

ENHANCING ESP STUDENTS WRITING SKILL DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC BY USING INSTAGRAM

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Abstract

The covid 19 pandemic has led the Indonesian government to carry out distant learning. This study aims to give an overview of a potential Instagram platform that can be used in teaching writing for ESP university students during the pandemic. Besides, social media is part of technology advancement to improve students' motivation and the efficacy of learning a language (Nugroho & Rahmawati, 2020). The present study sheds light on the effect of the use of Instagram on ESP students writing ability. The pre-experimental research will be conducted in eight meetings, including the writing pre-test and post-test. The students will be assigned to write a descriptive essay using Instagram as the instructional medium. Moreover, a questionnaire will be given to reveal their perceptions toward the use of Instagram to practice writing. The finding of this study is expected to provide a significant contribution to the realm of English for specific purposes (ESP) teaching in Indonesia.

Keywords : Instagram, ESP learners, Writing skill, COVID-19 Pandemic

INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 has overloaded worldwide mass media every day in 2020 (McAleer, 2020 in Atmojo A & Nugroho A 2020). The National Covid-19 Handling Task Force on Monday 12 October 2020 confirmed 3,267 new covid-19 cases, bringing the total number of confirmed covid-19 cases in Indonesia to 336,716 (Medcom.id, 2020). The outbreak of covid -19 shocking various countries around the world, including Indonesia. One sector impact by the Coronavirus (Covid-19) is felt by the world of education. Febriani et al (2020) state there are approximately 421 million students are disrupted by their school activities throughout the world and are forced by their educational matters in the future.

Before covid situations, distance learning is sometimes implemented as an additional class. There is various type of online media combined with face to face learning. Unfortunately, the situation force educational must go online without face to face learning anymore. The process of learning a foreign language is normally held in the classroom, with a structured **system**, material that has been prepared, and some

factors that support the success of learning such as adequate facilities and infrastructure (Mahmudi, 2019 in Febriani et al, 2020). The educational actors; lecturers, lecturers, and students consider this is a significant change in the learning system in Indonesia.

STIE Muhammadiyah Mamuju starting online learning on march 17th 2020 by officially letterhead of STIEM No. 157/III.3AU/A/2020 is a responsive response to this pandemic. Then, through the government's appeal and Muhammadiyah Covid-19 Command Center about the prohibition of advanced learning in Muhammadiyah campus on September 2020 till unpredictable time (letter No. 01/EDR/Covid-19/2020), STIE Muhammadiyah Mamuju continous to run via online learning by utilizing E-Campus facilities or other forms.

Instagram is a relatively new form of communication where users can easily share their updates by taking videos of photos (Yuheng Hu in Sofiyah, 2018). In addition, Instagram can also add text to give information about the pictures shared. Instagram is a contemporary platform that becomes the favorite of almost all of the students in STIE Muhammadiyah Mamuju. This is the main reason to choose the Instagram platform for enhancing ESP students writing skills during the covid-19 pandemic. The reason also supported by Safini (2017) in Sholikhah et al (2019) explained that Instagram becomes interesting and valuable media in her English class. To ensure the objectives, the study is guided by these two questions: (1) does the ESP students' ability in writing improve after being taught by Instagram? and (2) What are ESP students' perspectives on the use of Instagram in teaching writing?

Teaching Writing in Covid 19 situation

Writing is a productive language skill in which students have to express their opinion and ideas through written utterances (Ahmad, 2019 in Nugroho A & Rahmawati A, 2020). Among the four skills, the students always answer writing skills is the most difficult. Nugroho, 2019 adds the primary challenge of acquiring writing competence is how to build ideas and compose them into grammatically and culturally appropriate written expressions.

In Covid-19 situations, teaching writing more challenging for lecturers nor students. Ur, (2012) in Nugroho A & Rahmawati A, (2020) suggest several criteria in planning and creating a task, the criteria are (1) the task should be motivating and stimulating; (2) the language use should be appropriate with the level of students; (3) the topic of writing should be in line with the students' interest; and (4) the task should be easy to understand. To cover the challenges and the criteria, information, and communication technology (ICT), the Instagram platform can be an alternative.

ESP Learners

Facing English for Specific Purposes (ESP) program at university as a part of their commitment to improvement, this university is working to better prepare ESP Learners for employment so that they may function well in the workplace after graduation. The ESP subjects that are taught within the center depend on students' disciplines (Wicaksono, 2010 in Kurnia and Hafid 2019). ESP Learners are required to achieve a certain score to pass. Not only communicative from its importance but also the grammatical aspect as well.

Milaningrum, et al, (2018) wrote there are some problems faced by ESP learners in written text. There are (1) students who were unfamiliar with ESP vocabularies/diction based on their major. They felt difficult to produce the diction in their writing; (2) students had a problem in terms of language use. Some of them did not realize in using the appropriate pattern of tenses, article, preposition, pronoun, and part of speech; (3) students had a problem in mechanical aspects; like incorrect capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Experience in teaching ESP in STIE Muhammadiyah Mamuju, there are so many difficulties in mastering English. The ESP learners are interested in learning English because when the researcher taught them, they were active and excited. The problem was from the way ESP learners study English and seldom apply it in the dormitory or their daily activity. They felt that the teaching and learning process were so boring. They thought the lecturer teaches those very complicated materials, the students cannot understand what the lecturer is talking about. It makes the students have low motivation

in learning English. Also, the medium that is used by the lecturer during this covid-19 pandemic is only PowerPoint or video by zoom meeting, the students want more innovation in the teaching process so that the process will be fun and enjoyable.

Instagram Platform

Instagram is a photo and video sharing social media application that was launched on October 6th, 2010 by Kevin Systrom. Although Instagram has a variety of features, in general, the app's interface allows individuals who have created a free account to upload media both photos and videos. Users can then edit the media they upload with filters and organize them with location information and hash tags. Users can make their profiles public or private; the difference is that with a public profile, a user's photos/videos are viewable by every other Instagram user, whereas with a private profile, users can approve whom they want to be able to view their posts. Instagram users can browse other users' photos and videos by searching for hash tags and locations. They can also scroll through an aggregation of trending content and interact with other user's photos and videos by clicking on buttons that allow them to "like" a post or add a text comment to a post. When a user "follows" another user, it means that they are adding that user's photos and videos to their feed.

Rouse (2017) in Sholikhah et al (2019), wrote an article and explained that Instagram is different from other social media because it has complete and interesting features. Besides, Instagram offers us to connect with other social media and also allows us to share photos and videos at the same time on more than one social media site. Shazali, Shamsudin & Yunus, (2019) found Instagram as an effective tool for developing learners' vocabulary range and grammatical accuracy. Learners also portrayed a positive attitude as they fancied the use of Instagram for writing. Instagram can be an effective pedagogical tool in second language acquisition if used and supervised appropriately. Another study comes from Purwandari, (2017) who stated the application of photographs from Instagram can improve students' writing skills in writing descriptive text. It was effective and recommended for the English lecturer as one of the references in the teaching and learning process. Handayani (2016) mentions

Instagram is one of the popular social media, she adds by using Instagram lecturers are offered great opportunity to develop classroom activities creatively. Her paper gives an overview of the main advantages of using Instagram for EFL and offers a list of activities for which Instagram can be used.

Steps in teaching writing by using the Instagram platform

During the covid-19 pandemic, STIE Muhammadiyah Mamuju runs via online learning by utilizing E-Campus named SIKOPID, and other forms like zoom meeting and WhatsApp group. In this case, the researcher trying to combine the forms before with the Instagram platform. The steps in a simple list are below

1. The lecturer announces the zoom meeting link in the WhatsApp group;
2. Zoom meeting started, the students fill the Google form attendance list that shared in the zoom chat room;
3. The lecturer explains about descriptive text by using a PowerPoint presentation;
4. The lecturer asks the students to upload their best picture and upload to Instagram;
5. The students write descriptive text as their caption and tag the lecturer Instagram account; and
6. The lecturer check their caption and close zoom meeting.

METHODOLOGY

This study applies a pre-experimental research design with no control group that aims to examine the effect of the use of Instagram on the students' writing ability. It uses one group pre-test and post-test design. This study involved 41 Indonesian students majoring in Management who were taking an English for specific purposes (ESP) course at STIE Muhammadiyah Mmauju. They were 36 females (87,8%) and 5 males (12,2%). ESP course was one of the required courses for Management students. The course aimed to equip the students with the skills of English, including writing ability. The data will collect through a writing test and questionnaire. The writing test administers in the pre-test and post-test.

The data will collect through a writing test and questionnaire. The writing test will be administered in the pre-test and post-test to measure the students writing ability. The pre-test conduct in the first meeting before the treatment, while the post-test deliver after the treatment. Also, the questionnaire employs to reveal the students' perception of the use of Instagram as a medium to learn writing. The questionnaire used in this study was adapted and modified from Handayani et al., (2018) by following some procedures: creating the blueprint, stating the indicators, and developing the questionnaire items. The instruments then validate by consulting the English language teaching experts. The treatment consists of nine meetings. The students will train to write a descriptive essay by focusing on some parts of the essay, i.e., introduction, body paragraph, and conclusion. One of the researchers (the head of the researcher) will act as the instructor.

Two assessors will involve in scoring the essay. Firstly, the instructor, an English department lecturer as well as the head of the researcher. Secondly, the lecturer helper, who acts as the researcher member. The scoring rubric adapts from Jacobs (1981) that used by the assessors to assess the students writing. The scoring rubrics consist of five aspects having different weights: content (30), organization (20), vocabulary (20), language use (25), and mechanics (5). The final students' essay scores will determine by the average score given by the two assessors. The google form questionnaire consisted of 13 items comprising three parts: writing competence (1-6), interest (7-10), and process of learning (11-13). It will be measured in the four-option Likert Scale graded from “strongly agree” (4), “agree” (3), “disagree” (2), and “strongly disagree” (1). All of the participants (41 students) must complete the questionnaire.

RESULT/FINDINGS

The result of the data analysis obtained from the questionnaire shows that the Indonesian ESP students respond positively to most of the statements. To confirm their answers, the researchers kindly checked the students' essay. The result revealed that their writing quality improved. The researchers still found some mistakes in their essay

such as grammatical and mechanics but those mistakes were less frequently found in their results of the post-test. This finding confirms the result of the study conducted by Handayani et al. (2018) that showed a significant difference between the students' scores in pre-test and post-test. The result of this study also proves that social media, in this case Instagram, could be utilized as a learning tool in educational context. This is in line with Khalitova & Gimaletdinova's (2016) statement that mobile application Instagram offers various advantages as an effective means of learning a language. This statement is also supported by Anggraeni (2017) who argues that using Instagram in the process of learning a language is worthy since today is the twenty-first century era where technological devices and social media networking sites become the basic needs of the learners. However, a different response to the questionnaire was found in one statement in the part of the students' interest in the use of Instagram. The students agreed that obtaining feedback through Instagram is really interesting. In contrast, they did not feel the same when they have to provide feedback to their friends' essay through Instagram. Most of the students did not think that giving corrections and feedbacks through Instagram is interesting.

Integrating Instagram as an instructional medium in creative writing activities motivates students to engage in an active learning. They are given the freedom to choose pictures and composing their ideas in writing their essay (Aloraini, 2018). The students also believed that the uploaded pictures with the captions encourage them in composing the best essay writing. In addition, most of the students use Instagram as a medium to ask questions to their friends or the instructor regarding their writing problems. It implicates that Instagram is beneficial to assist the students' writing ability.

DISCUSSION

The result and discussion of this study are presented in two sections. The first part deals with the effect of the integration of Instagram on the Indonesian ESP students'

writing ability. The second part focuses on the students' perceptions toward the use of Instagram in writing class.

The effect of the use of Instagram on the students' writing ability.

To examine the difference between the results of students' writing in pre-test and post-test, the mean of the two scores are found out and compared. The data of the pre-test and post-test scores are presented in Table 1

Table 1. The data of the pre-test and post-test

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>
<i>Pre-test</i>	61.1579	36	5.744067	2.253163
<i>Post-test</i>	76.3947	36	10.56827	1.105446

Table 1 shows that there is a significant difference of the mean in the pre-test and the post-test. The mean score of the students' writing in pre-test is 61.1579, while the mean score in the post-test is 76.3947. In order to know whether the two mean scores have significant difference or not, a paired sample t-test was administered. The result of the analysis is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of the Means by Using Paired Sample t-Test

		Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	Pre-test Post-test	-15.23	4.31	0.69	-16.65	-13.81	-21.768	37	.000	

The students' scores in the posttest emphasized that they achieved better writing ability after being taught by using Instagram. Table 2 depicted that the paired t-test statistics was -21.506 and the significant level was .000. Since the significant level was lower than .05 ($.00 \leq .05$), it means that there was a significant different between the result of pre-test and post-test scores. As presented in the table, the average of the

students" post-test score was 15 points higher than the pre-test scores. Therefore, it could be concluded that the null hypothesis was rejected. In a nutshell, the students who were given treatment by using Instagram had improvement in writing a descriptive essay.

Although Instagram was still considered as a new platform in Indonesian education context, the students who were the participants of this study had seemingly been adjusted to the medium. When they were asked if they were familiar with Instagram in the beginning of the experiment, the majority of the students said that they had Instagram account. Because the students were familiar enough with Instagram, they did not seem to have any difficulty in using it. It was advantageous because the researchers did not need to tell them in detail about how to operate Instagram. College students in the twenty-first-century teaching had advanced level of performance on the social networking sites (Salomon, 2013).

The present study also revealed that the quality of the students" writing improved. Some common mistakes such as incorrect grammar, incomplete component of a sentence, and missing a thesis statement decreased bit by bit. In general, the students were successfully able to compose a well-developed thesis statement. Moreover, they were also able to write a descriptive essay as well as to provide a systematic description about the picture being described. This result supports the finding of Handayani's et al. (2018) which concluded that the students" ability of writing an argumentative essay significantly improved after being taught by means of Instagram.

This study also found that although not all students, most of the students employed Instagram to consult their writing problems related to the exercise and assignment. They utilized Instagram as a means of feedback and correction with the teacher and friends. This proved that teaching writing by means of Instagram could make the students more engaged in the learning activities (Listiani, 2016). This finding agreed with a statement that social networking sites were rapidly changing the way of communication (Griesemer, 2012). In addition, it also supported Salomon's (2013) statement that the students" engagement through the social media appeared to be higher. Not only did the

students actively engage in the teaching activities, they also achieved better learning results.

The students' perceptions toward the use of Instagram

The result of the questionnaire reveals the students' perceptions toward the use of Instagram in teaching writing on three aspects, i.e., writing competence, students' interest, and learning process. In total, there were thirteen items given in the questionnaire. The distribution of the results are presented in the following sections.

The students' responses on their writing competence

Items 1-6 of the questionnaire were addressed to reveal the students' perceptions on their writing ability as the result of integrating Instagram in their learning. The results of the students' responses are presented in the Table 3

Table 3. The result of students' responses in terms of their writing competence

No.	Items	Total Value	N	Average
1.	I can do well in my English writing class.	106	36	2.94
2.	I am confident with my ability to compose a descriptive essay on the writing test.	102	36	2.83
3.	I can organize ideas based on the given topic in each paragraph coherently.	112	36	3.11
4.	I can use appropriate vocabulary in my essay.	105	36	2.91
5.	I can use correct grammar in my essay.	92	36	2.55
6.	I can use appropriate spelling, punctuation, and capitalization in my essay.	104	36	2.88

As shown in the Table 3, the students' positively respond to all the criteria of the writing competence since the average value of their responses is around 3. It means that the students agreed to the statements examining their writing ability stated in the questionnaire. More specifically, they agreed that they could perform well in their English class (item 1), were confident with their ability to write a descriptive essay (item 2), could organize their ideas based on the given topic (item 3), could use

appropriate vocabulary in writing their essay (item 4), could use correct grammar in composing their essay (item 5), and could use appropriate spelling, punctuation, and capitalization in their essay (item 6).

The students' responses on their interest in the use of Instagram

The students" were also asked to respond the questionnaire examining their interest in the use of Instagram in their English class. The results of their responses are displayed in the Table 4.

Table 4. The result of students" responses in terms of their interest in the use of Instagram

No	Items	Total Value	N	Average
7.	It is fun to post writing assignments on Instagram.	130	36	3.61
8.	It is interesting to get feedback through Instagram.	112	36	3.11
9.	It is interesting to give feedback through Instagram.	70	36	1.94
10.	Posting writing assignments on Instagram motivates me to write better.	118	36	3.27

Table 4 clearly depicts the students" perceptions toward their interest in the use of Instagram to teach writing in English class. Based on the average value, in general, they agreed that it is fun to post writing assignment on Instagram (item 7), that it is interesting to get feedback through Instagram (item 8), and that posting assignments on Instagram motivates them in writing the essay (item 10). However, it was found that the students disagreed that obtaining feedback through Instagram is interesting (item 9).

The students' responses on the learning process

The other parts of the questionnaire were to find out the students" perceptions toward the learning process using Instagram. The results of their responses are shown in the Table 5.

Table 5. The result of students' responses in terms of the learning process

No	Items	Total Value	N	Average
11.	I enjoy giving feedback/corrections to my partner's essay posted on Instagram.	100	36	2.77
12.	My friends' feedback helps me make my writing better.	125	36	3.47
13.	The features available on Instagram helps me write better.	113	36	3.13

As depicted in Table 5, the students positively perceived to all questionnaire items examining the learning process by using Instagram. They enjoyed giving feedbacks and corrections to their partners' essay posted in Instagram. They are also agree that their friends' feedbacks help them in making their essay better. Also, the features available online on Instagram, such as direct message and comment, are helpful as media to enhance their writing ability.

CONCLUSION

Drawing on the findings and discussion, it is clearly showed that there is a significant difference between the students' writing scores in the pre-test and the post-test. It indicates that the students perform better writing ability after being taught by using Instagram. Besides, the sample t-test showed positive correlation which means that the students who obtain higher scores in the pre-test still had higher scores in the post-test. Similarly, those who get lower scores in the pre-test still had lower scores in the post-test. Moreover, the result of the questionnaire reveals that the students perceive positively toward the use of Instagram in English class. The students view that Instagram is meaningful and offers a number of benefits for the twenty-first century learning. The findings of this study provide practical contribution as an insight for language teachers in utilizing Instagram and other types of social media to teach language skills, especially writing. Future researches examining other features of

Instagram such as instastory, instapolling, etc should be conducted as an immense project of exploring the use of social media for language learning. Furthermore, similar researches involving different levels of students and language skills are highly recommended to present comprehensive description of the utilization of Instagram in teaching English as foreign language context.

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