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THE USING OF INSTAGRAM APPLICATION AS MEDIUM TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract

This study explored the use of the Instagram application as a medium to improve reading comprehension for an eleventh-grade student at SMA Santun Untan Pontianak. Employing a narrative inquiry approach, the research focused on the experiences of one student with Instagram and its impact on reading skills. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the student and analyzed thematically. The findings indicated that the student was initially motivated by curiosity and peer influence. The student's experiences with Instagram opened up opportunities for creative expression and inspiration, which ultimately contributed to improved reading comprehension skills. These findings suggest that social media can be effectively utilized as an educational tool.

Keywords: *Instagram, narrative inquiry, reading comprehension*

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Introduction

In the digital era, technology has profoundly influenced various aspects of human life, particularly in education. Rasyiid et al., (2021) states that one notable innovation is the emergence of social media platforms like Instagram, which has become a popular medium for instant information sharing. Instagram, with its visually appealing features such as images, videos, and short text, has significantly enhanced student engagement in the teaching and learning process, making education more enjoyable (Erarslan, 2019). Despite these advancements, many students still face challenges in learning English, particularly in developing essential



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skills such as reading. Reading is crucial for understanding texts both orally and in writing (Reza Ahmadi et al., 2013). It involves more than just decoding words; it requires comprehension and interpretation. Kamola Komilovna, (2023) emphasizes that reading comprehension is essential for effective communication and serves as a foundational skill for overall success in language learning. However, many students struggle with reading due to a lack of motivation and interest, especially when confronted with complex texts Wigfield et al., (2016). Thus, innovative approaches are necessary to enhance students' reading skills.

Research indicates that Instagram can effectively improve students' reading comprehension. By leveraging engaging visual content, students are more motivated to read (Aloraini, 2018). Studies have shown that Instagram's educational applications can increase student motivation and engagement while aiding their understanding of complex material (Putri et al., 2021). Features like Instagram Stories and IGTV facilitate interactive learning experiences, encouraging students to delve deeper into the content. This study aims to investigate whether Instagram can help student overcome difficulties in English reading comprehension, particularly among an eleventh graders student at SMA Santun Untan Pontianak. Prior teaching experience at this school has provided insights into the specific challenges students face regarding reading comprehension. Through a narrative inquiry approach, this research seeks to gain a deeper understanding of students' experiences using Instagram as a learning tool, providing valuable insights for educators and learners about its benefits and challenges.

The literature review includes relevant studies that underscore the potential of Instagram in educational contexts. For instance, Ageng Tirtayasa et al., (2022) explored how Instagram influences students' motivation in English reading. Their findings suggest that Instagram fosters a fun and engaging learning environment, enhancing students' interaction with English texts. Additionally, Putri et al. (2021) examined the efficacy of Instagram accounts dedicated to improving students' reading skills, while Morshidi et al. (2019) investigated the app's role in promoting reading behaviors among students. These studies collectively highlight the differences in research methods and participant demographics, establishing a foundation for this current investigation into the role of Instagram in enhancing reading comprehension.

Research Methods

Design

This study utilized a narrative research design, which is particularly effective for exploring individual experiences through storytelling. According to Creswell & Poth (2016), narrative research allows for a rich and detailed understanding of the phenomenon under investigation by focusing on how an individual perceives and interprets experiences within a specific context.

The primary aim of this research was to explore the use of Instagram as a medium to enhance reading comprehension through the personal

experience of a high school student at SMA Santun Untan Pontianak. Instagram has gained significant popularity, not only as a social media platform but also as a potential educational tool. By adopting a narrative approach, this study seeks to delve into the personal narrative of the student regarding the experience with Instagram in improving reading comprehension skills.

This was especially observed in one eleventh-grade student at SMA Santun Untan Pontianak. The researcher chose SMA Santun Untan Pontianak because it was one of the schools that was active in English learning. The researcher previously had teaching experience (PPL) in grade eleven for four months, which allowed the researcher to understand the difficulties that the student faced related to reading comprehension in English.

Data Collection

The data collection for this study involved interviews and documentation, which aimed to explore student's motivation in using Instagram as a medium to improve reading comprehension. The interviews gathered rich qualitative insights into student's personal experiences of Instagram's role in learning process. This discussion provides a deeper understanding of how social media affects student's reading comprehension skills. Additionally, documentation, including relevant posts and interactions from student's Instagram activities, was analyzed to identify patterns and themes that reflected student engagement and motivation. Using this method, this study aims to create a comprehensive picture of how Instagram can serve as an effective educational tool in improving reading comprehension for student.

Data analysis

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, as outlined by Kiger & Varpio, (2020). The steps involved in the analysis included: (1) Listening and Transcribing: The researcher listened to the recorded interview multiple times to understand the content thoroughly before transcribing it into Indonesian; (2) Reading and Identifying Critical Incidents: The transcribed data were read multiple times to identify significant incidents. This allowed for efficient coding while keeping the data in its original language until translation was necessary; (3) Categorizing Data: The researcher categorized the data into sub-themes based on similar ideas or information, highlighting key aspects of the student's experiences; (4) Reorganizing into Thematic Headings: The sub-themes were reorganized into broader thematic headings, providing a structured framework for analysis.

Results and Discussion

Results

The results of the thematically analyzed interview data revealed several key themes that highlighted student's experiences and perceptions of Instagram as a learning tool.

1. Motivation and Initial Experience Using Instagram

This theme explores student's initial motivations and feelings when student first used Instagram. The data shows that initial interest in Instagram is often driven by peer influence and curiosity about the rapidly evolving world of social media. The feelings felt when first using Instagram are a mix of excitement, curiosity, and anxiety.

"I first became interested in using Instagram about four years ago because many of my friends were using it" (A01/Interview)

"My initial interest in using Instagram stemmed from my curiosity about the rapidly growing world of social media" (A02/Interview)

"When I first uploaded a photo, I felt really happy when I saw the results appear in my feed. But yeah, I was also a little nervous thinking about other people's responses." (D01/Interview)

"At that time, I was a mixture of excited, curious, and a little nervous." (D02/Interview)

Instagram attracted student through social influence and curiosity about new trends. The mixed initial experiences reflected anxiety about how the content student created would be received by others. Student felt excited about being able to participate in a social media trend that was popular among teenagers, but also felt some anxiety about how others would judge the content. This shows the importance of social media in shaping the experiences and perceptions of digital interactions among adolescents. The high curiosity about new features on Instagram also shows how quickly social media platforms can attract new users through innovation and content diversity.

2. Using Instagram as a Medium of Expression and Inspiration

This theme explores how student used Instagram as a medium to express creativity and seek inspiration. student began actively using Instagram when entered high school and began exploring interesting and useful content. The diversity of ideas and creativity found on Instagram inspired participant to develop student own skills.

"I started actively using Instagram since entering high school, about two years ago." (B01/Interview)

"I started exploring various interesting and useful content. I was fascinated by the diversity of ideas, creativity, and inspiration presented by Instagram users from various parts of the world." (B02/Interview)

"One of the accounts I follow and find interesting is the @aarons.english account, which often shares interesting facts and new vocabulary in English."

This account provides easy-to-understand content that is useful for improving vocabulary comprehension and grammar usage." (E01/Interview)

Instagram provides a platform rich in ideas and creativity, allowing student to be inspired and develop new skills. Certain accounts that focus on education and self-development help student learn and grow in interests, demonstrating Instagram's potential as an informal educational tool. Student feel encouraged to explore and express through features such as posting photos, videos, and stories. Inspiration from other diverse users creates an environment that supports the exploration of creativity and self-development. In addition, interesting content from educational accounts also helps improve student's understanding and skills in certain areas, such as English.

3. The Influence of Instagram on Self-Confidence

This theme looks at how Instagram can boost student's self-confidence. Through inspiring content, student's become more confident in expressing hobbies and interests on the platform.

"This also affected me, at first I was still shy to express my hobby but after seeing interesting content on Instagram I became inspired and confident to channel my hobby on Instagram too." (C01/Interview)

Instagram can be a powerful tool for building self-confidence, especially in expressing hobbies and interests. Inspirational content from other users can motivate student to be more open and confident in displaying student work, demonstrating the positive impact of social media on self-development. Student who were initially shy in expressing hobbies found that seeing inspirational content from others can encourage student to be more confident and active.

4. Instagram as a Tool for Learning

This theme explores Instagram student as a learning tool, particularly in improving reading comprehension. Following educational accounts that post English-language content helps student learn new vocabulary and correct grammar usage.

"So, I follow the accounts @aarons.english and @mr.johnid on Instagram. They like to post interesting facts in English that are fun and easy to understand. From there, I learned new vocabulary and how to use grammar properly." (F01/Interview)

"By reading content like that every day, I indirectly got used to reading more and more variedly." (F02/Interview)

Instagram has the potential to be an effective educational tool, especially in language learning. Engaging and easy-to-understand content from educational accounts can improve student's reading skills and comprehension, indicating that social media can be used for educational purposes. Student following accounts such as @aarons.english and @mr.johnid directly benefited from improving vocabulary and grammar comprehension. Reading English-language content regularly helped student become familiar with language variations and correct word usage, which

indirectly helped improve student's reading comprehension. This suggests that social media is not only an entertainment platform but can also serve as a useful learning tool.

5. Challenges in Learning through Instagram

This theme identifies challenges that student faced when attempting to using Instagram as a learning tool. Key challenges included distractions from other content unrelated to learning and a lack of content that supported deep reading comprehension.

"The biggest challenge is distraction from other content that is not related to learning." (G01/Interview)

"Another challenge is that most of the content is not supportive enough to improve reading comprehension" (G02/Interview)

While Instagram has potential as a learning tool, student faced significant challenges such as distractions from entertainment content and a lack of in-depth content to support serious learning. Distractions from an abundance of entertainment content can interfere with student's focus when attempting to learn through this platform. Managing time and avoiding distractions are also key to overcoming these challenges.

6. Changes in Views on Social Media after Using Instagram

This theme explores how the experience of using Instagram for educational purposes has changed student's views on social media. Previously considered as a mere entertainment medium, social media is now seen as a tool that can be used to learn and improve skills.

"In the past, I always thought that social media only did things that weren't important and made us more lazy about studying." (H01/Interview)

"I realized that behind content that is just entertainment, there is also content that can help us learn new things." (H02/Interview)

The experience of using Instagram for learning has changed student's perceptions of social media. From an initial negative view, student began to see the educational value of the content on social media, showing that this platform can be used to develop knowledge and skills. Student who were initially skeptical about the benefits of social media in learning now realize that behind the entertainment content, there is a lot of useful information and knowledge. By following accounts that focus on education and self-development, student found that social media can be an effective and enjoyable learning resource. This shows that a change in perspective can occur when student actively seek out and utilize content that is relevant to learning goals.

Discussion

The results of the thematic analysis indicate that student's experiences in using Instagram as a learning tool are quite diverse, with several key themes reflecting student's motivations, challenges, and shifts in perspective. Student expressed that student's initial motivation to use

Instagram was often influenced by peer interactions and curiosity about the rapidly evolving world of social media. Huang & Su, (2018) states that the mixed feelings, such as excitement and anxiety, when first using this platform reflect how social interactions on social media can shape adolescents' digital experiences. This highlights the importance of social factors in attracting new users to this platform and underscores the impact of peer influence in adopting new technologies.

Student began actively using Instagram as a medium to express creativity and seek inspiration, particularly upon entering high school. Vogel, (2018) states that the diversity of ideas and creativity found on Instagram encouraged student to develop reading comprehension skills. This suggests that Instagram functions not only as a social platform but also as a rich source of inspiration that can enhance individual skills and interests.

Student also reported that Instagram plays a role in boosting their self-confidence. Susilawaty et al., (2023) states that through inspiring content, student felt more confident in expressing hobbies and interests. This indicates that social media can be a powerful tool for personal development, providing social support that encourages individuals to be more open and active in showcasing their work.

Specifically, the use of Instagram as a tool to enhance reading comprehension is prominent. Student who followed educational accounts reported improvements in vocabulary and grammar understanding. Aloraini, (2018) states that Instagram has the potential to be an effective educational tool, particularly in language learning contexts. Engaging and easily understandable content from educational accounts helps student become familiar with language variations and correct word usage, which in turn enhances reading comprehension skills.

Despite the many benefits, student also faced challenges when using Instagram as a learning tool. Zalani & Yousofi, (2024) states that distractions from unrelated content and a lack of in-depth material posed significant hurdles. This illustrates that while Instagram has potential as an educational tool, users need to manage their time and avoid distractions to maximize their learning experience.

The experience of using Instagram for educational purposes has transformed student's views on social media. Coman et al., (2021) states that Initially perceived merely as an entertainment platform, student now recognize the educational value of the content available. This indicates that when users actively seek out and utilize content relevant to their learning goals, they can discover useful information and knowledge.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that using Instagram as a medium can significantly enhance reading comprehension and self-confidence among high school student at SMA Santun Untan. The findings indicate that student are motivated to use Instagram primarily due to curiosity and peer influence, which aligns with existing literature on adolescent social interactions. Moreover, Instagram serves as a powerful

platform for creative expression and inspiration, enabling student to engage with diverse content that fosters creativity. This supports previous research suggesting that social media enriches social capital and facilitates social learning. The study also highlights Instagram's role in boosting student's self-confidence. Through validation and support from online communities, student feel more empowered to share hobbies and interests. This is consistent with research on self-affirmation and the positive impact of social support on confidence levels. Additionally, Instagram is identified as an effective learning tool. Student reported improvements in student's understanding of English vocabulary and grammar by following educational accounts, emphasizing the platform's potential for informal learning. This aligns with findings that suggest social media can bridge the gap between formal and informal education, providing accessible and engaging content. Overall, the implications of these findings underscore the educational potential of Instagram, suggesting that it can be leveraged to enhance learning experiences. Future research should explore the long-term effects of social media use on academic performance and identify strategies to mitigate distractions while maximizing educational benefits.

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