

Students' perceptions on the use of Instagram for learning English

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyse students' perceptions of the use of Instagram in learning English. There were ten students who participated in this study. To obtain the data, questionnaires and interviews were used. The results showed that the way students use Instagram to learn English, that most of the participants answered that Instagram is very helpful, which is 36%. some participants answered that Instagram is quite helpful, which is 5.3% and some of them are not sure they are helped by the existence of Instagram, which is 9.0%. This means that most participants perceived positively on the use of Instagram in learning English.

1. INTRODUCTION

The use of social media as a learning medium has become an increasingly popular trend in recent years. Teachers or instructors can upload lesson materials in the form of videos that can be accessed by learners at any time. The use of social media as learning media can be a very effective tool if used wisely and in an appropriate learning context. By taking into consideration and designing appropriate learning strategies, social media can improve learners' interaction, engagement and understanding in learning. The number of social media users has increased rapidly around the world, especially in developing countries. Advances in technology and easier access to the internet have led to more people adopting social media in their daily lives. Various social media platforms have emerged and gained popularity in the era of globalisation. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, TikTok, and many more have become popular places for people to interact, share content, and engage with others. One of them is social media Instagram.

Instagram can be an effective tool in learning English if used wisely (Sesriani, et al., 2019). Many of these accounts will share tips, new vocabulary, interesting facts and daily lessons in English. You can follow and participate by asking questions or discussing in English. This will help you find content that is relevant to learning English. It can help you practice written expression in English and force you to apply what you have learnt. It helps you get used to different types of English being used in different contexts. and will help you get used to seeing content in English and increase your exposure to the language. It can be a fun way to participate and apply what you have learnt. Remember that consistency and wise use are essential. Use Instagram as a complementary tool for learning English and make sure to keep a balance between social media and more formal learning. Considering the advantages of the use of Instagram in learning English, this study tries to investigate the students' perception on the use of Instagram in learning English.

2. METHOD

Case study was employed in this study and interview was deployed to get the data. The subject of this study was ten students from one of private university in Rangkasbitung. Questionnaire and interviews were utilized to obtain the data. To determine the validity, member checking was used. In analyzing data, Miles' and Huberman's (1994) idea were used.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore students' perceptions of using Instagram as a medium for learning English. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews, which revealed that students use Instagram in diverse ways to support their English language development. Overall, the findings demonstrate that Instagram provides multimodal input, interactive features, and motivational benefits that align with modern learning practices. The discussion below integrates the findings with relevant literature.

First, students reported that Instagram's visual content—such as images, short videos, Reels, and Stories—helped them improve their listening and reading skills. They followed English-learning accounts and engaged with captions and video narrations to gain exposure to authentic language input. This finding aligns with Liany et al. (2021), who stated that visual and audio-visual media enhance language comprehension by providing contextualized learning materials. Instagram's multimodal nature allows learners to process language through both visual and auditory channels, making it an effective platform for incidental learning.

Second, Instagram's interactive features, such as comments, direct messages, live sessions, and story interactions, provided opportunities for students to practice speaking in English. Some participants mentioned that communicating with friends and other users, including native speakers, contributed to improvements in speaking and pronunciation. This supports the principles of Communicative Language Teaching and aligns with Liany et al. (2021), who found that Instagram facilitates meaningful communication and social engagement among learners. Through informal digital interactions, students can practice language in authentic contexts beyond the classroom.

Third, the study found that many students learned vocabulary and grammar from captions and Stories. Some students also practiced writing by creating English captions for their own posts. The diversity of Instagram content—combining images, short texts, and videos—was perceived as helpful for expanding vocabulary and understanding grammar usage. The informal and visually rich environment of Instagram supports natural exposure to new words and language structures.

Fourth, videos and Stories were identified as helpful for pronunciation development, as students could imitate the spoken language they heard. However, several students mentioned challenges, including difficulty verifying correct information, inconsistent content quality, lack of immediate feedback, and occasional network issues. These challenges echo concerns raised by Liany et al. (2021), who noted that Instagram may not provide in-depth explanations or detailed correction needed for more complex language learning. Thus, while Instagram offers useful exposure, it may need to be complemented by more structured instruction.

Fifth, motivation and engagement emerged as significant themes. Almost all participants expressed increased motivation and enjoyment when learning English through Instagram. They appreciated the platform's variety of content and its alignment with their daily media habits. Vocabulary and speaking-related content—especially Reels and Stories—were the most frequently accessed. Martarini et al. (2021), who found that visually engaging media increase student motivation and attentiveness during language learning activities. Instagram's informal, interest-driven environment encourages learners to engage with English voluntarily.

Sixth, most participants recommended Instagram as an English-learning medium. They noted that Instagram provides unlimited access to educational accounts, including language teachers and well-known learning communities such as Kampung Inggris LC. This aligns with English (2018), who emphasized that teachers must be technologically literate and should integrate digital platforms into modern learning environments. Students' recommendations highlight the platform's accessibility, flexibility, and relevance to contemporary learning practices.

The questionnaire results reinforced the qualitative findings. A large proportion of students reported that Instagram was "very helpful" for learning English, while a smaller percentage found it "quite helpful" or were "not sure." These perceptions confirm the overall positive evaluation of Instagram as a supportive

language learning tool. Taken together, the findings illustrate that Instagram enables students to develop English skills—listening, speaking, reading, writing—and linguistic components (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation) through multimodal content and interactive communication. These benefits are closely aligned with current educational trends emphasizing technology-enhanced learning, autonomous learning, and authentic language exposure. Although challenges exist, the overall student perception toward Instagram is strongly positive, indicating its potential as a complementary tool in English language education.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that students hold highly positive perceptions of Instagram as a supportive medium for English language learning. Although Instagram offers substantial benefits, several limitations were identified, including difficulty evaluating the accuracy of information, varying content quality, lack of immediate corrective feedback, and occasional network issues. These challenges suggest that while Instagram is valuable for autonomous learning, it should complement—not replace—structured classroom instruction.

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