

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

In today's technology-driven world, information is readily accessible regardless of time or place, while mobile devices and applications facilitate easier interaction and connectivity among individuals. The rise of Social Networking Sites (SNS), a term that emerged from the earlier Web 2.0 phenomenon and social media trends, has powerfully changed how people communicate and learn. According to Aghalar (2025), SNS enables users to create their own personal accounts and join communities where they can quickly interact with others to share information, personal data, and images. Beyond entertainment, SNS are also used for educational activities outside formal settings, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter (X), YouTube, Telegram. These platforms support user-generated content and peer-to-peer communication, as well as exposure to native speakers, allowing users to engage in authentic language use in a more relaxed and self-directed manner (Zainuddin & Yunus, 2022).

In Indonesia, Instagram remains one of the most widely used platforms, with 84.8%, or 173.59 million monthly active users. This was supported by the country's highest rates of social media usage, with 68.9% of its population using social media daily (GlobalStatistics, 2025). Although originally designed as a photo-sharing application, with its visually appealing design, Instagram today is often used as a mode of communication between users, offering interactive features, such as Posts, Stories, Comments, Reels, Live, Broadcast Channels, Direct Messages (DMs), Group Chat, Notes, Instants, Explore Page, etc. Meanwhile, the platform also serves as a space for people to build communities in specific fields, exchange information, and engage in activities that can benefit from enhancing self-knowledge (Pujiati et al., 2019).

One kind of online activity that supports knowledge construction is language learning. With Instagram's large user population, educational content can

spread rapidly and reach users with just a single click on a post, including English content that serves as a supplementary tool for the subject (Lestari & German, 2021). Users can gain new knowledge of English topics e.g., grammar, vocabulary, idioms, discourses, pronunciation lessons, etc. These learning accounts, institutional and non-institutional; content creators, micro-celebrity teachers, enable users to follow and access their posts regularly (Şimşek, 2023; Fauziah et al., 2023). Their creative potential in providing more concise and easy-to-comprehend materials in the form of microlessons helps attract users' attention and support their engagement and interaction in further discussion, beyond the limitations of a classroom or textbook (Cappelli & Simi, 2024).

For instance, the comments section on Instagram serves as a discussion space for users to exchange ideas, ask questions, share opinions, clarify understanding, or obtain feedback on English-related materials. Users can leave comments below the content they are viewing to initiate a statement. Then, other users can add their comments in response to the main comment, generating threaded comments that involve interaction and deliberation about language between users. This interaction supports a collective knowledge-sharing environment that enhances users' overall experience belonging to a virtual community formed by people with similar goals and interests (Teng et al., 2022; Erarslan, 2019). Moreover, it creates collaborative learning in an online context that alternate ways for users in learning English outside formal settings.

Considering the importance of collaborative English learning and how it creates opportunities for discussion in online network environments, specifically using the comment feature offered by Instagram, it is necessary to study the interactions that occur between users, and their deliberations about language analyzed through Language-Related Episodes. Users interact in distinct ways, which can be classified according to their types from a coding scheme for types of interaction in live-chat comments, adapted from *tweets*, proposed by Luo & Clifton (2017): self-reflection, elaboration, alternative proposal, internalization, support, disagreement, self-expression, and socialization. Additionally, the deliberations where users discuss and negotiate about language forms can be analyzed through

classifications for Language-Related Episodes (LRE), developed by Lasito & Storch (2013): lexis-based LRE, grammar-based LRE, and pronunciation-based LRE, and their resolution types: correctly resolved, incorrectly resolved, and unresolved to assess the achievement of knowledge construction between users when discussing English-related problems.

Previous studies on interactions and deliberations between users in online social media context is still scarce since the majority of studies focused on Language-Related Episodes is held in classroom-based context, synchronous or asynchronous communication between students, under teachers' supervision or observed classroom activities. It appears in very few studies where LREs are analyzed on social media platforms beyond Instagram, or computer-mediated communication, specifically related to activities that record users' exchanges and communications when dealing with language tasks.

Firstly, Andújar-Vaca & Cruz-Martínez (2017) investigated how voice-based mobile communication on WhatsApp improves the oral skills of second language learners of Spanish B1-level English. The study used a mixed-methods design applied speaking assessments before and after the course as well as chat analyses, to evaluate language-related episodes (LREs) and their triggers. The results showed the experimental group outperformed the control group with significant improvements in students' speaking skills, particularly in vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. The most frequent interaction pattern found was negotiation due to phonetic triggers, while requests for recasts and elicitations accounted for the occurrence of negative feedback. The study concluded that discussions mediated by mobile devices promote meaningful negotiation of meaning and self-evaluation, enhancing learners' motivation and self-confidence, as well as their ability to produce a second-language.

On the other hand, Peeters (2019) explored how Belgian first-year EFL learners use Facebook to negotiate learning support for academic purposes. Two groups of learners' interactions were coded using a taxonomy of peer-interaction categories, including LRE postings with a social network analysis. The results showed learners frequently interacted when discussing cognitive tasks, while

organizational communications regarding deadlines and suggestions also prompted more conversations. However, there was a lack of deeper engagement in learning, as learners did not demonstrate goal-setting or reflection. Meanwhile, socio-affective messages often appeared as responses that maintained interactions rather than as discussion initiators. These interaction patterns highlighted the importance of learners scaffolding each other's cognitive and organizational development when discussing tasks, as well as socio-affective interactions to build rapport among learners. The study concluded the lack of metacognitive engagement indicates the importance of activities that stimulate self-awareness.

Lastly, Mardian & Nafissi (2022) utilized Skype to examine how synchronous computer-mediated corrective feedback affected the grammatical knowledge of Iranian EFL learners. The study employed mixed-methods design, applying pre- and post-tests of grammatical knowledge, written chat logs that were coded based on categories of LRE, and open-ended interviews. Findings showed the experimental group outperformed the control group by improved grammatical accuracy as a result of self-regulation encouraged by a shift from explicit to implicit corrective feedback, and increased motivation for learners to communicate in the online chat settings. Moreover, the analysis showed a lower incidence of grammatical errors among learners, as well as less intervention by instructors, allowing them to learn through self-correction and peer correction. This study suggested that engaging synchronous text-chat settings that help learners reduce anxiety in learning can encourage more focused attention on grammatical forms, as well as continuous and negotiated feedback. It is recommended to provide effective technology-mediated scaffolding training for teachers to guide learners in developing their grammatical skills.

These previous studies demonstrated how interactions in written and recorded communications were analyzed through Language-Related Episodes (LRE) and their communicative functions or usefulness to improve English-related skills and knowledge. In contrast with the current study, Andújar-Vaca & Cruz-Martínez (2017) analyzed different types and triggers of LRE, which recorded oral communication of students for the chat analyses, and it was solely intended to

improve learners' speaking performances, instead of general construction of English-related skills. Meanwhile, Peeters (2019) employed a social network analysis that identified the communicative function and categorization of LRE for learners' postings on academic challenges, not specifically elaborating on the process of deliberation or communication of language-related tasks. Finally, Mardian & Nafissi (2022) studied the role of corrective feedback for increasing grammatical knowledge through analysis of LRE categories from online chat features and interviews with learners who received the treatment, but not specified on the analysis of each interaction.

Therefore, none of the aforementioned studies come from an informal setting in context, where users outside of their educational tasks perform interactions and deliberations from English educational contents they access in social media platforms, like Instagram. The extent to which this informality can also support informal learning, especially through collaborative spaces such as the comments section, remains insufficiently explored in current research.

This study aims to fill the gap by examining how users' interactions and deliberations facilitate the construction of English knowledge. It systematically analyzes the types of interactions that take place among users and explores their deliberations about language, in which each resolution is subsequently assessed to determine their successful construction of knowledge. In addition, the patterns of interactions that arise from each comment thread including several types of interactions are learned by the researcher in explaining how they align with the resolution it produces. By utilizing comments as data drawn from six English educational accounts: @englishnesia.id, @kampunginggrislc, @jagobahasacom, @aarons.english, @annisavivi15, and @zelynafah, this study aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of how learning is negotiated and co-constructed within socially mediated, asynchronous text-based interactions, thereby offering insight into the pedagogical potential of informal online collaborative spaces.

1.2. Research Questions

1. What types of users' interactions are found in the comment section of Instagram English educational contents?
2. How do users construct knowledge from the comment section of Instagram English educational contents?
 - a. How do users deliberate Instagram English educational contents?
 - b. How much deliberation about language leads to users' knowledge construction?

1.3. Purpose of the Study

This study aims to explore how Instagram users construct knowledge of English topics through interacting and deliberating about language with other users in the comments section of English educational contents. The researcher examines three things in phases: (1) the types of interaction built between users, (2) the deliberation of language in English educational contents, and (3) the knowledge construction assessed through the resolution of deliberation and pattern of interaction. Therefore, the researcher analyzes comments that are classified according to their most relevant type of interaction and examines how users deliberate about language in an online environment to acquire knowledge of English topics and develop a better understanding of the language.

1.4. Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the types of interaction found between users in the comments section and how they construct knowledge through deliberation of language from English educational contents. Overall, this study analyzes the informal digital learning of English topics, such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, idioms, and discourse in the comment sections of six English educational accounts targeted towards Indonesian users, as follows: @englishnesia.id, @kampunginggrislc, @jagobahasacom, @aarons.english, @annisavivi15, and @zelynafah.

The data sources for this study are limited to Instagram comments, whereby users are active Instagram users who comment to ask questions, provide or confirm answers, and share opinions or feedback related to English-related contents. This study does not cover all English educational accounts available on the platform. In fact, the six accounts were selected based on their suitability to the specified criteria for accounts teaching English, with diverse educational contents, such as vocabulary, grammar, idioms, expressions, discourse, or pronunciation lessons, which are sufficient to generate interaction from users aiming to learn in the comments section. The comment threads were also selected between the time period from January 2025 to June 2026.

1.5. Significance of the Study

Theoretically, this study can provide insights into the existing literature on informal language learning in digital contexts, particularly through social platforms like Instagram. By utilizing comment sections as learning spaces for interaction and deliberation, it shows how users can develop knowledge by attending to the language presented in English educational content. This study builds on related theories and frameworks to identify a learning phenomenon that remains underexplored, through the analysis of Language-Related Episodes in an online dialogic environment.

Practically, for learners, this study can serve as their guide to the implementation of informal English learning, as a complement from formal education through social platforms like Instagram. By utilizing the potential of comment sections that facilitate interaction and exchange of information through deliberation, users can enhance their collaborative and cognitive thinking skills as they engage with English-related content to construct knowledge.

For educators, this study can serve as their strategy to incorporate English educational contents as supplementary teaching tools in the classroom by providing learners with access to English knowledge. Then, for educational content creators, to leverage the comment feature as an interactive space for learning English in an online environment, and to continually improve their methods in delivering

engaging English educational content, which better attract learners to actively participate in discussions on relevant topics.

1.6. State of the Arts

This study contributes to the development of research in the area of informal English language learning, specifically on the utilization of the comment section in social media platforms as a collaborative learning space for constructing knowledge of English topics outside of formal settings. Previously conducted research analyzed learners' interactions in formal classroom-based context through Language-Related Episodes (LRE), and computer-mediated communication in synchronous or asynchronous mode, remaining underexplored for social media context, only found in limited studies (Andújar-Vaca & Cruz-Martínez, 2017; Peeters, 2019; and Mardian & Nafissi, 2022).

This attracted the researcher to further explore a learning event in an informal collaborative environment, based on users' interactions and deliberations in the comment section of Instagram English educational contents, which resolution of LRE is assessed to determine whether it contributes to their successful knowledge construction, and exhibited patterns of interactions. This study generates novelty in recent literature regarding analyses between interaction types and LRE that can be combined to learn deliberations in the Instagram comments section as space for asynchronous interaction to negotiate and develop English knowledge collaboratively with other users or teacher-creators.