

## Improving Student's Writing Skill of Descriptive Text by Using Instagram Posts as Visual Media

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### Abstract

*Writing is one amongst the important skills learned in English. In writing, people express their ideas and opinions. In this era of advanced communication technology, the use of social media to teach and assist students to learn is common for educators. This research investigated the effectiveness of using Instagram in teaching writing of descriptive texts. As pre-experimental research, this research used written tests of descriptive texts as the main instrument and interview as the supplementary data collection technique. The samples of this research were eleventh grade students of Social one of a public senior high school in Semarang. The result of this research showed that there was a significant difference on the students' ability of writing descriptive texts before and after the treatment. The interview responses also indicated that using Instagram post as visual media for learning descriptive was effective. In conclusion Instagram posts as visual media in teaching descriptive texts can improve student's writing ability of descriptive text.*

**Keywords:** *Descriptive text; Instagram; Writing skill*

### INTRODUCTION

English becomes among the languages that incorporates a huge role within the world. It's called the language of international communication. Because of this standing, many individuals are learning and making an attempt to accumulate it so they're ready to communicate with additional individuals worldwide and use it in their daily lives. Kingston et al (2002) state that student's achievement in learning English is only measured by productive skills, especially the writing performance. Moreover, recently people prefer the written form of communication in accessing information to the oral communication. Abbas (2007) states the concept in term of the language use: the

spoken language which is very dominant will be followed by the more dominant of the written language.

Most English learners seem to agree that writing is the most difficult skill to master (Hersyaf et al: 2009). Students' low interest and lack ability in writing their ideas with the use of correct grammar, vocabulary, diction, and punctuation are some indicators showing the unsuccessful of teaching writing especially in Indonesia. The first indicator is the students' low interest in writing. They prefer to express their ideas orally rather than in written form. As a result, students can speak English fluently but they cannot write English well.

Social media are basically media which are used through various electronic, usually rechargeable, devices like mobile phone, computer, tablets, and many other ways to facilitate people sharing their ideas with others in an easy and systematic way. It is used mostly for communication and to build awareness around the world (Kaplan Andreas and Michael, 2010). Social media are useful for communicating and sharing knowledge because they reach high frequency of usability, and facilitate the users as compare to other sources (Pavlik et al, 2015). In education, social media play roles in language learning because they provide opportunities to English language learners to improve their language.

Social media may be outlined as web-based and mobile technologies used for communication. It's a platform which includes socializing and online networking through words, images and videos. Instagram is social media that focuses on writing captions of uploaded photos or videos and share them to other digital users of the globe. The use of social media, particularly Instagram, is extremely in style among teenagers, with attention-grabbing in it, one of which is to upload photos and videos with captions. Several photos and videos are uploaded on Instagram followed by captions such as quotes or description as well as narrations relevant to the photos. In Indonesia, though the national language is Bahasa Indonesia, many captions found in Instagram are written in English though the number of it are of course lower than the number of captions which are written in Bahasa Indonesia.

Instagram comes from the word "instant" or "insta", like a polaroid camera that was better known as "instant photos". Instagram can display photos instantly in appearance. The word "gram" comes from the word "telegram", where the work of telegram is to send information to others quickly. Similarly, Instagram can upload photos using the internet, so that the pictures and information conveyed can be sent and shared quickly. That's why Instagram comes from the word "instant-telegram" (Putri, 2013).

According to Atmoko (2012), Instagram is an application of a smartphone that is specific to social media, which is one of the digital media that have functions similar to twitter, but the difference lies in capturing images in the form or a place to share information about its users. Instagram can provide inspiration for its users and also can increase creativity, because Instagram has features that can make photos become more beautiful, more artistic and become better.

In English language teaching, the use of social media has evolved over the years. Wikis or Blogs have been mainly used for collaborative writing, facilitating writing, and also the use of YouTube in classroom teaching. Besides, the use of social media in

teaching and learning English has the advantages for both the teachers and the students. The use of social media in teaching and learning is very useful for both teachers and students. Some teachers have got a lot benefits from social media for their teaching activities by making use of them. Students may use YouTube to learn by watching, or Instagram to express their idea through writing descriptive. In fact, the integration of formal and informal learning has been suggested as a way to enhance formal language learning. It facilitates English learners to learn new words and vocabularies suitable for them. It is easy for English learners as compare to book reading and other text materials, and increases the interest of English learners toward the use of social media. English learners may use social media for a long enough period of time without any boredom.

There have been some studies about the use social media Instagram in English language teaching and learning. The first study was conducted by Hilman (2018) entitled “The Effectiveness of Using Instagram in Developing Students’ Descriptive Text Writing”. This research was aimed at finding out how effective the use of Instagram is to develop students writing skill of descriptive text was. The data obtained through pre-test and post-test as research instrument. The research setting was in a private high school in Yogyakarta and done in late of 2017. It was a quasi-experiment. The research involved 6 classes of level X students who were divided into two groups namely experimental and control groups, each group consisted of 25 students. The researcher stated that the use of Instagram could improve students writing skill and the students had positive perception about using Instagram in their descriptive text writing.

The second study was conducted by Etikaningsih (2018) entitled “Instagram Use to Enhance Ability in Writing Descriptive Texts. The aim of this research was to find out the effectiveness of using Instagram to teach students writing descriptive text. The researcher used a writing test as the data collecting technique. The population was 175 students in one of Islamic Senior High School (MA) who were divided into five classes. There were two writing tests given, pre-test and post-test. It was found out that there was a significant difference in the writing skill between the students who were taught using Instagram and the students who were taught without Instagram. The researcher also suggested that Instagram is an effective and suitable strategy to use in an English as a foreign Language learning setting, particularly in learning in writing of descriptive texts.

The third study was conducted by Gunantar (2019) entitled “Writing Caption on Instagram as Media for Student’s Motivation and Writing Skill Improvement”. The aim of this research was to find out that photo-based media use on social media Instagram could help students improve learning writing. The researcher used a writing test and questionnaire as the data collecting techniques. The population was 31 students of a junior high school in academic year 2018/2019. It was found that the use of photo-based media on Instagram could improve the quality of students’ English writing skill. With this strategy, students could understand the material better, besides the use of direct example of photos on Instagram in learning could better help students to find ideas to write and express them.

Considering the ideas presented above an effective method of teaching writing is urgently required and the use of Instagram as a media to teach writing is interesting to explore. Therefore, the research question proposed was: “Is the use of Instagram posts as visual media in writing class effective to improve student’s writing skill of descriptive text of the eleventh grade students of senior high school?”

### **METHOD**

This research applied an experimental research approach which belongs to quantitative paradigm. According to Matthews & Ross (2010) quantitative research methods are basically applied to the collection of data that is structured and which can be represented numerically. Sugiyono (2006) stated that experimental research is research that has the aim of finding out a causal relationship between variables under controlled conditions. An important feature of experimental research is that investigators deliberately control and manipulate the conditions that determine the event in which they are interested in, introduce interventions and measure the differences that result from the intervention. Experiments involve making changes in the value of one variable called an independent variable and observing the effect of that change on another variable called the dependent variable (Louis, 2007: 291). There are several types of experimental research design as pre-experimental design, true experimental design, factorial design and quasi experimental design (Sugiyono, 2006). The type of experimental research design used at this research is a pretest posttest pre-experimental design using one class, namely the experimental class. In this case, the experimental class received treatment.

Because of the circumstance of pandemic, the researcher decided that the participants of this study were 36 students of eleventh grade of social one of an SMA in Semarang. The research sample was chosen by using purposive sampling. For data collection, this research used test. There were two kinds of tests, they were pre-test and post-test of writing descriptive text. Pre-test was intended to measure students writing ability before the treatment was given, while post-test was to measure students writing ability after the treatment was given. The tests were in the form of writing descriptive text to measure students’ writing ability. The researcher also used interview for collecting data especially to know how the students perceived the usefulness of the Instagram for teaching writing in their class. Ten students who were randomly selected were interviewed.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The participants of the research were given pretest to measure their writing ability of descriptive texts before the treatment was conducted. The result showed that there were 18 students who got scores lower than 50, 14 students scored 51-60, 4 students scored 61-70, and no student scored 71-80 or higher. The results of pretest scores of the experimental group was divided into six categories namely excellent, good, fair, average, poor, very poor, and it was found that the majority of the participants (89%) belong to poor and very poor category. It means that a big number of students were not able to write English descriptive texts well.

After the pretest, the participants were given treatment. The students were taught descriptive texts using Instagram. The following was an example of how the treatment went through. The researcher ordered the students to open their Instagram and look for a picture in it. First of all the researcher allowed the students to choose random pictures and informed the researcher. After they got the picture, they made description about it in 30 minutes and submitted to the researcher via Google Classroom. After the students submitted their work, the researcher gave them a picture, in this case, was of Mr. B.J Habibie the former president of Indonesia and asked them to write the description of him. As they finished their work, the researcher checked on their work. After that the researcher did an online class for about 35 to 40 minutes and discuss about the descriptive texts they have written, and the researcher gave some advice how to describe a thing or a picture from the beginning, for example an animal, scenery, or a person etc. It was easy to describe because we have seen them in our daily life.

After the treatment, the participants had posttest. This test was to determine the result of students learning ability after treatment. The posttest data showed that the highest score achieved by students was 75 and the lowest score is 60. Scoring of the participants' work covered the content, organization, vocabulary, grammar and mechanics. By using SPSS it was found out that the average score (the mean score) achieved by students' posttest was 67.64; the mode was 65; the median was 67.50 and the standard deviation was 7.220. There was no students (0%) belonged into excellent category. There were 9 students (25%) in fair category, 18 students (50%) were in average category, and 9 students (25%) were in poor category. The majority of the students belonged to average category.

The scores of pretest were then compared to the scores of posttest. The mean score of the pre-test was 52.50. Meanwhile, the mean of the post-test was 67.64. The data show that the mean score of post-test was higher than the pre-test. It can be seen from the increase of the scoring categorization from very poor to fair category. It means that the writing ability of the students significantly improved after being treated using Instagram.

Table 1: Statistical Data of The Pre-Test and Post-Test Score

<b>Data</b>	<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Post-test</b>
Number of cases	36	36
Mean	52.50	67.64
SD	7.606	7.220
Very poor category of frequency	50%	0%
Fair category of frequency	0%	25%

After the post-test, the researcher did some interviews with some students who were assigned randomly. The respondents of the interview were 10 students consisting of 5 girls and 5 boys. There were 9 questions that the researcher asked to them. Most of them knew about Instagram, and they also could explain all the features of Instagram itself. Most of the students actually liked and have used Instagram for sharing but there were three of them who rarely opened or even used Instagram because of some reasons, for example they had no picture to upload to Instagram, they were not interested to open

Instagram because it consumed more data, full of hoax news, and they would open Instagram if there was an event like k-pop event or something like that. They rarely wrote caption on Instagram using English because they were confused and afraid of writing caption in Instagram using English. They were afraid that their friends would see and made bad comments about it. There were also some who were afraid of making mistakes when writing captions. The remaining respondents said that they were liked to write captions in Instagram using English. They wrote quotes or lyrics of song. All respondents had the same answer, they felt it was easier to write the descriptive text if they saw the object, they could describe better than when they didn't see the object.

Writing is a complex and difficult activity. It needs effort to study about writing. Regarding to the research, it was concluded that there was a significance difference on students writing skill between students who were taught using Instagram post as visual media and those who were taught not using Instagram post as visual media. Based on the computation of the post-test result the mean score of the post test was 67.64 while the pre-test was 52.50. The mean score of the post-test was higher than the mean score of the pretest.

In this case, Instagram post could help students to increase their score in post-test. The frequency distribution showed that in the post-test there was no students (0%) classified into excellent category. There were 9 students (25%) in fair category, 18 students (50%) were in average category, and 9 students (25%) were in poor category. The conclusion is that the majority of the students belonged to average category in the posttest. On the other side, the frequency distribution showed that in the pre-test there was no student (0%) classified into excellent category. There was no student (0%) was in good category. There was no student (0%) was in fair category, 4 students (11%) were in average category, 14 students (39%) were in poor category, and 18 students (50%) were in very poor category. It can be conclude that the majority of the students belonged to a very poor category. The findings showed that the students writing scores after they were taught using Instagram post as visual media were higher than their scores before they were taught using Instagram.

The research also revealed that the students were interested in using social media such as Instagram because it was quiet famous social media where they could write down captions and upload photos. Students can exchange ideas and write them. The pictures in the Instagram have stimulated them to write more. The students became more creative and motivated to write because it is easy to write a description when they see the actual picture. Instagram can attract the students to be more creative to start writing and developing their ideas. In fact, in the practice of using Instagram post, the students showed the significant improvement. It was easy for them to develop their own ideas into text by seeing the picture.

## **CONCLUSION**

The use of Instagram post as visual media in teaching-learning process of writing descriptive texts is good. It can make significant improvement in the students' interest in writing and scores. Therefore, it could be stated that using Instagram post in teaching-learning process of writing contributed positively in the improvement of students' writing skill.

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