

# **Indonesian Students' Perception and Their Interpretation on Instagram as Media for Learning Reading Comprehension**

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**ABSTRACT:** *In Indonesia, social media like Instagram can be integrated into the EFL teaching. Instagram is used either as a source of teaching materials or as EFL teaching media. Many students use Instagram for various purposes such as accessing photos, and videos, reading texts, grammar, and vocabulary. Meanwhile, teachers use Instagram to access information from which teaching materials are designed. This paper analyses students' perceptions towards the use of Instagram as a medium for learning reading comprehension. Instagram is used as learning media to improve their reading ability. Students create personal Instagram accounts and use this platform to practice reading texts. These activities involve Instagram features such as photos, videos, and text posts. This study aims to measure perceptions of students towards the use of Instagram as a learning medium for reading comprehension and to find out their interpretation of Instagram. This study used questionnaires and interviews as data collection instruments. The participants of the research were 156 students. Descriptive statistics were employed to analyze the questionnaire data, and categorization was utilized to analyze interview data. The results showed that students had a positive perception of the use of Instagram as learning media for reading comprehension. Students interpreted Instagram as an application to learn English such as searching for reading text, vocabulary, and English grammar. This result encourages EFL teachers to use Instagram in teaching reading comprehension to increase students' reading comprehension skills.*

**KEYWORDS:** *students; perception; interpretation; Instagram; reading.*

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning was usually used by school teachers to increase students' learning motivation (Mulyadi et al., 2022). Mobile phones could be used as innovative teaching media to promote students' motivation (Muhfiyanti et al., 2021). Mobile phones were suitable for use as teaching media at schools (Veronica et al., 2021). In the teaching and learning process, teachers needed teaching media to help students promote their language learning outcomes. Mobile phones could be used as teaching media and integrated into classroom activities to facilitate teaching.

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning can be categorized as a Social Network Site (SNS) which has several applications such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Myspace, and others (Alnujaidi, 2017). The application is easily applied by students and has interesting content so that it can be used as a tool for learning English. The use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning is very practical because it uses the internet network. It is often referred to by several terms such as social networking sites, social media, online social networks, and others (Park & Wu, 2020).

Research on students' perceptions of the use of Instagram as learning English media generally emphasizes aspects of writing skills. This can be seen in articles written by several authors. Students had positive perspective towards Instagram as a writing task application. It was fun and effective media to be utilized in doing writing tasks (Ramalia, 2021). Instagram could be used to analyse the effect of creative online learning and to create learning media that enabled students to publish their own visual media on Instagram (Salehudin et al., 2021). Instagram was applied to cultivate students' reading behaviour. It offered an innovative teaching strategy, and enabled teachers to promote students' reading comprehension (Morshidi et al., 2019). Moreover, students had positive perspectives on implementing Instagram in their writing tasks, and Instagram was a meaningful social network application that encouraged them to write better (Anggraeni, 2017). Those researches show that most researchers are more interested in themes that involved students' perceptions of Instagram as learning to write, and students have a positive perspective on Instagram that motivates them to learn writing skills. Although there are authors who investigate Instagram as a tool to improve students' reading habits, their study focuses on efforts to develop interesting reading material so that students are interested in learning to read.

Meanwhile, this study analyses students' perceptions and their interpretation on Instagram as media of learning reading skills. Even though many studies have showed that students have positive perspective towards Instagram as a writing assignment platform, little attention has been given to students' perception and interpretation on Instagram as media for learning reading comprehension. Therefore, this research is expected to produce useful findings about students' perceptions and interpretation of Instagram as media for learning reading skills. This research is important because it has relevance to students' ability to use Instagram as a tool to develop language skills such as reading, listening, speaking, and writing.

In Indonesia, the study of Instagram that students use as media for learning reading skills is still limited. This study is expected to be a solution to the lack of research related to students' perceptions of Instagram as learning media. This is because English is an important part of the Indonesian education curriculum system so that the need for mastery of English increases. A study of learning English in Indonesia is very important, but only a small amount of learning is done implementing social media such as Instagram in the classroom.

Instagram contains a lot of content and visual symbols such as sports, music, food, novels and leisure activities. This study describes students' perceptions of using Instagram and explores how students interpret Instagram as a tool for learning reading comprehension. The results of the study provide insight to researchers and teachers about the meaning and substance of Instagram in English learning activities.

Based on the explanation above, the study was conducted based on the research problems as follows: 1) How are students' perceptions of using Instagram as media for learning reading comprehension? 2) How do students define Instagram as a medium for learning English?

Social network sites are experiencing a rapid increase in popularity and facilitate English language education (Park & Wu, 2020). Terms such as social network sites, social media, online social network, and Web 2.0 have been widely used (Alnujaidi, 2017). Social media applications have played an important role in Creative Writing (Dagohoy, 2021). Therefore, the term social network sites are used based on web or **mobile**-based technologies that allow students to create unique profiles and content, make viewable connections with other users, and view or interact with content provided through user connections. (Ellison & Boyd, 2013).

Study on the use of social network sites (SNS) in classrooms has been conducted since it first received widespread attention in the early 2000s and has been generally positive. Many aspects of using SNS can facilitate English language teaching. Social Network Sites (SNS) provide tools for students to make learning materials more interesting and can improve learning outcomes independently (Chartrand, 2012). The study has shown the benefits of using SNS. It is used to develop language skills and increase student interaction (Dunn, 2013). The use of social media in the classroom has significant benefits because it helps students improve communicative and cultural competence (Maulina et al., 2019). Social media is beneficial to teaching English because it promotes students' communicative skills.

Language teaching is an activity to develop communication skills through interaction with students. Students interact with each other using the medium of language. When they use social media, they engage in communication activities and connect through language exchange (Isti'anah, 2017). Teaching and learning process is developed through interaction activities, which involve the relationship between individuals and the social world. Students communicate with other students and native speakers. The communication helps their learning in achieving learning outcome. The use of social media such as Instagram is a learning process in which students can improve their communication competence.

Instagram as part of social media is chosen for this study because researches show that Instagram can facilitate learning English. It helps students improve their writing skills. It can also be applied to motivate students to increase their confidence in communicating in English. Instagram and English enable students to communicate with classmates and other users. (Anggraeni, 2017). Instagram can also help students promote their reading and writing skills, listening comprehension, and the ability to understand certain opinions and information in reading texts. In addition, Instagram emphasizes visual content that can be used to support learning, familiarity, and popularity among students. Students incorporate all of these aspects when they use Instagram video with instructive text as a writing guide. Learning activities using Instagram can produce better writing. Students find video instructions more interesting. They enjoy fun video content by using Instagram in class. They find relevant content such as stories, images, reading text and videos from other users. This makes it easy for them to receive lessons from teachers directly through Instagram (Park & Wu, 2020).

There are many pedagogical benefits in using Instagram in English class so that many studies show significant writing output and communication skills. The research subjects in various studies are often students majoring in English at universities, or students in junior and senior high schools.

Learning activities carried out by integrating Instagram-based activities into class are more interesting and fun. Instagram was a useful language learning tool, and it motivated students to increase their English achievement. In addition, there was a correlation between using the platform and engaging in activities (Thomas, 2019). Student responses are very positive and most students agree that learning activities are

complemented by real-life communication patterns. The learning process takes place more easily than learning with textbooks. Learning with Instagram helps students improve their reading and writing motivation. The use of Instagram enables students to become active in class. This helps them apply Instagram more broadly so that learning objectives can be achieved.

On the other hand, with the outbreak of the global coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) in early 2020, many lecturers and students had to adapt to online teaching. Exploring the use of social media and Instagram in teaching English helpsteachers teach in online teaching, and helps students complete their class activities and homework.(Park & Wu, 2020).

Instagram has played an important role in the classroom activities because of its specific characteristics (Thomas & Park, 2020). Instagram can be used as a source of information for language learners. This is useful for EFL contexts where language practice is limited. Enjoyable learning is a key concept in appreciating the pedagogical benefits of Instagram. In the context of learning English through social media, every student has direct access to all their peers in learning English through Instagram.

Instagram components include text that describes everyday life such as pictures, canteens, food, ideas, games, music, parties, stories, travel, sports, books and others. The material is an object that attracts students' attention. Music, television, clothes and sports can be used as teaching materials to teach English(Leff, 2017). Pictures are objects that attract students' attention and can be used as English language teaching materials.(Scardina, 2017). Apart from as learning materials, the content can also be used as a means to improve student-centered learning approaches.(Rets, 2016).

## II. METHOD

The study used a descriptive method using questionnaires and interviews as data collection instruments. The questionnaire was developed by preparing 15 statements which contains 5 choices each. Options contain statements ranging from "totally agree, agree, neutral, disagree and totally disagree." The collected questionnaire data was analyzed using the SPSS program to obtain a percentage of students' perceptions of Instagram.

Meanwhile, interviews were constructed to capture qualitative data on how students interpret Instagram as learning English media. The interview was designed by giving 5 questions to students. Interview questions were developed in the form of unstructured interviews which allow students to express their thoughts about the meaning of Instagram (Denscombe, 2003). Student responses to interviews were analyzed using the categorization to determine the meaning of Instagram according to students.

Respondents were students who programed Critical Reading course at the English Language Education Department of the University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia. The objective of the Critical Reading course is to increase students competence in the skills to criticize the reading texts they read. The number of respondents was 156 students, and seven of them were selected to be interviewed about how they interpret Instagram as learning media of reading comprehension.

## III. FINDINGS

After the data was collected in the form of a questionnaire about students' perceptions of Instagram as learning reading comprehension media, the data was analyzed to obtain a percentage of students' perceptions of Instagram. The results of data calculation is seen in table 1 below.

**Table 1.** *Students' perceptions of Instagram*

No	Statement	Totally Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Totally Disagree (%)
1	I use Instagram to develop my reading skills	69.9	29.5	0	0.6	0
2	I use Instagram to find interesting ideas from reading texts	57.7	38.5	1.3	2.6	0
3	I use Instagram to improve my English vocabulary	53.2	42.9	1.9	1.9	0
4	I like using Instagram to get the example of using verbs	44.2	49.4	1.3	4.5	0.6
5	I use Instagram to get the example of using nouns	28.8	57.1	5.8	8.3	0
6	I use Instagram to get the example of using adjectives	25.6	60.9	8.3	5.1	0
7	I use Instagram to get the example of using adverbs	37.8	53.2	4.5	4.5	0
8	I like using Instagram to learn English idioms	19.9	47.4	10.9	20.5	1.3
9	I use Instagram to get videos about the reading activity	26.9	47.4	14.7	10.3	0.6

10	I use Instagram to get English texts	46.8	46.2	1.3	5.1	0.6
11	I use Instagram to improve my English grammar	34.6	50.6	3.2	10.3	1.3
12	I like using Instagram to get the example of simple sentences	38.5	50.6	5.8	4.5	0.6
13	I use Instagram to learn English daily expressions	43.6	44.9	5.1	5.8	0.6
14	I use Instagram to get information about reading strategies	53.8	40.4	1.9	3.8	0
15	I use Instagram to communicate with friends	30.8	49.4	11.5	8.3	0

Table 1 describes students' perceptions of Instagram as media of learning Reading Comprehension. Most students think that using Instagram helps them develop their reading skills (99.4%), find interesting ideas from reading texts (96.2%), and improve their English vocabulary (96.1%). This means that integrating Instagram in language classes allows students to improve their reading skills, access valuable ideas from Instagram, and develop vocabulary mastery.

Moreover, table 1 explains that students use Instagram to get the example of using verbs (93.6%), to get the example of using nouns (85.9%), to get the example of using adjectives (86.5%), to get the example of using adverbs (91%), to learn English idioms (67.3%). Furthermore, it explains that students use Instagram to get videos about the reading activity (74.3%), to get English texts (93%), to improve English grammar (85.2%).

Table 1 also demonstrates that students use Instagram to get the example of simple sentences (89.1%), to learn English daily expressions (88.5%), to get information about reading strategies (94.2%), and to communicate with friends (80.2%)

Based on table 1 above, it can be said that students have a positive perception of Instagram as a medium for learning reading comprehension. The results of this study can be used as a reference which illustrates that students have a tendency to use Instagram. They use Instagram for several purposes like: 1) to promote their reading skills; 2) to get important ideas from reading texts; and 3) to develop their English vocabulary.

Meanwhile, interview responses about the students' definition of Instagram are seen on from table 2 to table 6.

#### *Interview Response*

**Table 2: Interview: What is Instagram?**

Students	Response
1	Instagram is a smartphone program to download photos and videos.
2	Instagram is a smartphone program to upload photos and videos.
3	Instagram is a smartphone program to comment on photos and videos.
4	Instagram is a smartphone program to share life experience.
5	Instagram is a smartphone program to share information.
6	Instagram is a smartphone program to search for reading texts.
7	Instagram is a smartphone program to search for English vocabulary.

Table 2 explains students' definition of Instagram. They define Instagram as a smartphone program to download and to upload photos and videos, to share life experience, to comment on photos and videos, to find information, to search for reading texts, and to search for English vocabulary.

**Table 3: Interview: Why do you use Instagram?**

Students	Response
1	I use Instagram because it is interesting.
2	I use Instagram because it helps me find interesting photos and videos.
3	I use Instagram because it helps me share my photos and videos to friends.
4	I use Instagram because it helps me communicate with friends.
5	I use Instagram because it helps me learn English through photos and videos.
6	I use Instagram because it helps me learn vocab through photos and videos.
7	I use Instagram because it helps me learn popular proverbs.

Table 3 indicates students' reason why they use Instagram. They use Instagram because it is interesting, it helps them find interesting photos and videos, it helps them share their photos and videos to friends, it helps them communicate with friends, it helps them learn English through photos and videos, it helps them learn vocab through photos and videos, and it helps them learn popular proverbs.

**Table 4: Interview: When do you use the Instagram?**

Students	Response
1	I use Instagram when I need photos or videos.
2	I use Instagram when I need to share my photos or videos.

3	I use Instagram when I need to find English texts through photos or videos.
4	I use Instagram when I need to find English proverbs.
5	I use Instagram when I need to find English daily expression.
6	I use Instagram when I need to find English conversation.
7	I use Instagram when I need to find English vocabulary.

Table 4 describes time when students use Instagram that is when they need photos or videos, when they need to share their photos or videos, when they need to find English texts through photos or videos, when they need to find English proverbs, when they need to find English daily expression, when they need to find English conversation, and when they need to find English vocabulary.

**Table 5: Interview:What are the advantages of Instagram?**

Students	Response
1	Instagram facilitates finding friends or users.
2	Instagram facilitates sharing information.
3	Instagram facilitates sharing knowledge.
4	Instagram facilitates searching for English vocab.
5	Instagram facilitates sharing sweet memory.
6	Instagram facilitates communication.
7	Instagram facilitates searching for current issues.

Table 5 shows students' opinion of some advantages of Instagram. Instagram facilitates finding friends or users, sharing information, sharing knowledge, searching for English vocab, sharing sweet memory, communication, and searching for current issues.

**Table 6: Interview:How do you use Instagram?**

Students	Response
1	I use Instagram by registering for a password.
2	I use Instagram by logging in to the application.
3	I use Instagram by a smart-phone.
4	I use Instagram by a laptop.
5	I use Instagram by a tablet.
6	I use Instagram by connecting internet signal to a desktop computer.
7	I use Instagram by subscribing Wi-Fi at home.

Table 6 explains the way students use Instagram. They use Instagram by registering for a password, by logging in to the application, by a smart-phone, by a laptop, by a tablet, by connecting internet signal to a desktop computer, and by subscribing Wi-Fi at home.

Based on the interview responses, it can be said that students defined Instagram as a smartphone application to access photos and videos such as to upload, to download and to comment on. They explained that Instagram was a smartphone application to share life experience and information. Moreover, they called it a smartphone application to learn English such as to search for reading texts and vocabulary.

Students had some reasons for using Instagram. They used it because it was interesting, and helped them find interesting photos and videos and share their photos and videos to friends. It helped them communicate with friends and learn English through photos and videos. Moreover, it helps them learn vocab through photos and videos and learn popular proverbs.

Students used Instagram when they needed photos or videos and shared them. Students used it when they needed to find English texts and English proverbs through photos or videos. Furthermore, students utilized Instagram when they needed to find English daily expression, conversation, and English vocabulary.

Students had opinion of some advantages of Instagram such as connecting friends or users, sharing information, and sharing knowledge. Moreover, Instagram benefited them searching for English vocab, sharing sweet memory, and communication. And they thought Instagram was beneficial for searching for current issues.

Students had some strategies to use Instagram such as by registering for a password, by logging in to the application, and by utilizing a smart-phone. They used Instagram by a laptop, by a tablet, by connecting internet signal to a desktop computer, and by subscribing Wi-Fi at home.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that first, students had a positive perception of Instagram as learning media, especially reading comprehension. Second, students defined Instagram as a smartphone application to access photos and videos. Instagram was a smartphone application to share experience and information. Students also called it application to learn English such as to search for reading texts and vocabulary. The results of the study answered the research problems mentioned earlier, namely: 1) How are students' perceptions of

using Instagram as a medium for learning reading comprehension? 2) How do students interpret Instagram as learning English media?

The findings are supported by data consisting of 156 students who responded to the questionnaire. From the results of the questionnaire, 99.4% of students think that using Instagram helps them develop their reading skills, 96.2% of them think that using Instagram helps them find interesting ideas from reading texts, and 96.1% of them think that using Instagram helps them improve their English vocabulary. This means that applying Instagram in language classes assists students to promote their reading skills, to access valuable ideas, and to increase vocabulary mastery.

The result of questionnaire is consistence with Ramalia (2021); Salehudin (2021); Morshidi (2019); and Anggraeni (2017). Students had a positive perspective towards Instagram, and it was a fun, easy, and effective tool to be applied in doing assignments. It could be employed to create learning media in order that the process of learning became more creative. Instagram was applied to develop students' reading behaviour. Moreover, students have positive perspectives towards the use of Instagram in doing assignments, and it was a valuable social network platform that motivates students to learn better.

After the questionnaires were collected, the researcher randomly selected seven students to be interviewed. The interview results showed that students defined Instagram as a smartphone application for accessing photos, videos, and commenting on them. They explained that Instagram was a smartphone application for sharing experiences and information. They also called it an application for learning English such as to search for reading texts and English vocabulary.

Meanwhile, the interview results support previous research, namely, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning can be used to increase student interest and motivation in learning English. Mobile phones can be implemented in teaching English as a creative and innovative teaching media that increase students' interest and motivation. Mobile phones can be employed as teaching media to improve students' performance. (Mulyadi et al., 2022; Muhfiyanti et al., 2021; Veronica et al., 2021). Therefore, Instagram can be used as teaching media to improve students' learning outcomes of reading comprehension. This is because Instagram can be used to access information related to reading texts, vocabulary, and English grammar.

English teachers are expected to use Instagram as teaching media of reading comprehension courses. They provide students with assignments to access the latest interesting news through Instagram, and let students discuss in class. Such activities enable teachers to provide students with creative learning experiences.

Students use Instagram as a tool to find learning resources related to reading comprehension courses. They access information to increase knowledge about vocabulary mastery and English grammar, which help them understand reading texts easily.

The study needs to be developed by adding data or by using other research methods such as experiments so that the results can be used to strengthen the role of Instagram as a learning media that promotes student achievement.

The difference between the results of this study and previous studies is that this study used questionnaires and interviews. The results of data analysis shows that students have a positive perception of Instagram as media of learning reading comprehension, and it also indicates students' interpretations of Instagram. Students define Instagram as an application to access English vocabulary, to search for reading texts, and to share information.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that students have a positive perception of using Instagram as media of learning reading comprehension. This means that integrating Instagram in language classes allows students to improve their reading skills, to access valuable ideas, and to develop vocabulary mastery.

Meanwhile, there are seven meanings of Instagram according to students based on interview responses, namely: 1) to search for English vocabulary; 2) to search for reading texts; 3) to share information; 4) to share life experience; 5) to comment on photos and videos; 6) to upload photos and videos; and 7) to download photos and videos.

The data of the study is limited that is 156 students, and data collection techniques are questionnaires and interviews. Therefore, there is a need for further research involving a larger number of respondents so that students' perceptions of Instagram can be developed significantly.

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