EXPLORING CONTENT CREATORS' LANGUAGE LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND MULTILINGUAL PRACTICES TO ENGAGE AUDIENCE IN THE INSTAGRAM

A THESIS

By

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Language and Arts Education Department

FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY

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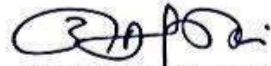
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I, undersigned,

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Certify that this thesis entitled "Exploring Content Creators' Language Learning Experiences and Multilingual Practices to Engage Audience in the Instagram" is my own work and did not have any plagiarism or inappropriate quotation against the ethics and rules commended by the Ministry of Education of Republic Indonesia Number 17, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education. Therefore, I deserve to face court if I am found to have plagiarized this work.

Palembang, March 2025

Undersigned,

Fitri Rahmadona Azzahro

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DEDICATION AND MOTTO

This thesis is dedicated to:

My beloved family, especially my mother and father whose always pray for, unwavering support, encouragement, and love have been my greatest strength throughout this journey. I am so thankful to have them. To my sisters, Ismi Hanna Meutia Putri and Feby Fadilah Putri, thank you for always supporting and entertaining me. Also, big thanks to myself that never giving up in finishing this thesis.

Motto:

Life is choice, take it or leave it.

Finish what you have started.

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Palembang, March 2025
The Undersigned,

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORING CONTENT CREATORS' LANGUAGE LEARNING
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ABSTRACT

The rise of digital technology has transformed communication and content creation, particularly on social media platforms like Instagram. This study explores how content creators use multilingual and multimodal elements to engage audiences, the challenges they face and strategies they use, and how their English learning experiences influence their multilingual content creation practices on Instagram. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with four Instagram content creators and an analysis of their digital artifacts. Findings reveal that content creators develop their English proficiency through formal education, self-learning via media exposure, and interactive digital communication. English is employed strategically to reach broader audiences, with creators combining it with their native language through code-switching. Multimodal elements, such as text, images, and audio, play a crucial role in enhancing engagement, enabling creators to convey messages effectively. Despite these advantages, challenges persist. Non-native English-speaking creators face difficulties in grammar accuracy, pronunciation, and vocabulary selection. To overcome these, they rely on tools like online dictionaries, AIs, and audience feedback. The study also highlights that content creation fosters confidence in English use and enhances digital literacy skills. By examining the intersection of language learning, multimodal communication, and audience engagement, this research contributes to the understanding of English as a global language in digital spaces.
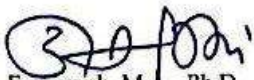
Keywords: *multimodal, multilingual, content creator, Instagram, audience engagement*

A thesis by an English Education Study Program Student, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

The rapid evolution of digital technology has changed the way people communicate, share information, and create content. In particular, social media platforms have emerged as dynamic spaces where users can explore various aspects of language in authentic contexts. One of the most popular social media platforms today is Instagram, which allows its users to share various types of content in multimodal formats, such as text, images, video and audio in order to convey the messages effectively (Grewal et al., 2022). Instagram has evolved into more than just a photo-sharing platform, it has become a digital environment where individuals and communities interact with each other, share information and create new communication trends. This shift has led to the increasing prominence of digital literacy, which involves not only the ability to consume digital content but also to produce and critically evaluate it (Falloon, 2020). Especially in an era where information is consumed at an unprecedented rate, the global connectivity provided by social media platforms has made them essential tools for communication and self-expression (Reza, 2024). In this context, many content creators utilize Instagram to build audiences, share insights, and even develop their language skills.

Content creators often use more than one language in their posts as a strategy to reach a wider audience and increase engagement. The use of multiple languages in a single piece of content not only serves as a communication tool but also reflects the creator's own linguistic and cultural identity. Phenomena such as code-switching is often seen in digital content, where creators intentionally mix their languages to create a closer connection with their followers. English is one of the languages that many people use on social media and content creators often combine it with their native language since English serves as a global medium for reaching diverse audiences

(Khramchenko, 2023). For example, content creators from Indonesia mix their native language to English in their posts to attract both local and global audiences.

One important aspect of creating engaging content on social media is the use of multimodal elements. Multimodality refers to the combination of different modes of communication, such as text, images, audio, and video, to convey messages more effectively and engage the audience. The integration of multiple modes of communication enables creators to amplify their messages, making them more engaging, relatable, and impactful (Isti'anah et al., 2021). On Instagram, content creators utilize various forms of multimodality to increase engagement, for example by combining engaging text in captions, aesthetically pleasing images or illustrations, and short interactive videos. This combination allows the audience to understand the message more easily, increases visual appeal, and strengthens the communication experience.

However, creating multilingual and multimodal content on social media is not without its challenges. Digital content creators must navigate a highly competitive and ever-changing digital landscape. To maintain relevance and engagement, they are often required to produce content that resonates with a diverse and global audience. This task demands not only technical proficiency in using various digital tools but also cultural sensitivity and an understanding of audience preferences. For non-native English speakers, additional challenges arise, such as ensuring linguistic accuracy, fluency, and cultural appropriateness while communicating effectively in a language that may not be their first (Ouanhlee, 2023). They must understand how to choose the most appropriate words, language styles, and communication strategies to make their content more engaging and easily understood by audiences from different language backgrounds.

Given the central role of digital content creators in shaping online discourse, understanding their practices and challenges is critical. This study explores how creators use multimodal elements to enhance communication and engagement on social media platforms, investigates the specific challenges they face and the strategies they employ when using English as the primary language for creating multimodal content

and also explores content creators' learning experiences relation to communication in the real world situation. By addressing these problems, this research aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on digital literacy practices, particularly in the context of multimodality and global Englishes. In doing so, it seeks to provide valuable insights into the intersection of language, technology, and creativity in the digital age.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Based on the background above, the problems are formulated as follows:

1. How do content creators use multilingual and multimodal elements to enhance communication and engagement in English on Instagram?

2. What are the challenges and strategies of using English as the language for creating content on Instagram?

3. How do English learning experiences influence their multilingual content creation practices on Instagram?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze how digital content creators, use multilingual and various multimodal elements to communicate and engage effectively on Instagram.

2. To identify the challenges and strategies of using English as the language for creating content on Instagram.

3. To know whether English learning experiences their content creation practice.

1.4 The Significant of the Study

This research is expected to provide information and knowledge of the researcher, educators and learners, content creators, and social media platforms.

1. For Researchers

This study adds to the growing body of literature on multimodality and digital literacy, offering new perspectives on the intersection of language, technology, and communication.

2. For Educators and Learners

The insights from this study can inform the development of digital literacy curricula, particularly those emphasizing multimodality and English as a global

language, equipping learners with the skills needed for effective content creation in the digital age.

3. For Content Creators

By uncovering successful strategies and common challenges, the study can provide practical guidance for creators aiming to improve their multimodal communication skills and optimize their use of English in digital content.

4. For Social Media Platforms

Understanding the challenges and strategies faced by creators can inform platform developers in designing tools and features that support effective multimodal communication and inclusivity for diverse linguistic and cultural users.

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