

INVESTIGATING THE EFFECT AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF USING INSTAGRAM AS A WRITING TEACHING TOOL IN INDONESIAN EFL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the effect of using Instagram as a writing teaching tool and to explore students' perceptions of its implementation in Indonesian EFL classrooms. A quantitative research design employing a survey method was utilized, involving undergraduate students from the English Education Department at UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms and analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentages and mean scores. The findings indicate that Instagram has a positive effect on students' writing learning, particularly in enhancing writing practice and engagement. Furthermore, students' perceptions toward the use of Instagram fall into a moderate to high category, suggesting that the platform is considered a useful and supportive learning tool. Aspects such as motivation, interaction, and engagement were also identified as contributing factors in supporting the writing learning process. However, the effectiveness of Instagram largely depends on its pedagogical integration within the classroom.

Keywords: Instagram; Writing Skills; EFL; Students' Perceptions; Social Media; Writing Instruction

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly transformed various aspects of education, particularly in language learning. In recent years, the integration of technology into educational practices has created new opportunities for students to engage in learning activities in more flexible, interactive, and collaborative ways. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts (Misnawati, 2023), digital technology enables learners to access diverse learning resources, communicate with peers, and practice language skills beyond the traditional classroom environment. One form of technology that has gained considerable attention in language learning is social media. Social media platforms provide interactive environments where students can share ideas, collaborate with others, and engage in meaningful communication. Previous studies have shown that integrating social media into language learning can enhance students' motivation, participation, and engagement in the learning process (Gardina, 2021).

Among the various social media platforms available today, Instagram is among the most widely used among students worldwide. Instagram allows users to share images, videos, and written captions while interacting with others through comments and discussions. These features provide opportunities for students to engage in authentic communication and practice language skills in real-life contexts (Prasetyawati, 2022). In the context of English language learning, Instagram can serve as an innovative instructional medium that encourages students to express their ideas creatively. According to (Putri & Saehu, 2025), Instagram offers a different and more engaging learning approach that can create a dynamic and enjoyable learning environment, particularly in English learning activities. Therefore, integrating Instagram into language-learning activities may help students practice and improve their English skills.

Writing is considered one of the most essential yet challenging language skills for EFL learners. Writing requires students to organize ideas logically, apply appropriate grammatical structures, and use suitable vocabulary to convey messages effectively. However, many students struggle to develop writing skills due to limited vocabulary, low confidence, and insufficient practice opportunities. In many EFL classrooms, writing instruction often focuses on formal exercises that may not provide meaningful opportunities for students to express their ideas in authentic contexts. (Rahmawati et al., 2025), Writing is a productive skill that requires continuous practice and feedback to help learners develop their ability to communicate effectively. Therefore, teachers need to adopt innovative teaching tools that can motivate students to practice writing more actively and meaningfully.

Several previous studies have explored the use of social media platforms in language learning contexts. (Prihatin et al., 2021) found that using Instagram in writing activities can increase students' motivation and engagement in learning. Their study indicated that Instagram provides an enjoyable learning environment and enables

students to develop their ideas through writing activities such as captions and descriptive texts. Similarly, (Gardina, 2022) reported that students who participated in language learning activities using Instagram demonstrated better learning performance compared to those who learned through conventional methods. In addition, (Misnawati, 2023) emphasized that the integration of social media in language teaching allows students to interact with broader audiences and participate in learning activities both inside and outside the classroom. These findings highlight the potential of Instagram as a learning tool that can support students' writing development and enhance their engagement in the learning process.

However, despite the increasing number of studies examining the use of social media in language learning, research specifically investigating the effects of using Instagram as a writing-teaching tool and students' perceptions of its implementation in Indonesian EFL classrooms remains limited (Gardina, 2021). Understanding students' perceptions is important because their attitudes toward technology integration may influence the effectiveness of the learning process. Furthermore, examining the effect of Instagram on students' writing learning can provide insights into how social media platforms can be utilized as effective instructional tools in language education. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effect of using Instagram as a writing-teaching tool and to explore students' perceptions of its implementation in Indonesian EFL classrooms. Based on the objectives of the study, the research questions are formulated as follows: 1). To what extent does the use of Instagram affect students' writing learning in Indonesian EFL classrooms? 2). What are students' perceptions toward the use of Instagram as a writing teaching tool in Indonesian EFL classrooms? 3). Which aspects of Instagram (e.g., engagement, motivation, and interaction) are perceived by students as supporting their writing learning process?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media and Technology in English Language Learning

The advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed various aspects of education, including English language teaching. In recent years, the integration of digital platforms and social media into the learning process has opened new opportunities for students to engage in language practice beyond the traditional classroom environment. Social media platforms enable learners to access information, interact with peers, and share ideas through various multimedia formats (Fiqri Fauzi et al., 2024). Consequently, these platforms are increasingly recognized as effective tools for facilitating collaborative and autonomous learning in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts.

In particular, social networking applications have demonstrated strong potential for supporting language learning due to their accessibility and interactive features. According to (Prihatin, 2021), the emergence of social media in educational settings has

introduced innovative learning environments that encourage students to actively participate in language learning activities. Instagram, for instance, has been widely adopted among students and can serve as a medium for sharing information and expressing ideas through visual and textual content. As stated by (Pambudi, 2024, p. 76), “Instagram offers a different and more engaging learning approach, which can create a dynamic and enjoyable learning experience, especially in English learning”. Therefore, integrating Instagram into EFL classrooms may foster more engaging, student-centered learning environments.

Instagram as a Language Learning Tool

Social media platforms such as Instagram offer a practical solution to these challenges by creating authentic spaces where students can share their written work and receive feedback from peers and instructors. A study conducted (Misnawati, 2023) demonstrated that the use of Instagram in writing activities can enhance students’ motivation and creativity in composing descriptive texts. The researchers reported that students perceived Instagram as an enjoyable learning medium that allowed them to freely express their ideas in written form (Tarihoran et al., 2022). As indicated in their findings, “the use of the Instagram application in writing descriptive text provides a sense of fun for students and makes it easier for students to develop themselves and share their writing with their virtual friends”. These findings suggest that Instagram can support a more interactive and motivating environment for developing writing skills in EFL classrooms (Lehmann, 2023, p. 45).

Instagram has emerged as one of the most widely used social media platforms globally, particularly among young learners. Its features, such as photo sharing, video uploads, captions, comments, and interactive stories, provide students with opportunities to practice language skills in authentic communication contexts. Within English language learning, Instagram allows students to produce written texts, respond to peers’ posts, and participate in online discussions, thereby fostering communicative competence and learner autonomy (Kurnia & Nasution, 2021).

Previous studies have highlighted the educational potential of Instagram in language learning contexts. (Mellinia et al., 2023) explains that Instagram offers a wide range of learning resources to support the development of English language skills, including vocabulary acquisition, grammar understanding, and writing practice. Additionally, the platform facilitates interaction among learners, enabling them to engage in meaningful language use. (Nurisma et al., 2024) further states that “Instagram has great potential in improving English language skills, especially in vocabulary and communication skills, and students show positive responses toward the development of writing skills through this platform”. These findings indicate that Instagram can function as an effective supplementary tool in English language instruction (Abdillah, 2022).

Student Engagement in Technology-Assisted Writing Learning

Student engagement is an essential factor influencing the effectiveness of language learning, particularly in writing instruction. Engagement refers to students' active participation, motivation, and emotional involvement in the learning process (Pambudi, 2024, p. 56). The integration of technology into language education has been widely recognized as an effective strategy for increasing student engagement through interactive, collaborative learning experiences.

In the context of social media integration, digital platforms enable students to interact with broader audiences and engage in meaningful communication. (Yusuf & Jazilah, 2020) argue that social media platforms allow learners to share their written work with a wider community and receive responses from other users, which may increase their motivation to improve their writing skills. The authors emphasize that "social media integration into language teaching enables students to reach greater readers and engage in the learning process both inside and outside of the classroom." Consequently, incorporating Instagram into writing instruction may enhance students' engagement and encourage active participation in writing activities (Putri & Saehu, 2025).

Instagram and Higher-Order Thinking Skills in Language Learning

Beyond facilitating language practice, social media platforms can also support the development of higher-order thinking skills, such as critical thinking and analytical reasoning. Through interactive features such as comments and discussions, students are encouraged to reflect on information, evaluate different perspectives, and express their ideas in written form. These activities can foster deeper cognitive engagement in the language-learning process (Zalani & Yousofi, 2024).

A study by Zalani and Yousofi (2024) examined the impact of Instagram-based learning on EFL students' critical thinking skills and found that students who participated in Instagram-integrated learning activities performed better than those who used traditional instructional methods. The findings revealed that social media integration could significantly enhance learners' cognitive engagement and language performance (Tarihoran et al., 2022). As reported in the study, "the experimental group who used Instagram performed much better than the control group, indicating the effectiveness of integrating social media in language learning". These results indicate that Instagram may not only improve students' writing skills but also foster higher-order cognitive abilities in EFL learning contexts (Prasetyawati & Ardi, 2023).

The Development of Writing Skills in EFL Contexts

Writing is widely recognized as one of the most complex skills in language learning, as it requires learners to effectively organize ideas while applying appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structures. For EFL learners, the challenges associated with writing often result in low motivation and limited opportunities for practice. Therefore, educators are encouraged to incorporate innovative teaching

media that can stimulate students' interest and encourage them to practice writing more frequently (Nurisma et al., 2024).

The development of writing skills in EFL contexts has been influenced by the rapid advancement of digital technology. In modern language classrooms, writing is no longer limited to traditional paper-based activities but also involves digital platforms that allow students to communicate and construct knowledge collaboratively (Pambudi 2024, p. 67). According to Zalani, "digital technologies have transformed the ways in which people communicate and compose texts in second language contexts" (Zalani & Yousofi, 2024). This transformation affects how writing is taught and practiced in language learning environments.

Digital environments also support interaction between students and teachers through computer-mediated communication. These platforms allow learners to exchange ideas, receive feedback, and revise their writing more effectively. Li explains that "computer-mediated communication provides opportunities for learners to engage in meaningful interaction and collaborative writing practices" (Rahmawati et al., 2025). Through this interaction, students can develop their writing skills while improving their English communication skills.

Furthermore, digital tools encourage collaborative writing activities that help students generate ideas and improve their writing quality. Collaborative writing enables learners to share their perspectives and support one another throughout the writing process. According to Li, "collaborative digital environments allow students to co-construct texts and learn from peer feedback during the writing process" (Gardina, 2022). This process helps students develop both linguistic competence and critical thinking skills.

Another important concept discussed in the book is multimodal composing, which involves combining written language with other elements such as images, videos, and hyperlinks. This approach reflects modern communication practices in digital platforms and social media. Li states that "multimodal composing enables learners to integrate different modes of communication to express their ideas effectively in digital contexts" (Gardina, 2022). As a result, students can improve their writing skills while also developing digital literacy skills important in the contemporary learning environment.

Overall, integrating digital technologies into writing instruction offers new opportunities for EFL learners to practice writing in authentic, interactive contexts. Through digital platforms, students can collaborate, receive feedback, and develop their writing skills more effectively (Nurhakiki et al., 2025).

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design using a survey method to investigate the effect and students' perceptions of using Instagram as a writing teaching

tool in Indonesian EFL classrooms. Quantitative research focuses on collecting numerical data and analyzing it statistically to obtain objective findings about participants' responses, attitudes, and perceptions (Almusaed et al., 2025). In educational research, quantitative methods are frequently used to measure students' perceptions of learning media through structured instruments such as questionnaires and surveys. Previous studies also indicate that quantitative research involves systematic processes of collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and presenting numerical data obtained from participants in order to understand specific educational phenomena (Ahmad Saputra et al., 2023).

The survey method was selected because it allows researchers to collect responses from a relatively large group of participants efficiently using structured questionnaires. Survey research is widely used in studies investigating students' perceptions of digital learning tools, including social media platforms used in language learning (Lehmann, 2024, p. 69-70). Research examining the use of Instagram in EFL learning contexts has also employed quantitative survey-based approaches to investigate how students perceive social media as a medium for learning English (Ahmad Saputra et al., 2023). Therefore, this study adopted a quantitative, survey-based approach to examine students' perceptions of Instagram as a writing teaching tool.

Participants

This research was conducted at UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, Indonesia. The participants of this study were 100 undergraduate students from the English Education Study Program, who are categorized as EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners. In Indonesia, English is primarily learned in formal educational contexts and is not commonly used as a daily language of communication. Therefore, students studying English at universities are generally classified as EFL learners.

The 100 students served as the research sample of this study. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, meaning the researcher selected them based on specific criteria relevant to the study's objectives. The criteria included students enrolled in the English Education department who actively used Instagram. Selecting participants who are familiar with Instagram is important because they can provide relevant responses regarding their experiences using the platform in learning activities.

Previous research investigating social media in language learning contexts also selected students who actively use Instagram in order to obtain valid information about their learning experiences and perceptions of social media as a language learning tool (Ahmad Saputra et al., 2023). Therefore, undergraduate students in the English Education program were considered suitable participants for this study because they are familiar with English learning activities and commonly use social media platforms such as Instagram.

Research Instrument

One instrument was used to achieve the research objective: a survey questionnaire created in Google Forms. The questionnaire was designed to collect data regarding students' perceptions of using Instagram as a writing teaching tool in Indonesian EFL classrooms. However, before data collection, a set of questionnaire items was prepared to ensure the instrument was relevant to the study's objectives. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section contained participants' demographic information, such as name, age, gender, and academic level. Conversely, the second section consisted of statements about the use of Instagram in English writing. The statements explored several aspects of Instagram usage, including (1) whether Instagram helps students generate ideas in their English writing skills, (2) whether Instagram makes writing more interesting, (3) whether Instagram helps practice writing skills, (4) whether Feedback improves writing skills, and (5) whether Instagram is an effective learning tool. Each statement employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree* to measure students' perceptions.

Despite the extensive data collected through the questionnaire, this research primarily focuses on students' perceptions of Instagram's effectiveness as a writing-teaching tool in Indonesian EFL classrooms. The questionnaire items were developed based on previous studies on the use of social media platforms in language-learning contexts and their influence on students' engagement and writing practice (Manullang & Katemba, 2023). In the first stage, a small number of students completed the questionnaire as a preliminary test to ensure that the statements were clearly understood and relevant to the research topic. The results of this preliminary stage were used to revise the questionnaire before the main data collection. After the instrument was finalized, the survey was distributed online to 100 undergraduate EFL students at UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten to obtain more valid and reliable data for analyzing students' perceptions.

Data Collection Procedure

The data in this study were collected via an online survey. The questionnaire was created in Google Forms and distributed to participants via online platforms such as WhatsApp and email. Online surveys are widely used in educational research because they allow researchers to collect data efficiently from large numbers of respondents in a relatively short period of time.

The data collection procedure consisted of several stages. First, the researcher developed the five-item questionnaire based on previous studies examining the use of Instagram in language learning. Second, the questionnaire was uploaded to Google Forms to facilitate the online survey process. Third, the survey link was distributed to 100 EFL students at UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten who met the participant

criteria. The participants were then asked to voluntarily complete the questionnaire by selecting the most appropriate response for each statement.

Previous studies investigating students' perceptions of social media in language learning contexts have also used online questionnaires distributed via platforms such as Google Forms to collect survey data from participants (Manullang & Katemba, 2023). The participants' responses were automatically recorded and stored in the Google Forms database for further analysis.

Data Analysis

This study employed quantitative descriptive analysis to explain students' perceptions of the use of Instagram as a writing teaching tool in Indonesian EFL classrooms. The quantitative data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed using Google Forms to undergraduate EFL students. The responses from the questionnaire were automatically summarized in Google Forms and then presented quantitatively as percentages and frequencies to describe the overall pattern of students' perceptions of the use of Instagram in English writing. Quantitative research focuses on collecting numerical data and analyzing it using statistical procedures to identify patterns and relationships within the data (Almusaed et al., 2025).

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including percentage distributions and mean score calculations, to identify the level of agreement among participants. Descriptive statistics are commonly used in educational research to summarize and interpret numerical data from survey responses, enabling researchers to describe participants' attitudes and perceptions toward a particular phenomenon (Petrus, 2021). The analysis examined whether students perceived Instagram as an effective medium for improving their English writing skills. The results of the analysis were then interpreted to explain the overall perception of 100 undergraduate EFL students at UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten regarding the effectiveness of Instagram as a writing learning tool.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This study involved 100 undergraduate students from the English Education Department. The results are presented in two main sections: demographic data and students' perceptions of Instagram as a writing teaching tool.

Demographic Data

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents Based on Semester

Semester	Frequency	Percentage
Semester 2	20	20%

Semester 4	22	22%
Semester 6	58	58%
Total	100	100%

The data show that the majority of respondents were from semester 6 (58%), indicating that most participants had greater English-language learning experience.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents Based on Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	32	32%
Female	68	68%
Total	100	100%

The findings indicate that female students accounted for 68% of the respondents.

Students' Perceptions Toward Instagram

Table 3. Students' Responses and Mean Scores

No	Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean
1	Instagram helps generate ideas	7	9	43	27	14	3.32
2	Instagram makes writing more interesting	6	12	38	31	13	3.33
3	Instagram helps practice writing skills	8	4	31	43	14	3.51
4	Feedback improves writing	4	8	40	35	13	3.45
5	Instagram is an effective learning tool	11	3	42	36	8	3.27

Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Interpretation of Mean Scores

1.00 – 1.80 = Very Low

1.81 – 2.60 = Low

2.61 – 3.40 = Moderate

3.41 – 4.20 = High

4.21 – 5.00 = Very High

Overall Result

The overall mean score of all items is:

$$(3.32+3.33+3.51+3.45+3.27)/5=3.38$$

This indicates that students' perceptions fall into the moderate-to-high category, meaning Instagram is generally perceived as a useful and supportive tool, though not fully dominant.

Discussion

The first finding indicates that Instagram moderately supports students in generating ideas for writing ($M = 3.32$). The data show that 27% of students agreed and 14% strongly agreed, while a significant proportion (43%) remained neutral. This suggests that although Instagram provides visual and contextual stimuli that can inspire ideas, not all students fully utilize the platform for this purpose. The high neutral response may indicate that students tend to consume content passively rather than actively transforming it into written output. Therefore, Instagram has potential as a source of inspiration; however, its effectiveness in idea generation depends on how it is pedagogically integrated and whether students are guided to engage critically with the content (Mellinia et al., 2023).

The second finding reveals that Instagram increases students' interest in writing activities ($M = 3.33$). A total of 31% of respondents agreed, and 13% strongly agreed that Instagram makes writing more interesting, although 38% of students reported neutral perceptions. This result indicates that Instagram's interactive and multimodal features, such as images and captions, can enhance students' engagement and make writing activities more enjoyable (Prihatin, 2021). However, the relatively high neutral responses indicate that not all students experience the platform's motivational impact equally. This may be due to differences in learning preferences or the tendency to perceive Instagram primarily as a social rather than educational platform.

The third finding shows that Instagram is particularly effective in supporting writing practice ($M = 3.51$), which represents the highest mean score among all items. The data indicate that 43% of students agreed and 14% strongly agreed that Instagram helps them practice writing skills. This suggests that the platform offers meaningful opportunities for authentic writing, such as composing captions and engaging in comments (Sinthya et al., 2025). The ability to write in real-life contexts encourages students to practice more frequently and develop their writing fluency. This finding highlights that Instagram effectively serves as a medium for continuous, contextualized writing practice.

The fourth finding demonstrates that feedback received through Instagram improves students' writing ($M = 3.45$). A total of 35% of respondents agreed, and 13% strongly agreed, with this statement, while 40% remained neutral. This indicates that feedback plays an important role in writing development, particularly in digital

environments where interaction is more immediate. However, the high neutral percentage suggests that feedback may not be consistently experienced by all students or may not always be sufficiently constructive (Fiqri Fauzi, 2021). This implies that structured feedback strategies are necessary to maximize the benefits of peer and teacher interaction on the platform.

The final finding indicates that Instagram is perceived as a moderately effective learning tool for writing ($M = 3.27$). While 36% of students agreed and 8% strongly agreed, a large proportion (42%) expressed neutral responses. This suggests that although Instagram is recognized as beneficial, it is not fully perceived as a primary instructional medium. Instead, it functions more effectively as a supplementary tool that supports traditional teaching methods. These results highlight that Instagram's effectiveness depends largely on how it is integrated into the learning process and supported by appropriate instructional design (Zalani & Yousofi, 2024).

CONCLUSIONS

The use of Instagram has a positive impact on students' writing learning, particularly by facilitating continuous, contextualized writing practice. Students benefit from opportunities to compose captions and engage in interactions through comments, which promote frequent writing activities. Nevertheless, the overall effect is categorized as moderate to high, indicating that while Instagram is effective as a supplementary instructional tool, it does not fully replace conventional teaching methods.

Students generally exhibit positive perceptions of the use of Instagram in writing instruction, with an overall mean score in the moderate to high range (3.38). They perceive Instagram as an engaging and accessible platform that enhances interest, facilitates idea expression, and creates a more enjoyable learning experience. However, the substantial proportion of neutral responses suggests that not all students perceive its benefits equally, indicating that Instagram is more effective as a complementary rather than a primary instructional medium.

The aspects of Instagram that most significantly support students' writing learning include writing practice, feedback, and increased engagement. Interactive features such as captions, comments, and visual content enable students to develop ideas and participate actively in writing activities. However, aspects such as motivation and idea generation remain at a moderate level, as many students reported neutral perceptions. This suggests that the effectiveness of these aspects depends largely on how Instagram is systematically integrated into instructional practices.

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