

@Englishfess_ Auto-Base Twitter Account as an English Learning Community

AUTHORS INFO

David Geba Abi Anandi
Sanata Dharma University
davidgebaabianandi@gmail.com
+6287834282801

ARTICLE INFO

e-ISSN: 2502-6909
p-ISSN: 2502-9207
Vol. 8, No. 1, June 2023
URL: <http://doi.org/10.31327/jee.v8i1.1865>

© 2023 JEE All rights reserved

Abstract

As a form of ICT (Information and Communication Technology), the use of social media in language learning has become a trend. Twitter, as one of the social media platforms, can be used as a learning tool and a place to connect people with the same interest. @englishfess_ is an autobase Twitter account which enables its followers to send tweets on the account so that others can see and reply them. This study uses qualitative approach and applied document analysis and interview in collecting the data. The document analysis were gathered from the tweets produced on 27-29 of October 2022, while the interview session was done with 4 followers of the account. This article also includes an analysis of the contents shared through the account. Furthermore, this study also investigates the advantages and disadvantages of the account to learn English. The findings show that the majority of tweets found are translation and asking about grammar. The informants perceive that the account provides the followers with a safe environment to learn English and various types of contents.

Keywords: @englishfess_, auto-base Twitter account

A. Introduction

The use of social media in language learning is a form of ICT (Information and Communication Technology). ICT refers to computer-based technologies and internet-based technologies, used for creating, storing, displaying, and sharing information (Arif, 2019). Social media also provide bountiful opportunities for students to connect, collaborate, and interact with other people (Taskiran, Gumuoglu, and Aydin, 2018). Social media is an online platform which many people use to build social networks or social relationships with other people who have the same background, activities, career interests, or real-world relationships (Nazmunissa and Rachman, 2021). In education, social media can be used to practice English (Anwas et al., 2020). It has a great influence on students' learning motivation (Sopian et al., 2022).

As one of the biggest social media platforms, Twitter is a multi-platform Social Networking Site (SNS) which is available to users from a range of devices, whether they are mobile or not. It allows users to publish short messages made up of 280 characters in real-time messaging format (Malik, Schrum, Johri, 2019). Twitter is used not only to communicate, but also to learn.

One of the accounts that exist to learn English is @englishfess_. Recently, there is a type of Twitter account called auto-base. An auto-base account is an account providing a place to look for, get information about, and discussions about topics with people with the same background and interests. Adelia & Christin (2022). In creating a discussion or information, a Twitter user must send confess mentions sent anonymously through the direct message feature which then will be sent by the auto-base bot. @englishfess_ is a kind of auto-base account which allows the followers to send a tweet on the account by using certain codes through the direct message feature. This feature, thus, allows the followers to make their tweets visible to the other followers so that the discussions of certain topics can start by simply replying to the tweets. When this study was conducted, there were 725.000 followers of @englishfess_ Twitter account. Moreover, it was found that approximately, there are tens and even hundreds of daily auto-tweets made on the account. Through this account, Twitter users can ask anything related to English, send jokes, or discuss problems related to English (Aljasysyarin, 2022).

Learning English through social media is not new. A study conducted by Thariq (2020) shows that social media can be used as alternative source to learn during the COVID-19 pandemic. A study conducted by Ansari and Khan (2020) also reveals that the collaborative use of social media had a significant impact on interactivity with peers, teachers, and online knowledge-sharing behavior.

There has been a number of research conducted regarding the use of Twitter in English Language Learning. A study conducted by Rosell-Aguilar (2020) investigates whether or not Twitter helps the effectiveness of Twitter as a language learning tool. The study involves 370 language learners who use Twitter to give their opinions about Twitter as a language learning tool. Another study focuses on describing students' perceptions of the importance of Twitter as an English learning medium (Sudiran, 2019). The researcher invited 100 students to give their perceptions towards the importance of Twitter as an English learning media. A thesis written by Aljasysyarin (2022) focuses on investigating the benefits and problems faced by senior high school students when using an auto-base Twitter account and SLR are incorporated as a tool to develop their writing skills. The study was conducted by interviewing the participants and analyzing the documents.

In fact, there have not been many researchers focusing on the use of Twitter in general, or in particular on the English learning autobase account in English learning. The purpose of this study, thus was exploring the contents of the @englishfess_ autobase account and measuring the followers' motivation to learn English after following the @englishfess_ Twitter autobase account. This study can be used by educators who want to utilize such autobase learning system for students. Furthermore, this study can also be beneficial for students who like learning English through social media. In addition, this study can also be a reference for those who are interested in investigating language learning platforms.

Based on the background of this study, there are some research questions formulated in this study, which are:

1. What contents does the @englishfess_ Twitter auto-base account provide?
2. To what extent does the @englishfess_ Twitter auto-base account satisfy the followers?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of @englishfess_ Twitter auto-base account in learning English?

B. Methodology

The method used in this research is a basic qualitative study. Basic qualitative studies or interpretative studies provide rich descriptive accounts targeted in understanding a phenomenon, a process, or a particular point of view from the perspective of the people involved in the event (Ary et al., 2012). The researcher chose the method because the method is suitable with the purpose of this study since this study aimed at exploring the contents shared through the account and measuring the followers' motivation to learn English after following the account.

The researcher employed document analysis and interviews to gather the data. The document analysis was done by collecting all the tweets produced in 3 days through @englishfess_ Twitter autobase account. The interview was done not only to get deeper data, but also to get informants' thoughts and feelings when accessing the account. The interview questions were produced based on the concept of ARCS (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction) motivational design proposed by Keller (1987). The theory is used to investigate whether or not the students are satisfied with the learning process in the @englishfess_ Twitter autobase account. Each of the criteria is covered through the interview session. The questions were delivered to 4 followers of @englishfess_ Twitter auto-base account. Before the interview sessions, the researcher conducted a pilot test. According to Creswell (2012), a pilot test is a procedure in which researchers make changes in instruments based on feedback from a small number of participants. The pilot testing was done with one follower of @englishfess_ to get feedback and improvements in the interview sessions. The interview sessions were done through the zoom application.

After collecting them, the researcher categorized each of the tweets into specific categorizations. Furthermore, the categorized tweets are further categorized into more specific types, namely asking for tips, sharing tips, sharing English-related content, etc. For the interview data, the researcher recorded the whole interview session. After that, the researcher transcribed the interview results.

C. Findings and Discussion

1. The Contents Of @englishfess_ Twitter Auto-base Account

Based on the observation, the researcher found that the contents provided in @englishfess_ Twitter autobase account are very varied. It is because the contents are produced by the followers of the account. The findings show that there are 93 tweets produced on September 27, 108 tweets on September 28, and 64 tweets produced on September 29. Hence, in total, there are 262 tweets produced within 3 days. Below is the categorization table of the types of contents shared on the account:

Table 1. @englishfess Tweet Types Categorizations

No.	Types of Contents	Number
1.	Translation	76 (29%)
2.	Checking writings	28 (10.68%)
3.	Sharing English related contents	21 (8.01%)
4.	Asking English related contents	29 (11.6%)
5.	Vocabulary related questions	23 (8.77%)
6.	Asking grammar	52 (19.84%)
7.	Sharing other than English	5 (1.90%)
8.	Asking learning references	9 (3.43%)
9.	Sharing learning references	4 (1.52%)
10.	Asking learning tips	9 (3.43%)

11.	Sharing learning tips	2 (0.76%)
12.	Asking pronunciation	4 (1.52%)
Total		262 (100%)

Based on the table above, it can be seen that from the last 200 tweets produced in the account, the contents of the tweets are dominated by translation (29%), followed by asking about grammar (19.84%). Below are examples of each type of the tweet.

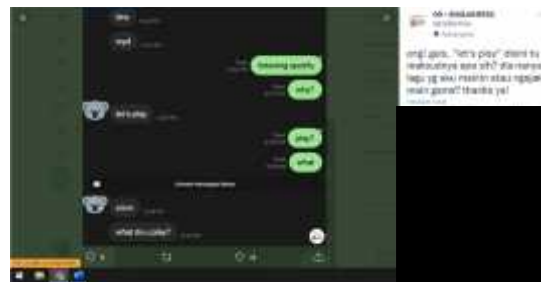


Figure 1. Example of Translation Tweet



Figure 2. Example of Asking about Grammar Tweet

2. Followers' Satisfaction with @englishfess_ Twitter Auto-base Account in Learning English

The 4 informants in this research are random followers of @englishfess_. The informants were from different genders, educational backgrounds, and occupations. As mentioned in the previous section, this study applied ARCS to investigate the informants' satisfaction with the account. There are some general aspects of this study, namely (1) attention, (2) relevance, (3) confidence, (4) satisfaction. In the interview session, the researcher also reveals the profile of the informants and their interaction with the account.

Attention

The first category the of ARCS model is attention. It refers to getting the interest and stimulating the curiosity to learn. Based on the findings, it was found that the contents of the account are quite interesting. It is because the tweets are produced by many people. However, some informants consider some of the tweets are low-quality contents and monotonous such as simple grammar questions and translations. It is also in line with the fact that most of the tweets are about translation.

70% of them are low quality content, 20% of them are high-quality contents, and 10% are memes. The example of the low quality contents are when someone asks the English word for "mobil" and other repeated questions. – Interviewee 2

The interviewee above perceives that 70% of the tweets produced in the account are low quality contents, while 20% of them are high quality contents, and 10% of them are memes.

Based on the findings, the contents are not really difficult to understand. The tweets are sometimes difficult to understand especially those which ask grammar without contexts. In fact, all the interviewees thought that the contents are pretty easy to understand. The contents are also quite varied.

They are very variative, like questions, memes, sharing tips, infographics. – interviewee 4

As the interviewee 4 above perceives that the contents are quite varied since they are in forms of questions, memes, sharing tips and sometimes infographics.

Relevance

The next category is relevance. Relevance refers to fulfilling the learners' personal goals or needs to affect a positive attitude. All the informants, the account is useful for them. They can access the account to have fun, gain knowledge, get new experiences, and improve their English skills. The informants are familiar with the majority of the contents. Furthermore, the informants also perceive that the contents of the account have met their needs and purposes.

Pretty useful for me because they improve my skills when answering questions. I can also get new information and know other people's perspectives. – interviewee 4

Informant 4 assumes that the contents of the account are useful because they improve her skills. The informant can also get new information and know other people's perspectives about an issue.

Confidence

The next category is confidence. Confidence refers to supporting learners to believe or feel that they will succeed and control the success. All the informants assume that the contents of the account have met their expectations and have given the opportunity for the followers to learn. As informant 2 below explains:

I think it is quite free environment just to learn English. In general, it is a chill place to ask things they don't understand. – interviewee 2

Satisfaction

Another category is satisfaction. Satisfaction refers to reinforcing accomplishment with rewards both internal and external. Some of the informants consider the account is best used as a supplementary learning platform. They do not recommend using the account as the main source to learn English.

Yes I like it. But I use other English learning applications to learn English. I also teach my students using duolingo. – interviewee 3

Informant 3 feels that the account uses other English learning platforms and media to learn and teach her students. Therefore, she only accesses the account as a supplementary learning medium.

Based on the observation, it was found that the account is a safe place to learn. It is because the contents are safe and the community is supportive. Below is the additional data from one of the informants:

I think it is very supportive because if someone makes a mistake, others will correct him. I have never seen anyone fighting in the account. – interviewee 4

Based on the four aspects of ARCS, it was found that the majority of the informants agree that the account has satisfied them. It is because the contents have met their needs, the community is supportive, and the contents are quite varied. However, they also perceive that the contents are sometimes monotonous and too simple. Therefore, most of them access the account as a supplementary learning platform only.

3. The Disadvantages and Advantages of @englishfess_ Twitter Autobase Account as an English Learning Platform

Disadvantages

Based on the findings, the researcher found that there are some disadvantages of using the account as a medium to learn English. Firstly, the interaction of the admin and the followers is limited. Below is the data gathered from one of the informants:

Maybe because it is a submission base, the interaction of the admin and the followers is limited. In my opinion, it would be better if there are some quizzes and rewards. – interviewee 1

Secondly, the researcher found that the answers are sometimes less trustworthy because most of the answers are too short and need more explanations. Moreover, the chosen answer is usually chosen based on the popularity of the tweets, such as the number of likes. Below is the data gathered from one informant:

The sources are not credible. They influence others to do low-order thinking skills because the majority of the tweets are too simple. Most followers conclude the answers based on the number of likes. But that's not always the case. The tweets may also be wrong. – interviewee 2

Advantages

There are several advantages to learning English through the account. The first advantage is accessibility. Below is the data gathered from one of the informants:

I think the advantage of this way of learning is the accessibility because we do not need a very good internet to access Twitter. - interviewee 2

Another advantage of learning through the account is that the followers can find people with the same interest. One of the informants also perceives that the account has become an escape place for people who want to find a safe place to learn English. The account also facilitates the followers to get information by simply asking questions.

This account can be a place to escape for those who have a toxic learning environment to learn English. It facilitates us in finding information. We can ask questions and there would be someone who answers. - Interviewee 2

We can find friends whom we can learn together with. We are connected through the account. - Interviewee 3.

D. Conclusion

Based on the findings, there are some points that can be derived. Firstly, the majority of tweets produced through @englishfess_ are translation, followed by asking about grammar. The informants of this research perceive the learning process through @englishfess as a safe environment to learn English as the account provides the followers with various types of content and freedom to ask and answer English-related content freely. However, based on the findings, it is suggested that the account is best used as only a supplementary source to learn. Furthermore, this study can be a reference for further research regarding the use of social media learning. This study can also inspire teachers and students to utilize English learning through social media, particularly the auto-base account learning system.

E. References

- Adelia, Y., & Christin, M. (2022). Pola komunikasi pada autobase twitter @collegemenfess sebagai media informasi dan komunikasi di bidang pendidikan. *E-Proceeding of Management*, 9 (2), 1112- 1121.
- Aljasysyarin, A. V. (2022). The use of Twitter auto-base @englishfess_ for self-regulated learning in writing skill: The students' perception. *Undergraduate (S1) thesis, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang*.
- 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), 2-16. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-020-00118-7>.
- Anwas, E. O. M., Sugiarti, Y., Permatasari, A. D., Warsihna, J., Anas, Z., Alhapip, L., Siswanto, H. W., & Rivalina, R. (2020). Social media usage for enhancing English language skill. *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies*, 14(7), 41-57. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijim.v14i07.11552>.
- Arif, T.Z.Z.A.(2019). Indonesian university students' perception and expectation towards ICT use in learning english as a foreign language. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 4(1), pp. 133-145.
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Sorensen, C., Razavieh, A. (2010). *Introduction to research in education*, 8th ed. Canada. : Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Creswell, J.W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Boston: Pearson Education.
- Fernando Rosell-Aguilar. (2020). Twitter as a language learning tool: The learners' perspective. *International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching*, 10 (4).
- Keller, J., 1987. Strategies for stimulating the motivation to learn. *Performance + Instruction*, 26(8), pp.1-7.

- Malik, A., Schrum, C.H., Johri, A. (2019). Use of Twitter across educational settings: a review of the literature. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 16(36), 1-22. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-019-0166-x>.
- Nazmunissa, N., Rachman, G.A. (2021). Learning English independently through social media during the covid-19 pandemic. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Ilmu Pendidikan dan Multidisiplin*, 4, 94-97.
- Rosell-Aguilar, F. (2018). Twitter as a formal and informal language learning tool: From potential to evidence. In F. Rosell-Aguilar, T. Beaven, & M. Fuertes Gutierrez (Eds), *Innovative language teaching and learning at university: Integrating informal language learning into formal language education* (pp.99-106). Research-publishing.net. <https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2018.22.780>.
- Sopian, A., Nandiyanto, A.B.D., Kurniawan, T., Bilad, M.R. (2022). The influence use of social media on the learning motivation of junior high school students. *Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 2(1), 1-6. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijomr.v2i1.38662>.
- Sudiran. (2019). Students' Perception towards the importance of Twitter as media of learning English: A case study at University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia. *International Journal of English and Education*. 8(1), 352-359.
- Taskiran, A., Gumusoglu, E.K., Aydin, B. (2018). Fostering foreign language learning with Twitter: Reflections from english learners. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education-TOJDE*, 19(1), 100-116.
- Thariq, Z.Z.A. (2020). The use of social media as learning resources to support the new normal. *Teknodika*, 18(2), 80-93. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20961/teknodika.v18i2.4218>.