Yunus, M. (2021). Instagram interactive face filter to motivate speaking skill among Year 5 ESL learners in rural Sabah: Pupils' perception. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 11(7). <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v11-i7/10401>

Segalowitz, N. (2010). *Cognitive bases of second language fluency*. Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203851357>

Siemens, G. (2005). Connectivism: A learning theory for the digital age. *International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning*, 2(1), 3-10.

Sue, V. M., & Ritter, L. A. (2012). *Conducting online surveys*. SAGE Publications, Inc.,  
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506335186>

Tabassum, A. (2022). The use of Instagram to enhance EFL learners' speaking skills. *KOTESOL Proceedings 2022*, 315.

Ushioda, E. (2011). Language learning motivation, self and identity: Current theoretical perspectives. *The Modern Language Journal*, 95(s1), 199–210.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2010.538701>

Utomo, A., & Bastiar, I. (2020). The use of Instagram to improve English literature students' self-confidence in mastering speaking skill. *Jurnal Pendidikan Edutama*, 7(2), 81–92.  
<https://doi.org/10.30734/jpe.v7i2>

### **Acknowledgments**

Not Applicable.

### **Funding**

Not Applicable.

### **Competing interests**

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

### **Informed consent**

Obtained.

### **Ethics approval**

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Macrothink Institute.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

### **Provenance and peer review**

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

### **Data availability statement**

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

**Data sharing statement**

No additional data are available.

**Open access**

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

**Copyrights**

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.