

INSTAGRAM : A MEDIUM IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING

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Abstract

Instagram is a popular social media among young people, particularly students. It can be used for students to share their most memorable moments and improve their writing skills. The students may compose a narrative and publish it on Instagram. The teacher can then evaluate their creative writing. This study aims to analyze how Instagram digital poster projects can help students improve their writing skills. To support this analysis, the researchers utilized a qualitative methodology and applied the Teaching by Principle theory by H. Douglas Brown and Heekyong Lee and the New Media theory by J. Van Dijck and T. Poell. The scope of the study was derived from the writing of SMK Binakarya Mandiri Bekasi students and some supporting articles. There were three participants included in this study. This study's findings show that students can improve creative digital poster project on their Instagram accounts.

Keywords: *Instagram, Narrative, Social Media, Poster, Writing*

INTRODUCTION

New media is a form of communication currently utilized in daily life. The purpose of new media is to acquire knowledge dependent on internet-connected digital devices (A. J. Udoudo et.al., 2016). Holmes and Gardner (2011) asserted that the current young generation is part of the Internet generation and has easy access to digital technology, which is a force of social transformation. A system for creating, modifying, and disseminating information is included in new media. Numerous new forms of media are available, including YouTube, Instagram, emails, and podcasts. The media is essentially a convergence of technologies, and new media enable interactive communication. With new media, opportunities can be greater, inexpensive, and straightforward. The media disseminate information quickly and effectively.

According to Xizhu Xiao et.al. (2021), even though New Media and Old Media provide information and communication to the public, they are undoubtedly distinct.

There are two aspects to this difference: a. technically, new media features such as user-generated content and dynamic programming are significantly different from Old Media, and b. New Media has socio-cultural characteristics that create collaborative content, communicate the creator's values and ideological perspectives, and provide various services ranging from politics to education and commerce. New media refers to a communication system in which the media platform is accessed through the Internet and used to create content, modify content, and share information using digital devices.

Social media is one of the most widely used New Media at present. It is a collection of Internet-based applications based on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and enables the creation and exchange of user-generated content (J. van Dijck and T. Poell, 2013). Social media also contributes to the continuity of students seeking information, news, education, insights, and long-distance contacts. People who use social media can now communicate and share information, including any news, without considering barriers such as cost, distance, or time (Soliha, 2015).

Instagram is a photo- and video-sharing social networking platform. Other users can view every image and video posted on Instagram. Instagram posts are typically accompanied by a caption or photo description and a hashtag. Instagram is one of the widely used social media consumed by the public (Renata, 2021). As Instagram is widely used by the public, it can be used by the teachers and students as a medium for teaching and learning process. The researchers view that teachers can assign their students to create digital poster projects. For instance, when the teacher explains one theme related to daily routines using Simple Present Tense, he can provide a sample story of daily routines. Then, he explains the format of a paragraph with its pattern, Present Tense. Then, when the teacher wants to assess his students' understanding, he can assign them to create a poster on Instagram story. Lastly, the teacher checks their writing and giving feedback to them. The researchers see that it is one of interesting activities that students can do to improve their writing. Thus, the role of teacher here

is as a facilitator. According to Brown et. Al. (2015), a less directive role could be that of a guide, facilitating the students' learning and assisting them in overcoming obstacles. The role of facilitator necessitates stepping away from a managerial or directive position and allowing students to find their paths to success with your guidance and gentle prodding. A facilitator capitalizes on the opportunity for students to discover language through practical use.

The nature of the writing composition process is a central topic in pedagogical research on writing (O'Brien, 2004; Silva & Brice, 2004; Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2008; Silva, 2010). Written products are frequently the result of thinking, drafting, and revising processes that require specialized abilities — abilities that not every speaker acquires naturally. In addition, students exhibit a variety of styles and preferences in their writing processes (Chen, 2005). The compositional nature of writing has led to the development of writing pedagogy that focuses on teaching students how to generate ideas, how to organize them coherently, how to use discourse markers and rhetorical conventions to incorporate them cohesively into a written text, how to revise text for clearer meaning, how to edit text for correct grammar, and how to produce a final product (Brown, et.al., 2015).

The compositional nature of writing has altered the structure of writing courses. Before fifty years ago, writing instructors were primarily concerned with the final product of writing: the essay, the report, and the story, as well as how it should "look." Compositions were expected to adhere to English rhetorical style standards, demonstrate correct grammar, and be structurally and cohesively organized. A great deal of emphasis was placed on "model" compositions that students would imitate, as well as on how well a student's final product met a list of criteria that included content, organization, vocabulary use, grammatical use, and mechanical aspects as spelling and punctuation (Brown, et.al., 2015).

Hedgcock (2005, p. 604–605) characterized the essence of process writing as engaging students in meaningful writing, encouraging multiple drafts and revisions, and providing formative feedback through conferencing. You may have personal

experience attempting to create a "perfect" final product without the preceding steps. You may have experienced "writer's block" or anxiety while writing an in-class essay that would be judged, graded, and returned with no opportunity for revision. The process approach is an effort to capitalize on the planned potential of writing to provide students with the opportunity to think as they write. Writing is indeed a process of thought, to put it another way. To improve students' writing skill, the researchers view that the teacher can do various interesting teaching methods. One of them is through Instagram story. Thus, in this writing, the researchers attempt to analyze the impact of Instagram story in students' writing. The participants of this study were taken from three students' digital projects of Binakarya Mandiri Vocational High School, Bekasi.

METHODOLOGY

This research analyzed how digital poster project on Instagram can improve students' writing. To support this observation, the researchers utilized a qualitative method and applied the Teaching by Principle theory by H. Douglas Brown and Heekyong Lee and the New Media theory by J. Van Dijck and T. Poell. The object of the study was taken from the writing of SMK Binakarya Mandiri Bekasi students and some supporting articles. There were several stages that we did.

First, the researchers selected certain Binakarya Mandiri students' writing as the sample of the research.

Second, the researchers analyzed the students' writing in form of digital poster project based on the theme given by the teacher.

Third, the researchers connected the students' writing with Teaching by Principle theory by H. Douglas Brown and Heekyong Lee and the New Media theory by J. Van Dijck and T. Poell.

The last, the researchers concluded the whole observation.

RESULT/FINDINGS

To analyze SMK Binakarya Mandiri students' writing, the researchers provided the result by classifying the writing aspect and digital literacy aspect. The first aspect is the component of writing. The components must adhere to English rhetorical style standards, demonstrate correct grammar, and be structurally and cohesively organized. They also consist of content, organization, vocabulary use, grammatical use, and mechanical aspects as spelling and punctuation (Brown, et.al., 2015).

The second aspect is digital literacy. Digital literacy encompasses a variety of digital reading and writing techniques across multiple media types, such as words, texts, visual displays, and motion graphics, audio, video, and multimodal forms. Literate technology users can consume and produce digital compositions, just as literate individuals can negotiate printed text through reading and writing. When a reader is immersed in digital content, cognitive processes along a continuum from consumption to production are at work. The digital context is challenging for all readers due to the fluidity of the Web and the need for critical judgments (Spires & Estes, 2002). The reader must decide how to locate information as well as the credibility and reliability of that information. One of digital platforms that can be used for improving students' writing is Instagram story.

DISCUSSION

To figure out the improvement of SMK Binakarya Mandiri students' writing, the researchers classified the writing component and digital literacy aspect. The first observation is taken from one of the students that wrote an opinion about their school on Halloween's Day.



Source : SMK Binakarya Mandiri Student

Figure 1. Argumentative digital poster project

In this writing, the researchers observe that the student named Sabrina did a creative digital poster on her argumentative writing. She added some images relate to Halloween such as spider and spider web. She also put on devil horns on her head to show that the theme is scary and frightening. The researchers view that she did it very well. Meanwhile, on the writing aspect, there are several errors she made. She wrote the word “I” with lower case whereas she knows that “I” must be written with uppercase no matter in what position it is. The next writing aspect to be corrected is the school’s name which is SMK Binakarya Mandiri. The student wrote “mandiri” while it is supposed to be “Mandiri”. Another error that she made was on the word “halloween.!!”. Since it is a holiday’s name, the writer should write it down with the uppercase letter, “Halloween.”

In a closer observation, the participant has applied the technique in writing digitally and creatively. However, when it comes to format of the paragraph, punctuation, and capitalization, the student still made some mistakes. Supported by Bacha (2002), there are three essential elements to writing. According to Bacha

(2002:17), three significant sub-skills of writing emphasize the text: language (sentence structure, grammar, vocabulary, coherence, and mechanics), organization (general statement, thesis statement, topic sentence, supporting sentences, and conclusion), and content (main, supporting ideas, logical order of ideas). Another component of writing that the students need to know is the genre. One of writing genres is argumentative paragraph. One of the various types of written compositions is argumentative composition. The argument is a mode of reasoning in which specific reasons are offered to support a conclusion. It is a means of resolving disputes and discovering the truth. Arguing does not imply anger, but it is essential to present and examine the ideas of others. The argument is important in academic writing because students use it to persuade their teachers and peers to accept their ideas or points of view (Agustin, & Ngadiman, 2013). In this case, the researchers view that social media such as Instagram can actually help the students to improve their writing. However, they also need to know that their writing still when they post a story is totally different from the story in academic. Thus, they need to pay attention on the components of the writing, too.

The next analysis is taken from the second participant, named Salwa Alipia Lestari that wrote about her daily routines during Ramadhan (Figure 2).



Source : SMK Binakarya Mandiri Student

Figure 2. Ramadhan's daily routine

In this writing, the researchers view that the student named Salwa created a simple design on her writing. She used a background with a mosque and a moon. Then, on the writing aspect, she put an introduction nicely and clearly. However, there is also a little mistake on writing her name. She wrote "lestari" with lowercase instead of "Lestari" with uppercase. Next, on the content, she did numbering her activities such as 1. Wake up for Sahoor, 2. Prepare for Iftar, and 3. Nightly prayers. The researchers view that the student tried to write clearly by numbering the activities. However, it would be much better if she wrote them into sentences. For example, I wake up for sahoor. Then, I prepare for iftar. The last, I have nightly prayer.

In a closer analysis, the researchers view that there is a similarity between Figure 1 and Figure 2 digital project. The second participant has applied the technique in writing digitally. However, when it comes to format of the paragraph, punctuation, and capitalization, the student still made some mistakes. In addition to vocabulary, content, and grammar, writing requires a critical thought process. Students must master vocabulary when writing text in order to produce quality content. The writer's

idea is developed through their content. Additionally, the last sentence contains the pattern and structural words. Writing is not a simple task. Students must consider how to construct good sentences and what aspects of writing should be observed. In writing, students should be familiar with the context and elements of writing. Students must understand transition words as one of the elements of writing. Transitional expressions link, contrast, demonstrate cause-and-effect relationships and indicate chronology or order between ideas. Students should master transition words because they must compose good sentences for their writing to be understood. Transitional words, also known as conjunctive adverbs, join two independent clauses or sentences. The purpose of transition words is to facilitate the reader's comprehension of the paragraph by establishing a logical connection between each sentence. Students must learn to use transitions appropriately when writing paragraphs to connect sentences or to link one idea to the relationship between different parts of an essay. This means that transition words are conjunctive adverbs that allow the reader to understand the relationship between one sentence and the next easily. In addition, transition words signal to the reader the relationship between sentences in paragraphs, so students must learn how to use them effectively. Numerous transitional expressions include addition, comparison, conclusion, contrast, reason, consequence, and sequence (Fauziah, 2019).

Many students have used transition words, but not all of their variants, which is one of the difficulties in teaching English paragraph writing. They must be familiar with the various types of transitional words and the proper way to connect one sentence to the next. Students have not yet utilized a variety of transitional phrases. The researcher is interested in transition words used by students in the middle of an English test paragraph. Students must learn to use transitional phrases to link ideas and paragraphs within an essay. Jot down ideas until they become a written work. Word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, and discourse are the main components of writing (Fauziah, 2019).

In this case, social media such as Instagram plays an important role to improve their writing. However, they still lack of understanding in writing components. They still cannot differentiate formal writing and informal writing. They write and post a story on Instagram as if their daily writing which means not academically. The teacher can give understanding on components of writing regularly to prevent the same mistakes.

The last observation is taken from the third participant named Nazwa Lutskia (Figure 3) that wrote about his daily routines during Ramadhan.



Source : SMK Binakarya Mandiri Student

Figure 3. Ramadhan's daily routine

In this writing, the researchers see that the student named Nazwa created a nice design on his writing. He used a background with orange bubbles design. He also added the pictures when he gathered for Iftar and did nightly prayers. However, there are still some errors on his writing. Firstly, the researchers view that the student wanted to give interesting impression on the design but it became distracting as he wrote the introductory sentences in the middle. In introductory section, there were also some errors in writing his name and a big day. He wrote "nazwa lutskia" instead of Nazwa Lutskia. Next, he also wrote "ramadhan" instead of "Ramadhan." On the

content, he wrote “while iftar gathering with friends. Me and the boys, while goes nightly prayers.” Another mistakes on the digital poster above is on the grammar. He didn’t follow Subject Verb agreement appropriately. He should write “While iftar, I gathered with my friends” and “my friends and I went nightly prayers.”

In a closer analysis, the days of the week, months of the year, and holidays should be capitalized. For example, the terms "morning," "day," and "month" are everyday nouns. They do not refer to anything particular or unique. Suppose, however, that you awaken on the Thursday of November, and it is also Thanksgiving Day. Then there are numerous instances of capitalization that should continue. Thursday is a specific day with a specific name. It requires capitalization. November is a specific month with a specific name. It needs to be capitalized. Thanksgiving is a specific holiday with a specific moniker. It requires capitalization (Thurston, 2000). Besides that, another supporting source that relates to the following error is Subject Verb agreement. Subject-Verb Agreement means that the number of subjects and verbs must always correspond. In addition to changing its form to indicate time, a verb can also change its form to indicate the number of subjects it has. For instance, consider the verb "run." In the present tense, the verb "run" changes form to indicate a singular subject when the subject is anything other than "I" or "you" (*Subject-Verb Agreement*). In addition, Subject-verb agreement is the correspondence between a verb and its subject in terms of form. Every verb must agree in number and person with its subject within a clause or sentence. In other words, a verb should be singular if its subject is singular and plural if its subject is plural. Also, a verb must agree with its grammatical subject in person (i.e., the person acting — first person, second person, or third person) (*Academic Achievement Center*).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, social media, specifically Instagram, can be utilized as a tool in the teaching and learning process. A teacher can instruct students on how to use Instagram as a writing platform by providing examples on various topics. However,

the essential aspect of writing must be taught first, as it must be emphasized more often. Students must be familiar with paragraph structure, punctuation, capitalization, subject-verb agreement, and coherence. These considerations are essential so that students can write coherently. Any writing platform will make it simple to compose the story. As a result, they can compose effectively and imaginatively.

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