INSTAGRAM AS SOCIAL MEDIA FOR TEACHING WRITING

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Abstract

This study aims to describe students' perceptions of social media - Instagram in learning English, especially writing. This research is a type of qualitative research conducted on even semester students of the English study program at STKIP Muhammadiyah Pringsewu, Lampung. The data collection technique in this study uses questionnaires and structured interviews. Data analysis uses Interactive Model which consists of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The result shows that have a positive perception of the use of Instagram as a learning medium. Instagram creates fun classroom situations and helps students to be creative, communicative, and also collaborative with peers.

Key words*: Instagram, social media, Writing.*

I.   INTRODUCTION

Along with technological developments, people today cannot escape the use of social media. Social media is an invention in the field of communication that continues to grow rapidly in the era of globalization where each individual can use it in real life to interact globally. Social media is also growing rapidly according to classification, type and the needs of the world community. Among the needs for entertainment, self-existence, health, education, transportation, even primary, secondary, and tertiary needs can be obtained through social media.

Social media means technology based *mobile* that is used for the purpose of communicating, sharing information, and entertainment (Boyd: 2014). Social media combines social activities and online dealing through

words, images and videos. Some social media are widely used and known by the world community including, Facebook, Twitter, Path, Pinterest, and Instagram. The media *platform* provides its users to interact with anyone, anytime, and wherever they are. Users can share information, exchange information, give comments, discuss, and collaborate to create something or new knowledge. By using social media, people can create their personal pages and connect with friends to share anything. This reason is what makes social media increasingly popular to use in the past decade.

Not limited to only sharing content with fellow social media users, in recent years, social media has become increasingly popular in the world of education. Of course this is because many social media users come from young people, namely students. Social media is the most widely used communication medium by students almost all the time to interact. Seeing the fact that many users of social media are students, so teachers or instructors have an opportunity to create activities in an effort to develop language skills. Teachers can use social media actively to always connect with their students or make learning activities based *online* (Zhang, 2013). The basic reason for using social media in the learning process is because most students are very close to social media. Social media makes it easy for students to access a variety of learning materials. Therefore social media has sufficient capacity to support education in accordance with the social context of learning while promoting activities that can improve critical thinking in students (Mason, 2006).

In addition there are several reasons for using social media in the classroom that is encouraging a more active learning approach where social media allows students to create their own digital content and publish it online. Teachers can also share knowledge in certain fields that allow teachers and students to collaborate in creating specific tasks or projects that are suitable for learning objectives. Crowley (2015) argues that several reasons for using social media in class are as follows: (1) providing a place for students to share information both inside and outside the classroom; (2)

giving an opportunity for students to know stories from all parts of the world; and (3) help students recognize student potential.

From these reasons it can be said that social media is a medium that can be said to be effective for use in class to support teaching and learning activities. Using social media in learning in this class means that the teacher has connected educational goals with social and even vice versa. This certainly makes teaching and learning activities fun. Students can interact *peer to peer*, *student to teacher*, and with people all over the world to achieve learning goals, especially learning English as a foreign language as this research related to.

Through social media, language students especially English can directly communicate with native speakers. Although English learning such as vocabulary and grammar are more easily learnt with the help of non-native speakers, many students have very few opportunities to interact and communicate in reality or directly with native speakers. Then with social media, students have many opportunities to interact directly using English without being limited by distance or time so that the goal of learning English as a foreign language can be achieved (Muniasamy et al., 2015).

Today, social media that is in great demand and is owned by students is Instagram. Instagram is a media application that gives users the freedom to capture and share their moments of life instantly. The number of Instagram account users is increasing more and more because the social media focuses more on photos and short-duration videos compared to other social media, such as Twitter which focuses more on words or status, so Instagram is easier to use. The use of Instagram in the class is something new. The teacher has the opportunity to use Instagram so the learning process becomes unique, fun, and full of ideas. Instagram seems to be a tool that can be used to support English learning because social media offers contextual visual data that can provide ideas for critical thinking. Topics used come from real life as stated and visual or photographic forms. Then

Instagram provides space for students to be creative and communicate in using English (Ali: 2014).

The role of social media in language learning has been investigated by Geminastiti et al (2016). They revealed that almost all students use social media, but only few teachers use social media in the teaching process. The research findings identified that most students gave a positive response and willingness to use social media in learning writing. Then, social media in learning English has also been studied by previous research. Fitri (2016) investigated the use of Instagram as an teaching instrument. This study examined the benefits of Instagram for students of English as a Foreign Language and offered a number of activities that could be used through Instagram. The results of this study indicated that Instagram has a good influence on improving students' language skills. Instagram is an educational instrument that is useful while making it easier for students and teachers to communicate in class and outside of school hours. Instagram provides opportunities for students to form ideas with relevant content and offer them fun learning.

Previous research presented the benefits and advantages of social media such as Instagram as a medium for learning foreign languages. If previous researchers used Instagram as a medium for learning English in general, this study tries to examine how Instagram is used as productive learning media in English, especially in writing skill. This is based on the fact that almost all students in STKIP Muhamadiyah Pringsewu have an Instagram account. Then, many of them actively make captions, update their status in writing and upload recordings and videos. Besides that, this campus facilitates the entire academic community with an internet network that makes it easier for lecturers and students to use it in the teaching and learning process. This also allows lecturers and students to have one or more social media accounts. And of course it becomes an opportunity for lecturers and students to create a fun, active and insightful learning atmosphere by using social media, especially learning English as a foreign language. Therefore, this study aims to determine students' perceptions of Instagram

usage in writing learning and to find out Instagram's influence in improving English writing skills.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach that focuses on the context of actual meaning, where the collected data will be interpreted according to the actual reality. This study applies case study research to find out students' perceptions of Instagram social media used for teaching writing and to find out what factors influence students' perceptions in using Instagram social media. This research was conducted in the even semester of academic year 2017 – 2018, on students in the English study program STKIP Muhammadiyah Pringsewu Lampung, located on Jalan Makam KH. Gholib Number 112, Pringsewu.This research was conducted on even semester 2017 - 2018 academic year students in the English study program STKIP Muhammadiyah Pringsewu Lampung, located on Jalan Makam KH. Gholib Number 112, Pringsewu. This LPTK is equipped with facilities that support teaching and learning activities such as classrooms equipped with *Wi-Fi networks*, *LCD* projector, and *air-conditioners*. To achieve the objectives of this study, data were collected by using several techniques, namely (1) an open questionnaire containing questions about students' perceptions of social media in writing learning and students' experiences in using social media - Instagram. (2) The interview is directed: the researcher uses the interview in a direct manner where this interview has been prepared in advance by the researcher in the form of an open conversation which gives the respondent freedom to collect data according to the situation and condition of the respondent. In this interview the researcher developed a set of questions focused on a particular topic according to the research objectives (Kvale, 1996: 104). Although researchers have prepared questions, it is still possible for researchers to ask additional questions based on new unexpected findings. This is expected to provide in-depth information in accordance with the situation and actual conditions to avoid data manipulation. In qualitative research to determine the validity of the

data, a test was carried out with *Trustworthiness* by using several strategies proposed by Merriam (1998: 204).

The first is triangulation. Triangulation is used to confirm data obtained from strategies used such as questionnaires and interviews. The second is member-checking where the data that has been interpreted is then given to the respondent to standardize the data obtained from the interview in accordance with the actual data.

Data collected through data collection techniques are then analyzed by using the Interactive Model (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 21-22). Data analysis by using the Interactive Model consists of four parts, including data collection, data reduction, making conclusions, and verifying data.

1. Data Collection

   In phase data collection, all required data are collected through questionnaires and interviews.

2. Data Reduction

   In this phase the collected data then enters the selection, focusing, filtering, and processing of raw data that emerges from the data collection stage. This phase not only selects the collected data but more than that: there is a process of summarizing, coding, making clusters, and so on. Data is selected based on research objectives.

3. Data displays

   After the data is sorted, then the data is displayed as a unit of information that leads to conclusions and follow-up. The displayed data can have images, tables, charts, graphics and so on.

4. Drawing conclusions and data verification

   The final stage of data analysis is in the form of drawing conclusions and verifying data. From the initial stages of analysis, the researcher determines what to obtain, then forms rules, patterns, so it produces clear conclusions. The conclusion is then verified for the truth to avoid data bias. Therefore, researchers do verification based on theory and relevant research. Data consistency can be verified through original data collected through triangulation.

3.FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The subjects of this study were 39 EFL students of second semester (33 females and 6 males). Their age range was from 18-21 years old. Data from questionnare showed that they had experienced in learning English less than 10 years. The questionnaire consisted of three parts; (1) a demographic part to get students' background information, (2) a multiple choice part to get students' experience on the use of social Media, and (3) open-ended questions to investigate students' opinion on the use of Instagram in writing class.

Analysis of the collected data had revealed that all the surveyed students reported to be members of at least one social media. Result actually showed that 87% of students reported that they had 2 to 4 social media accounts. It was shown by graphic below.
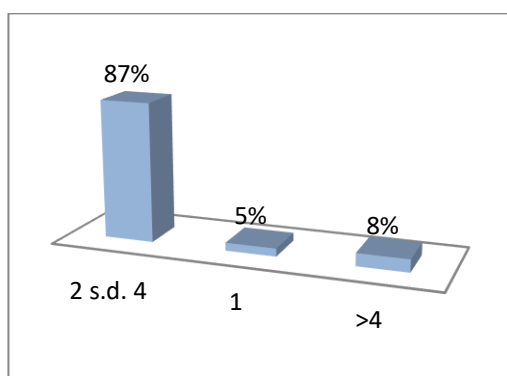
Graphic 1. Students' Account Number

Results also show that the majority of students have Whatsapp, Facebook, and Instagram accounts. As seen clearly, the most popular social media among second semester students of STKIP Muhammadiyah Pringsewu Lampung is Whatsapp (100%), Facebook (94%), Instagram (67%), BlackBerry Messanger (28%), Twitter (8%), Line (8%), Tiktok (3%), and Snapchat (3%). The social media that are less frequently used by students are Tiktok and Snapchat. It may be due to the fact that these online

communities are mainly used for creating videos or pictures with funny filters and emoticons.
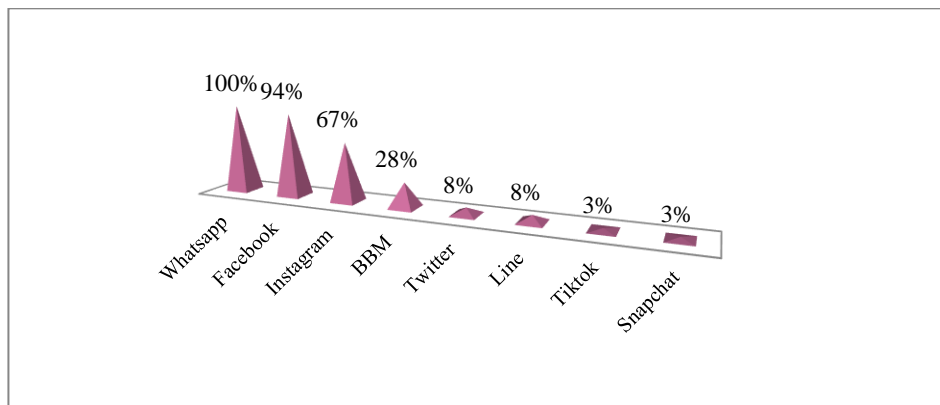
Graphic 2. Students' Social Media Account

With regard to the use of Instagram, 73% of surveyed students reported that they use this platform to entertain, 38% of students use to post and share their self-photos and videos, 30% of students told that this social media was as a tool for learning and 27% of students used it as a source of current information. However, they lacked experience in using Instagram as a tool for learning English.

After five weeks observing students' activity in writing class, the researchers gave questions to students regarding students' opinion towards the writing activity. 66.7% of students agreed that Instagram could be as new tool for writing English. They explained that while they posted pictures or videos, they exposed themselves to write in English and collaborate with friends in composing a good English caption to complete their writing tasks. The result also showed that 76.9% of students claimed that E-learning through Instagram helped them more in their individual or group work than what they expected. Furthermore, the majority of students (83.3%) agreed that writing English by using Instagram helped them in being more productive in learning activities and made them a more productive students. The lecturer did not have difficulties to explain the materials for students because the students could be free write anything spontaneously and get much information as well as giving their critics to friends' writing. 25 students of second semester told that their experience in writing English by

using Instagram was better that what they expected. In the first meeting, most students felt uncomfortable to express their ideas in English through Instagram. Some of them revealed that they were afraid of ungrammatical writing. After three weeks they forced to write English through Instagram, they felt more familiar and enjoyed to write. They explained that they could correct their writing by asking friends' and lecturer's help.

The majority of students (93.3%) had access to internet at home. They used internet more than eight hours a week. They did not need any training to operate this platform, but they might ask their friend to help them in making their posting are more gorgeous. 77.7% of students agreed that they could easily access Instagram every time they needed it.

Based on the observation and interview, the researchers found factors affecting students' writing ability. The students lacked of vocabulary, language use, and mechanics which made them difficult to express their ideas. Many mistakes were found in their writing. In vocabulary, they misused word choices and word forms. There were also inaccurate grammar use in students' writing. Second factor related to Instagram, in the beginning of using media, is losing its function as learning tools and the students used it in a while for gossiping or stalking friends. 6 students explained that they were not focused while finishing a task through Instagram. It was also found that they just copied and pasted others' opinion to their caption of pictures or used Google transletor.

In addition, some students made some comments about the use of Instagram in writing class that can be summarize as follows: "It is a new tool in learning English for me, I can express my ideas and get improvement of my writing ability. However, sometimes there was limited access of Internet at college; It is good, it makes us more creative in writing English; I do not have supported gadget to access Instagram, it is quite difficult; I am so excited to use Instagram in our writing activities".

Based on data collected from 39 second semester students of STKIP Muhammadiyah Pringsewu, this research measures the effective contribution of Instagram in writing activities. Results of the research

showed that most of students favored using Instagram in writing class. This internet-based application helps them improve their writing ability and create pleasing environment in writing class. The majority of students showed a willingness to use Instagram in writing class nevertheless the lack of facilities and limited internet access provided by the college. In conducting research or teaching and learning activities through social media, Tahir and Aminah (2014) recommended for teacher and next researchers to take into account many aspects of internet-based media such internet connection, facilities, cost, and great designing to utilize these media in teaching and learning process. The lack of internet connection will affect students' enthusiasm in learning while waiting to access to the page. It also takes teachers' creativity and innovation in designing and modifying instructional media or teaching materials.

4. CONCLUSION

Second semester students of STKIP Muhammadiyah Pringsewu are active users of several social media accounts, one of which is Instagram. Instagram itself is used as an entertainment medium to post photos and videos, and get the latest information. There is still very little student experience about using Instagram as a learning media. The second semester students of STKIP Muhammadiyah Pringsewu tend to have a positive perception of the use of Instagram as a learning medium. Instagram creates fun classroom situations and helps students to be creative, communicative, and also collaborative with peers.

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