

## **BOOSTING STUDENTS' WRITING ABILITY THROUGH *INSTAGRAM'S* CAPTION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Social media is a tool used by people for communicating to each other in this millennial era. One of them is Instagram. In this pandemic era, people have changed their ways of life and communication by engaging into online activities. This also includes education aspect which becomes online as an instruction of Ministry of Education. Thus, the role of social media is also very important in the online learning. Instagram can be one of means of teaching and learning process. It can help a learning process to build the interaction between teacher and students. This study, therefore, was conducted to see the implementation of Instagram on students' writing ability and how to maintain the interactions in online learning. The qualitative method was applied because the data were collected from questionnaire distributed through Google Form. The subject were senior high school students. To sum up, the result showed that the students' writing ability improved. Most of the students participated well in Instagram. Then, through Instagram, most students interacted in learning process until the end of class. This study suggests that teacher can use Instagram in writing activity and build the interaction well in learning process.*

*Keywords: Instagram; online learning; writing*

### **INTRODUCTION**

English is a subject that should be learned by students in a school. It is an important subject that should be mastered by students. English can be one of the media by students to communicate. Mandasari and Oktaviani (2018) stated that Learning English as a foreign language leads the students to have their own strategy in order to achieve the objective of learning. Tarigan (2008, p. 1) stated that “there are four skills in the language which are related to each other, those are; reading, writing, listening, and speaking.” Those skills are divided into two types of skills. Types of skills are including receptive skill and productive skill. Receptive skills are listening and reading. Then, productive skills are speaking and writing. Comparatively, writing also the most important skill should be learned by the student because communication not only through speaking but also through writing can be used to communicate. Mandasari (2019) stated that “the indicators of the successful English language learning are the language users can use the language both in spoken and written”.

Through speaking and writing people can communicate. Sparrt (2005, p.26) stated that “writing is one of the four language skills that involves communicating in the message (something to say) by making signs on a page.” By writing a message, people can communicate with each other via e-mail or other media. Sari (2016) stated that writing covers the process of developing ideas, logical thinking, and language forms and transfer them into graphic symbols on a paper by using appropriate conventions including content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. It becomes the reason, the student should be mastered in writing ability. Not only to communicate but also writing is needed by people for literacy needs in facing the 4.0 era. UNESCO (2014, pp. 12-13) stated that “a literate person is one who can, with understanding, both read and write a short simple statement on his or her everyday life”. It means that writing becomes one of the aspects that should be mastered by people to support literacy needs. As a result, Indonesia on a low rate of literacy compared to other countries.

According to the data from the *Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)* literacy of students in Indonesia is very low. In 2012 Indonesia was positioned at the rank 60<sup>th</sup> of 65 countries (Ajiksukmo, 2019, p.159). In another case, there is the data from UNESCO on the research entitled *World’s Most Literate Nations* was conducted by Central Connecticut State University in March 2016, Indonesia on the ranked 60<sup>th</sup> of 61 countries. It becomes proof that Indonesia still has low literacy. It means that the writing ability had by people in Indonesia still low. Because the data from UNESCO showed that reading interest in Indonesia only achieves 0,001 it means that every 1000 people only one person who has a reading interest. It refers that people who have writing abilities are still low. As Warsihna (2015, p.40) stated that the core of literacy is reading activity, thinking, then writing. The statement is the same as the statement from Kartanegara (Wiedarti, 2005, p. 142) which stated that the tradition of writing will not be achieved without a preceded by the tradition of reading”. From reading, people will thinking about the information that has been gotten, then produce it by writing.

Brown (2001, p.336) stated that “writing is a thinking process in which a writer produces a final written product based on their thinking after the writer goes through the thinking process.” It means that when people want to write a text, they need to arrange the process well. The process is including developing an idea and then how we arrange the idea into good content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Harmer (2007) stated that “some of the students are not confident enough to write”. There are some issues or problems that can be a challenge for a student to writing well. Even though from the offline learning, the students already taught by the teacher directly, still got a low score. Right now the reality in the education sector is harder than before. As in reality, right now the world has calamities, which is the COVID-19 pandemic. The education sector has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic situation. In this situation, the Ministry of Education has been changed the learning activity into *online learning* or namely (*pembelajaran dalam jaringan*). Online learning affects the teacher and the students to follow the rules in *pembelajaran dalam jaringan*. The teacher and the students should run the learning activity well.

Previously, the researcher did practical field experience in a school. That school follows the regulation from the Ministry of Education. That school conducts *online learning* for the learning activity. As the analysis was found by the researchers when conduct practical field experience at one of the Senior High School in Bandar Lampung. The students less interest when given a writing task by the teacher. The teacher uses an online learning platform to support online learning for English subject. One of the learning objectives is the students are able to write a text. Nonetheless, the students are not interest to write a text. There are some grammatical errors, errors’ in arrange text structure, then unrelated content each other. When the researchers analyze deeper the causes

of students' low ability in writing a text. It comes from students' carelessness in writing a text and translation factor. The students' careless about the result of their writing task because their task only assessed by the teacher. Those factors become the reason why the researchers conduct the present study for boosting students' writing ability through Instagram's caption.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Senior high school students are very close to social media. Instagram can be one of the media for improving students' interest in writing a text. Atmoko (2012, p. 10) stated that Instagram has features that can make photos more beautiful, more artistic, and better. That is why people are interested to know more about information, issue, and solace. Instagram is a suitable social media that can be used in online learning. There is the data that Indonesia on the 4th country biggest of Instagram users. The users in Indonesia reached 56 million people or 20,97% of the total population in the country. Most Instagram users come from the age of around 18 years-24 years old. It means that the students in senior high school become the biggest Instagram user. It refers to the teacher can utilize Instagram in the learning activity. Especially in writing skills.

Instagram has some suitable features in the English Foreign Language class. Those are; Instagram photo content, caption below the picture, then comment forum, Instagram story, IGTV, etc. However, in writing skill, the suitable features can be used in writing skill is Instagram photo content and caption below the picture. This strategy can build a good method for online learning. The students need to upload the picture as an authentic picture in learning media. Then, the students need to write a caption in that picture. It can practice writing skills. After that, the students need to give feedback between their works on Instagram in comment features. This strategy is trusted to build good learning circumstances in online learning. The students' interest to make their paragraph text the best as they can, supported by the picture that they choose to upload on Instagram. Then, in the comment forum, the students can give positive feedback to each other related to their works to build a good interaction with each other.

As we know, interaction is one tool that can be used to share the information. The expectation is this strategy has a positive impact on online learning. Oktaviani and Mandasari (2020) argued that the teachers need to create interactive and interesting teaching and learning process in order to attract and motivate students, especially in industrial revolution 4.0. era. Online learning still running well and online learning through Instagram has a powerful impact on the teacher and students, then useful for the people who contributed to online learning.

The previous study entitled *The Effect of Instagram on the Students' Writing Ability at Undergraduate Level* was conducted by Wahyudin and Sari (2018). The study using a quantitative method, the subject were 82 first semester students divided into experimental class and control class. The result showed that Instagram bring positive impact towards students' writing ability. Instagram can be an effective media to support of practice teaching writing skill for undergraduate students. On another hand, Sari & Putri (2019) argued that the teachers can monitor students' learning activity through social media for instance WhatsApp Group. The result of the second previous study told that WhatsApp Group media might help students in learning writing so that the student can improve their writing ability through WhatsApp Group. Based on the explanation above, the purposes of this research to reveal that in this pandemic era Instagram can be the media for boosting students' writing ability for senior high school students. The senior high school students will be interested in using Instagram in writing a text; thus, it will improve their awareness in writing well.

## METHOD

A qualitative descriptive method was applied in this study. Creswell (1994) stated that “qualitative study is defined as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting”. The primary data for this study was collected through a questionnaire in Google Form. The samples of this research were the students in Senior High School in Bandar Lampung in the academic year 2020/2021. After that, we did the interviews with the English teacher directly in the school. Besides, this collected data lead this research study to see how the implementation of Instagram on students’ writing ability and how to maintain the interactions in online learning. The question being was in the form close-ended question. The researchers use Yes/No question and adapt the liker scale which is 1 (Disagree), 2 (Strongly Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree). There are questions in the questionnaire, the questions as follows:

1. Do you have an Instagram account?
2. Do you consider an active user on Instagram?
  - A. I like open Instagram to know about the information, news, and entertainment on Instagram.
  - B. I often upload a photo on Instagram.
  - C. I always use the caption to explain the expression text on Instagram.
  - D. I often comment on my friend’s photo when they are uploading the photo on their Instagram account.
  - E. I like when online learning with the activity writing a text moved into Instagram media.
  - F. I feel easier when do the task writing text paragraph using Instagram.
  - G. Instagram influences my ability in writing a text paragraph.
  - H. Instagram can influence my communication in discussing the material with my friend.
  - I. Instagram makes me easier to give feedback to my friend’s work.
  - J. Instagram can help to build interaction in the online learning activity.
  - K. Instagram can influence my ability in writing a text with a good structure, using better grammar, and also language features.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study discusses whether the students agree or disagree that *Instagram* can help the students in writing a text paragraph and help the students to build the interaction in online learning. Beside the questionnaire result, we also conducted interview session as a media to collect the data. We interviewed the teacher to ask his perception toward whether or not the *Instagram* can help the students become more interested to write the text well. The teacher also gave his opinion toward using *Instagram* in writing learning activity.

25 students who were involved as the participant have an Instagram account. Further, they are as an active Instagram users. 100% students agree that they like open the Instagram to know the information, news, and the entertainment from Instagram. Not only find out the information but also most of them often upload their photo on their Instagram account. Almost all of them giving a comment to each other when they see their friend has been upload the photo on Instagram. The students prefer that online learning for learning writing skill is moved to Instagram media. According to Sari and Wahyudin (2019) “Through Instagram, the teacher and students can do photo-sharing and video-sharing. Besides, they can write and read a caption in photos description, put specific hashtag in their posts, comment, and send direct message on the Instagram. Hence, it will be interesting doing a writing task using social media. Their awareness to write a good text will be motivated by social media, the students think that their work should be posted on social media. Thus, they need to write a good text with a good content and good structure. Henceforth, it will improve students’ communication through giving feedback each other. It will influence students’ communication and discussion session in online learning. The students feel easier for boosting their writing ability because supported by online discussion and interaction in online learning. This strategy help the students better in improve the knowledge and insight through online learning.

To support this questionnaire result, below this is interview transcript between the researchers and the English teacher in senior high school;

**Researchers** : What method do you usually use in teaching writing?

**Teacher** : As usual, I give the students the material related to the text explanation. I give them a definition of that text, I guide them to analyze the text structure, social function, language feature, then, I give them the example of the material text being learned. Then, I try to build the students’ interest in writing a text. I connect the material with several pictures to make them interested in writing that text. For example, when I am teaching the text procedure, I prepare the picture appropriately with the step by step on the text procedure.

**Researchers** : When you are teaching writing, what are the difficulties that usually faced?

**Teacher** : I usually feel difficult to make the students interested in writing a text. They are lazy when they asked to write. I rarely face the students who write the text as well they can. They do their work just think that the important thing the task is completed.

**Researchers** : In your opinion, what the difficulties faced by the student when they are writing a text?

**Teacher** : as I said before, they are not interested in writing a text. There is no self-awareness to create a good text, because they do not have more lexicon, and they are difficult to create a text with a good structure.

**Researchers** : In your opinion, what the strategy can be used to make students interesting in writing a text, and they can write the text carefully. Then, there is a step-up from students writing. Then, they can create a good text. Especially in this pandemic situation?

**Teacher** : In my opinion, interesting media can help them to improve their writing result. We can use social media; they are very close to the social media. If we moved the writing strategy in the media social, I think it is a good idea.

**Researchers** : how about *Instagram*?

**Teacher** : Yes, we can use *Instagram* to improve their ability in writing. *Instagram* becomes their daily need social media; they usually interact with the people through *Instagram*. The students will be careful in writing a text because they think if their work will be posted on *Instagram*, people can see their work. It will affect them to be careful in writing, they will interest to create a good text with a good structure. Then, they can give feedback to each other through *Instagram* to build the interaction in an online learning class.

In this study, the result showed that the students are very close to social media *Instagram*. A100% result showed that the students have an *Instagram* account. Indeed, they are considered as an active user in social media *Instagram*. The use of *Instagram* can engage students' interest in writing. The result showed that students like to open *Instagram* to know more about information, news. They like to upload the photo on their *Instagram* account, then they write the caption to express the feeling, explanation related to the picture. Then, the students usually comment on their friend's pictures on *Instagram*. Through that case, the researchers try to utilize *Instagram* as a tool used to build EFL students' interest in writing a text. Mostly, the students spend their spare time to open *Instagram*. Right now, they can spend their time learning at the same time. They can improve they are writing a text through *Instagram*. They need to upload the picture related to the material text being learned, then they write a text through the *Instagram Caption*. Rozak and Saeed (2014) defined that "an online posting on *Instagram* provided an opportunity for students to collaboratively revise their writing in a non-classroom context".

After using this strategy, students can create a good text in writing the text on *Instagram*. They try to understand well about the text structure and language feature. They had interest to create a good text. Self-awareness about responsibility creates a good text that has affected them because they should post their work on their *Instagram*. This strategy also supports the interaction in online learning class. When they give feedback to each other, they will share the opinion. That will be a discussion online session. From the discussion, the students get a learning process to study together. Even though it is online, interaction should be built to support the learning process. Based on the result, the students have positive respond toward *Instagram* social media, it is indicated that *Instagram* influences students' writing. The students were more aware to be careful with the text structure, grammar, language features when they are writing a text.

## CONCLUSION

We conducted this study to find out the students' perceptions about the use of Instagram in online learning. In this pandemic era, the teacher should aware more in choosing a strategy to maintain online learning activity to make it running well by using any kind of social media or tools like Aminatun and Oktaviani (2019) did a research by using memrise instead of social media. From the research, the students are more interested in writing a text through Instagram. The students like to upload a picture appropriate with the material being learned, then they create a caption suitable with the text material being learned. The limitations of the students are less of a lexicon, lazy to write with correct grammar, they did not interest to write. Thus, through this strategy, we know more that the student like in learning in combination with their favorite social media and learning activity. They become more aware to create a good text as well as they can with a good text structure, correct grammar, and language features. After that, they will share each other, give

feedback on their friend's work. It is indicated to build a good interaction in online learning happens in this pandemic situation.

This study, therefore, concludes that Instagram can help the students are better in writing. They aware that they should know more about how to write a text well. Then, from this strategy the students know how to write with a good quality in writing a text. The students can learn by themselves to more attention with the text structure, language features, and writing with a good structure. It was in line with Oktaviani and Desiarti (2016) that Instagram usage can improve students' creativeness in doing the assignments in a class.

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