INSTACLASS: INCORPORATING INSTAGRAM AS A MOBILE LEARNING TOOL IN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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Abstract: Technology has shifted teacher-centered approach to a more student-centered learning, where students construct their own understanding (Linn, 1998) and acquire new language while also building networks and socializing with their peers in a meaningful communication. This mixed-method research aimed to explore students' perspectives in using Instagram as a platform to learn English. The findings of the research showed that most students felt more motivated in learning English in classrooms where Instagram is integrated as a learning tool. More importantly, students also felt more engaged in meaningful communication during the learning process, which is in accordance with the previously conducted studies. Students also revealed that Instagram can promote meaningful interaction as well as learner autonomy which are essential for their life outside the classroom.

Keywords: Instagram, language classroom, meaningful communication

BACKGROUND

Advances in technology have changed the way students obtain information and learn new things (Figueiredo and Afonso, 2005). Students have no longer relied on printed books and materials, since technology and internet provide easier, faster, and cheaper access with wider and more varied resources (Pelgrum, 2001). Technology has also shifted teacher-centered approach to a more student-centered learning, where students construct their own understanding (Linn, 1998) and acquire new language while also building networks and socializing with their peers in a meaningful communication.

Among various platforms and social media, *Instagram* is deemed to be particularly popular for teenagers and young adults. *Instagram* allows users to post their pictures and write interesting captions to capture their followers' attention. *Instagram* is not only used for socializing and garnering attention, but also promoting and selling products. The increasing use of *Instagram* to market products is hyped by *Selebgram* –a term for celebrities popular in *Instagram*. One does not need to fill requirements of a model to be able to become *selebgram*, as long as they can post interesting contents, such as the current trend of make up or fashion.

This trend pushed young adults and teens to produce creative and interesting photos so that the y can get more attention from their peers. Some people even make a living from being popular on *Instagram* and endorse products from various sellers and companies. This research focused on the incorporation of *Instagram* in the teaching of English for students of Business Administration Department of State Polytechnic of Malang which is used as a medium to promote products in English that is in accordance with D3 and D4 curriculum. Students posted pictures of local products and wrote interesting captions to garner international buyers' attention. This research attempts to investigate students' perceptions on the use of *Instagram* as learning media and identify challenges encountered by the

students while using it. The present research aims to answer the following questions: a) What are students' perceptions on using *Instagram* in the language classroom? and b) What are the challenges encountered by the students in using *Instagram* in the language classroom?

Social Media in the language classroom

Learners who are actively involved and engaged in the learning process have long been known to be learning better than those who learn in a traditional method where they function as passive listeners (Parker, Maor, and Herrington, 2013). Learners need to have opportunities to construct their own knowledge and recognize how certain decision is the right decision or whether a certain solution will solve the problem during the process of learning as part of a rehearsal for the real life work (Bransford, Brown, and Cocking, 1999).

For this purpose, technology and internet, particularly social media, are now incorporated in the language classroom and have been revealed to give advantages for language production (Amer, 2014; Stockwell & Liu, 2015; Richards, 2015). Instead of teaching students the language structure and rules, learners will be situated in an environment where they need to use the language (in this case, English) to share their ideas, work collaboratively to promote products and services, and use the technology to share their ideas (Schezher and Warschauer, 2000). By giving opportunities for interaction and collaboration, learners can provide mutual assistance and move from their Zone Proximal Development (Gibbons and Cummins, 2002), and at the same time, a non-comprehensible language will turn into comprehensible and be incorporated into learners' target language (Van Lier, 2000).

Social Media and Students' Motivation

Social media benefit language learning by creating environment where the learners are involved in meaningful interaction and enable them to establish connection beyond the classroom (Fewkes & McCabe, 2012; Yu et al., 2010). Instead of answering multiple questions in a piece of paper which arehardly relatable, students are asked to search the trend, identify the language used by *Instagram* celebrities, and use their understanding to promote their own products. Parker et.al. have revealed how engaging students in real life interaction can boost their motivation to use a foreign language (2013).

In EFL context, students are often demotivated to learn English for they do not find the materials interesting (Falout and Maruyama, 2004) and is seen as less useful in real interaction. By incorporating *Instagram* in the language classroom, it is expected to boost students' positive attitudes to learn English for they use *Instagram* in their daily activities. As students can access more varied materials, they find learning more fun than the traditional classroom (Husniyah, 2018).

Instagram for Business Marketing

Founded in 2010, *Instagram* is one of several popular social media among teenagers, adults, and young adults which is freely available both in Google Play and Application Store (Bergstrom & Backman, 2013). Well-known as photo-sharing application mainly for socializing and building network, *Instagram* now is also used as one powerful marketing tool.

This particularly happened in Indonesia, in which thousands of young adults and teens compete to grab attention from their followers and sell their products. The more interesting and better the pictures they post, the more attention they get. The more eye-catching the captions, the more followers buy the products. Sellers can, for example give good reviews on the products, or explain the products in eye-catching captions. Sellers can also choose to promote their products or services through short video available in *Instagram* features.

Given this current trend, it is important for the students to be taught how to market products using their personal social media accounts, so that they can build their business network and at the same time can analyze their market. To be able to broaden their

network for international buyers, students need to write their reviews and captions in English, or to promote their products in short *Instagram* video. By using language used internationally, students will be able to capture broader and wider market. This is also a good opportunity to apply their knowledge of English to communicate in a meaningful way, which is to interact with real customers. For the aforementioned reasons, the students have been taught various common expressions to identify current trends, to market their product, to ask and answer questions, and also to initiate business talks.

Previously, students in the subject class have searched the current product promoted by *Instagram* celebrities. Students, then, collected various discourses and identify the grammatical structures. Next, students promoted two selected products or services to be promoted and wrote their captions to grab buyers' attention. Students are also asked to promote their selected products or services in short videos uploaded in *Instagram.*

METHODS

The present researchaims to identify students' perceptions on using *Instagram* and to identify challenges encountered by the students in using *Instagram* in the language classroom. This research is conducted using mixed-methods in two phases to answer the research questions.

First, quantitative data will be collected through questionnaire survey to explore various students' perceptions on using *Instagram* as learning media in their language classroom. The students' perceptions are then used to construct questions used in the next semi-structured interview. Second, some students will be interviewed using some structured questions which are designed based on the results of the survey to explain and further investigate the results of the research. Data will be analyzed in two ways, using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis (will further be explained below).

Before students were given questionnaire and being interviewed, they were taught of the use of Instagram as an online marketing tool. They were also taught to search for examples of *Instagram* use in online marketing. Students were also given detailed instructions on the task, which is as followed:

Pre-activity	In group of three, look for three products you like which are advertised in English. Analyze the use of English in the captions they use for marketing.
Main activity	Take two pictures of two different products. Post them on your *Instagram* account with alluring captions as what you have analysed before.
	Comment on your friends' *Instagram* posts. Give constructive feedbacks to their posts in terms of the quality of the pictures as well as the captions they posted.
Post-activity	Two most attractive posts will be given 3 points.

Table 1. Classroom activities

Students then uploaded their works before the deadline set up by the teacher. In a group of three people, they uploaded two pictures containing the product they advertised with the caption they wrote by themselves.

The overview of the methodology is as follows:

Steps	Sampling	Purpose	Data Collection Method	Data Analysis
Quantitative Research: Creating and distributing questionnaire	60 second year students in Business Administration Major	To explore students' perceptions	Close-ended questionnaire	Descriptive Statistics
Qualitative	4 second year	To further	Semi-	Thematic

| Research: conducting semi-structured interviews | students in Business Administration Major | investigate the result of the questionnaire | structured interviews | Analysis |

Table 2. Overview of the Methodology

The subjects are 100 students (Second-year D3 students) of Business Administration Department of State Polytechnic of Malang. Data of the research are in two formats: quantitative data and qualitative data. Quantitative data are used to explore students' perceptions, while qualitative data are used to further investigate the result of the questionnaire.

Data will be collected through questionnaire survey (close-ended questionnaire) and semi-structured interview. The questionnaire will be the basis to design the questions asked in the interview to investigate the data further. Data collected are analyzed using two methods. Data from the quantitative survey are analysed using Descriptive Statistics to describe the basic features of the research data using graphs or charts (Gray, 2014). Data from semi-structured interview will be recorded and analyzed using thematic analysis using the framework of Clark and Braun (2013).

FINDINGS

Results of the Questionnaire

A close-ended questionnaire with 10 questions were given to the students. Of 90 questionnaires given to the students, 57 valid questionnaires were filled by the participants which were used as the basis of the research. The results of the questionnaire are as follow:

No.	Statement	Students' Responses (%)			
		Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**
1.	I am excited in using *Instagram* as a learning tool	30.4	59.6	0	10
2.	I feel more motivated in using *Instagram* in learning English.	25	66	0	9
3.	I feel more engaged to the learning process when I use *Instagram* in learning English	24.5	52.5	3	20
4.	I learn more English vocabulary by using *Instagram*	30.7	53	0	16.3
5.	I prefer using *Instagram* to learn English than reading textbooks.	37.1	43.1	2	17
6.	I prefer using *Instagram* in learning online marketing than reading textbooks.	41.2	41.2	5	12.6
7.	I learn Grammar usage more by using *Instagram* in the learning process	27	42.9	3	27.1
8.	I use my Grammar knowledge to write captions	17	67	0	16
9.	I feel engaged in a meaningful interaction	21	56	4	19
10.	I feel engaged in a useful	35	63	0	2

communication

Table 4. Results of the questionnaire

The above table shows the students' perceptions on using *Instagram* as a mobile learning tool. More than half of the students felt that using *Instagram* made them more excited and motivated in learning English, as shown in question 1 and 2 with 90% of students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement given in the questionnaire. Most importantly, more than 90% of the students (98%) felt more engaged in the learning process since they are involved in the process of accomplishing the task (posting the picture and writing the captions), leaving only 2% of the students who disagreed that they were engaged in the process of learning.

The findings also revealed that students learn more English grammar and vocabulary during the learning process as they have to post the pictures and captions in their real *Instagram* account, with 70% of them agreed that learning Grammar by putting their knowledge of a certain Grammar elements (for example, whether to use simple Past Tense or Present Tense, or whether to use gerund or to-infinitive) and correcting mistakes in their caption made them learn more English, and 84% of them learned more vocabulary when they chose words as the captions of the picture of the product they advertised. They paid more attention to the grammar and the vocabulary because they did not want to get bad reviews from their peers if they happened to post grammatically incorrect captions.

In other statements, more than half of the students also show their learning style preferences. They preferred to learn English (81%) as well as learning online marketing using *Instagram* (84%) rather than by reading their textbooks. Students also used their English knowledge to write the captions to make sure they did not make any severe grammatical mistakes.

The last two statements also revealed that students feel more engaged (77%) in a meaningful interaction, meaning that they conveyed real messages, which is to market their products. Almost all of them (98%) also felt more engaged in useful communication since they know for sure what is the real purpose of the task, rather than simply doing exercises in the classroom.

Results of the Interviews

Based on the results of the questionnaire, three students were being interviewed. The followings are the basic questions given to the students:
a. What is your opinion in using *Instagram* as a learning mobile tool?
b. What are the benefits you got from using *Instagram* as a mobile learning tool?
c. What are the problems you encountered during the learning process?

The results of the interviews were then categorized according to the theme using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013) as follow:

Instagram is a useful tool to help students learn English	Writing *Instagram* captions are more fun and relatable because students convey real messages to real audience.
	Writing *Instagram* captions helps students learn more English grammar and vocabulary by putting into use Grammar elements they have learned in the class and choosing effective and correct words to market their product.
	Writing *Instagram* captions make students more engaged in the learning process compared to completing workbooks.
Instagram strengths compared to traditional classroom	*Instagram* exposed students to more English daily usage than traditional textbooks.
	Instagram offers more beautiful and interesting pictures.
	Instagram is part of their communication tool.

Problems encountered in using *Instagram* in the learning process	It takes more time to prepare the pictures and the captions.
	It needs stable internet connection.

Table 5. Students' responses to the interview

The above tables show how the majority of the students favored using *Instagram* as a learning tool rather than their traditional textbooks for various reasons, for example: they know for sure the messages they sent to the audience, and they felt that they could relate why their captions were essential to promote their products. During the process of writing the captions, students also use their English knowledge (vocabulary choice and grammar) to avoid grammatical mistakes.

DISCUSSION

Based on the above data, the findings of the research are discussed in three parts, namely a) Instagram as a mobile learning tool in English classrooms, b) meaningful interaction in language learning, and c) common problems encountered in integrating technology in the classroom.

Instagram as a mobile learning tool in English Classrooms

Although many studies have been conducted on the use of *Facebook* (Bowman & Akcaoglu, 2014; McCarthy, 2010) and *Twitter* (Krüger-Ross, Waters, & Farewell, 2012; Reed, 2013; Warren & Wakefield, 2012) as language learning tools, only few studies have been done on *Instagram*, particularly as a language learning tool. Bell (2013) wrote his attempts to use *Instagram* for his college students' field trips in a library science course. Although the study was not conducted in language classroom, *Instagram* was revealed to be a helpful tool to motivate students in the learning process.

Salomon (2013) and Tekulve & Kelly (2013) revealed their successful attempts in using *Instagram* as a tool to reach more audience as opposed to other types of social media. Ali (2014) also conducted a similar study on how to use *Instagram* as a mobile learning tool and suggested three different ways to use it as a part of classroom activities, which are to boost students speaking skill by asking students to present a story based on their chosen pictures on *Instagram*, to improve students writing skill by writing stories based on their browsed pictures in *Instagram*, and also writing stories based on the picture they took themselves. Ali revealed how students felt more engaged and motivated in the learning process since they were quite familiar with this social media and felt the urge to convey real messages to the audience. Handayani, Cahyono, and Widiati (2018) further revealed the use of Instagram as a medium of learning in their EFL writing class in Indonesian settings, resulting in significant difference between the pre- and post-test writings. It was suggested that using Instagram could help students improve their writing skill and their interest in the learning process.

These previously conducted studies were in accordance with the present research, in which students also showed positive response with more than half of them considered Instagram a useful tool to learn English in a digitally connected world as quoted by one interview participant

"I find it hard to relate why I have to fill in random questions about Simple Past Tense or Simple Present Tense in my workbook, like, why did I even do this? For what purpose? But writing captions and using Grammar elements in the captions helped me understand the concept of time in those Grammar tenses, which is something I could relate, a purpose which is relatable."

Another interview participant also revealed that learning English using workbooks is hardly engaging and is boring, as shown in the following interview excerpts:

"Writing answers on workbooks about Grammar or vocabulary is really boring. I lost my interest once I can solve several problems presented in the book. I also lost motivation when I don't understand a certain Grammar elements. Using Instagram, on the other hand, felt more adventurous, like, I can write anything here as long as it is understandable to the audience, it is okay to be wrong, as long as people understand, I think."

One important point was revealed in the findings, in which students felt safer when they used Instagram captions to experiment with the Grammar, rather than when using workbooks, where there are correct and incorrect answers. Using Instagram exposed them to more varied sentences without being afraid of making mistakes in using them. Allowing students to feel okay when they made mistakes were revealed to raise their self-efficacy (Walker, 2010). When students viewed themselves as readers or writers, instead of learners who need to be corrected, they will engage more actively in the learning process, which results in more enhanced self-efficacy.

Promoting Meaningful Interaction by Using Social Media

Some language tasks are deemed to promote interaction, such as simulation, games, drama, using electronic media (Oxford, 1997). These tasks combine collaborative and cooperative learning, which represent the real-world system, where meaningful interaction happens to achieve a particular purpose.

It is essential for the students to be exposed to the real use of language, so that they can be engaged to real interaction beyond the classroom. With the present of technology and social media, meaningful interaction no longer requires the actual presence of a native speaker. Students can engage in real interaction through various social media, like Facebook, Twitter, and in this case, Instagram.

In the study conducted by Mondahl and Liana (2014), they revealed that collaborative and cognitive processes occurred during the interaction by means of digital technology which can be a supportive and conducive platform to foster successful language learning.

By creating meaningful interaction through the use of social media, students can be more engaged and more involved in the learning process and as a result, boost their motivation which were also in line with the results of the questionnaire, and further elaborated by one interview participant:

"Most of the time, we do not know why we did things we did in the classroom. As soon as we go outside, we totally forgot what we learned. This is mostly because we aren't really engaged in the learning. But using Instagram, we need to take pictures, edit them, and write the captions as interesting as possible, which made us think of the words we were using, applying our knowledge of Grammar."

One interview participant also highlighted that using Instagram helped her understand how to make complex sentences, instead of simple sentences she usually wrote in the class.

"I just realized why we need to write complex sentences, and how to do it. Because I wrote the captions by myself, you know, not only filling in the gaps of random questions in books."

Integrating Technology to Promote Autonomy

Using technology in the classroom has another perk, which is to promote learner autonomy. By giving direct access to learning materials through the use of social media and internet, students can also build their learning autonomy, while working with their peers in taking initiative, planning, and accepting all responsibilities of their own learning process (Murray, 2014). In accordance with this, one interview participant revealed:

"When we work in group, sometimes only one of us did the work, and others did not get involved. This is because the task itself can be managed to be done by one person, and the task is not really interesting. So we need to get it done soon. In this task, on the other hand, all of us want to get involved. We want to participate in choosing the pictures, taking pictures, and editing them, and writing the captions based on the pictures."

Moreover, it is also important to assist students to the more updated way of retrieving, processing, and constructing knowledge to achieve purposes beyond task completion, such as for real product marketing as traditional skill of information retrieval is no longer sufficient in order to live and work (Ritter, et.al., 2001). Learning in the digital era should not only be regarded as memorizing formulas and drilling patterns, rather as information gathering and knowledge processing which include applying previously

gathered information with the new knowledge for language acquisition and to produce new knowledge. Learning should be an active process that combines both their past and new knowledge (Bruner, 1990).

By giving them language tasks which promotes not only their learning autonomy, but also their knowledge construction, teachers can help them prepare for using the target language in everyday communication.

CONCLUSION

The present research aimed to explore students' perspectives in using Instagram as a platform to learn English. The findings of the research showed that most students felt more motivated in learning English in classrooms where Instagram is integrated as a learning tool. More importantly, students also felt more engaged in meaningful communication during the learning process, which is in accordance with the previously conducted studies. Students also revealed that Instagram can promote meaningful interaction as well as learner autonomy which are essential for their life outside the classroom.

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