Using Instagram to Teach Writing Descriptive Text

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Writing skill is probably the most difficult skill to master. It is due to the students that may have less experience to write than to read, speak, and even to listen. Descriptive text is one of the five genre texts learned by Junior High School students, especially the 7th and 8th graders. To avoid boredom for the students in learning writing descriptive, the teacher should apply the interesting method in teaching. There are some methods for teaching writing descriptive text using ICT. One of the alternative methods for teaching writing descriptive text is using the application of Instagram. Instagram has become one of the most popular social media today. Moreover, in this pandemic era, when the teaching learning activity is mostly done online, the social media is widely used in virtual class activity. This essay describes the application of Instagram and its features for teaching learning activity. It also explains some procedures of implementing Instagram in learning activity, particularly in writing descriptive text. From this study, the researcher found that the application of Instagram in teaching writing descriptive text is very attractive to the students. It can be seen from the students' response in the teaching and learning process.

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1. INTRODUCTION

As an international language, English is used in every sector in the world. Most of the business centers and offices that have an international level use English as their spoken and written language. The ability to speak English (language competence) is an absolute prerequisite that must be had by everyone, especially in this day of communication and globalization when the free market is accessible. If a person does not have a good command of the English language, he will be left behind by the times.

Learning English in junior high school is a required subject to develop their competence in science, technology, and art. As the result, the students must be an intelligent, skilled, and good character individual. This is for preparing their future life.

Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are the four skills needed to master a language. All of them are aided by language elements such as grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary based on the theme as a way of achieving the objectives. Of the four language skills above, writing is often supposed to be a problem for students in the English learning process. The majority of English students appear to believe that the most difficult skill to master is writing [1]. This is very interesting to study considering that writing ability is strongly

influenced by vocabulary mastery, language structure and students' ability to assemble words into an acceptable text.

The grammatical difference between English as a foreign language and Bahasa Indonesia as the first language is a problem that often arises when learning to write. One of the Basic Competencies that 7th grade Junior High School students must master is the ability to compose short and simple descriptive oral and written texts about people and animals, while taking into account the linguistic element, text structure, and social function, correctly and in context.

Nowadays, social media becomes the most popular thing in the world. They can be applied in electronic devices or gadgets like computer, laptop, and cellular phone. The last is the most usable right now. In this pandemic era, most of the students and teacher used online learning system. Some of them use such a Learning Management System (LMS) like Google Classroom, Edmodo, Rumah Belajar to do the teaching and learning process. WhatsApp group, Telegram group, Facebook, Instagram are also used by some others. The use of social media is massive to communicate and share knowledge since they are highly used, and helpful to the users. Social media has a key role in education since it provides chance to the students to improve their language skills.

The authors of this study use Instagram to teach descriptive text writing skills. Instagram focuses on writing captions from uploaded photographs and videos and sharing them with everyone who uses the program across the world. The application of social media, especially Instagram, is very popular among teenagers and can attract attention, including uploading photos and videos with captions. The users can upload photos and videos to Instagram accompanied by captions to describe them. Some Indonesian users also used English for their captions.

There are some studies relate to the use of Instagram in teaching English. One of the studies is "The Effectiveness of Using Instagram in Cultivating Students' Descriptive Text Writing" [2]. The study found that using Instagram can help students improve their writing skills, and students have a good attitude toward using Instagram when writing descriptive language.

Dealing with the previous study, the writers conduct the study and propose research questions as follow:
1. What is the definition of Instagram?
2. What are the Instagram's characteristics?
3. What are the benefits and drawbacks of Instagram?
4. What is writing descriptive text?
5. How might Instagram be used to educate students how to write descriptive text?
6. How do the writers report the use of Instagram?
7. What is the teachers' perception of using Instagram to teach writing descriptive text?

2.   RESEARCH AND METHOD

This research applied a descriptive qualitative approach. It describes the teachers' perceptions in using Instagram to teach writing descriptive text. Three English teachers were involved in this study. They are from SMPN 3 Gandrungmangu, SMPN 1 Cipari, and SMPN 1 Kedungreja. The purposive sampling technique was used in this study. Purposive sampling technique must be applied when there will be bias if the sampling was taken randomly [3].The teachers were chosen since they used Instagram in teaching.

A literature analysis was used to get the definition, characteristics, benefits, and drawbacks of Instagram. A semi-structured interview was applied to get the teachers perceptions. The most practical and generally used instrument in the interview is general interview guide or interview protocol [3].

To get the validation of data, the researcher applied triangulation of instrument. The other instrument was document analysis. The document came from the screen shot of the use of Instagram in teaching and learning process. It was to make a cross-check to the teachers' data.

3.   RESULT AND DUSCUSSION

The following are the result of the research:
3.1 The Definition of Instagram

Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger created a similar platform to Foursquare but focused on photo sharing named Instagram in San Fransisco. Instagram derives from the word "instant" or "insta", just like "instant photo" better known by Polaroid camera. Instagram may show photos in a variety of ways. The word "gram" is derived from the phrase "telegram," which refers to send information swiftly. Instagram, on the other hand, may publish photos to the Internet in order to send and share images and information rapidly. This is why Instagram is a combination of the words "instant camera" and "telegram."[4]. The iOS app was released on October 6, 2010, while the Android version was released on April 3, 2012. In just two years, Instagram has grown to 40 million active users. This drew the attention of Facebook, which in the summer of 2012 purchased Instagram for a billion dollars [4].

Instagram is a social networking program for smartphones that is similar to Twitter but differs in that it allows users to share photos and videos [5]. It enables the users to share photos and videos those can be edited by using filters and organized by hash tags and geo-tagging. The post can be set to whom they are shared, publicly or privately. Users can browse other people's posts by tags and location, as well as discover what's trending. They can like and follow other users to add their content to a personal feed, as well as like and follow photographs and videos.

3.2. The Characteristic of Instagram

Photo posting, captioning, hashtagging, and exploring are just a few of the capabilities that available on Instagram. Instagram's most recent upgrade regarding photo publishing allows users to upload several photos in a single post. According to Cosntine (2017), Instagram users should not be puzzled about which photo is their best; instead, they can share up to ten photos. It is increasing the pupils' options by providing ever more detailed information. Furthermore, Instagram's most recent update allows users to share videos with music in reels.

According to Jackson (2017), Instagram allows users to write up to 2.200 characters in a single post. Three paragraphs are equal to 2.200 characters. Brooks (2014) adds that the hash tag function, which is utilized as a tic tac toe in social media to draw attention from another user, might be a good approach to stand out. According to Constine (2012), explore helped the user uncover more photos that were not included in the hashtag search. Instagram users can also send private messages to one another via direct message. Instagram's message function allows users to communicate synchronously and asynchronously in public or private. Users connect by following each other's profiles, allowing them to view the information put on those pages and interact with comments or likes.

3.3. The Benefits and Drawbacks of Instagram
3.3.1. The Benefits of Instagram

Instagram is a popular social media site that young learners have become almost fully accustomed to; adding it into their learning process can be viewed as a way of applying topics learned in class in a real-world situation. Instagram is regarded as a useful tool for enhancing English learning for the following reasons:

a. A big collection of contextualized visual data on Instagram can be used as a classroom teaching aid.
b. A wide socially linked network for students allows them to communicate with one another outside of the classroom and form connections with one another.
c. Unlimited access without boundaries from the classroom situation makes it possible to distribute education to all areas of the country and to have an endless tapping capacity.
e. Unlike traditional face-to-face learning, the learning process is not constrained by time.
f. Themes and instructional materials provided by Instagram are relevant to the interests and needs of the students.
g. The length of study is also determined by each individual's aptitude, accuracy, and current studying material.
h. Learning can be done in an interactive manner to engage pupils. Allow interested parties (parents of students and teachers) to be able to participate in the success of the learning process by checking tasks done by students online.

3.3.2. The Drawbacks of Instagram

In this scenario, using the internet or Instagram as an online learning tool has a number of drawbacks, which are as follows:

a. Using a lot of data on the internet

Internet data that is used to open the Instagram, edit the images or video and upload it consume a lot of internet data. For students, it can be an obstacle to deal with this problem. Teacher can help them by facilitating the Wi-Fi connection when doing this activity at school.

b. The internet connection doesn't support in some areas.

Internet connection is very limited in some areas. This can be a problem when the teacher asks the students to do some activities using Instagram from home.

c. Depends on learning motivation's independence.

The activities in using Instagram depend on the learner motivation to get the knowledge from this application. So, the teacher should have some tricks to overcome this problem. The Instagram writing activities that are arranged by the teacher should encourage the learner motivation to write. It can be done by providing some pictures or topics that the students understand for sure.

d. The students' name in Instagram is different with their real name.

The students usually make their Instagram account using different name. It is difficult for teacher to identify them.

3.4. Writing Descriptive Text
3.4.1. Descriptive Text

Kane (2000) defines description as the sensory and visual experience of something; how it looks, sounds, and tastes. Writing a description is the process of using words to create a visual image. As a result, a descriptive text can be defined as a text that tells what a person or an object is like, including its form, qualities, quantity, and so on.

Writing a descriptive text is a means of orally portraying images in speech or writing and arranging those images in such a way that the reader may feel the situation described.

3.4.2. Kinds of Descriptive Text

A description depicts how something appears, smells, tastes, feels, or sounds. It can also express positive emotions such as joy, loneliness, or dread. It is used to describe visual representations of individuals, places, and even time units.

a. Describing people

People are usually the ones who pique the reader's curiosity. For instance, their physical appearance matches their personality. When it comes to description, most people think of adjectives and possibly adverbs.

b. Describing place

It is critical to consider how a location appears, smells, and sounds. There are a few ways to assess a description of a location; is the image captured at a single point in time? Is the information organized in a logical manner? Is there a consistent point of view throughout? Are the noun and verb specific and descriptive, as well as the adjective?

c. Describing unit of time

Mood is frequently established through descriptions of time units. Seasons, days, and times of day are all described in literature. In each of the following examples, notice how the description of a unit of time creates a specific mood or emotional tone.

3.4.3. The Generic Structure

Wardiman, et al. divide the generic structure of descriptive text into two parts: 1) introduction, which introduces the character, and 2) description, which explains the character. This means that a descriptive text comprises two elements: one for identifying phenomena (identification) and another for portraying components, attributes, or features (description).

3.4.4. The Language Features

The following is a discussion of the language characteristics of descriptive text. First, it has a specific noun/clear noun, such as my hobby, my sister, and so on. Second, it uses simple present tense, as in: I live in a small house, but it is really comfortable and has a tiny beautiful park. Third, utilizing adjectives to describe, number, and define something, such as two powerful legs. It involves the use of action verbs, such as "my cat eats a mouse," with figurative language, such as similes and metaphors. Furthermore, the descriptive text has the following linguistic features: 1) Simple Present Tense, 2) Action Verbs, 3) Adverbs, and 4) Special Technical Terms.

3.5. The Application of Instagram in the Classroom
3.5.1. Procedure

There are some activities we can apply in our English lesson using Instagram. The following are some suggestions for using Instagram in the classroom [6]:

1. Instaphotos: Using images

   a.   Find and upload a photo that is related to the topic we are studying. For example, if the class is learning about travel vocabulary, we can show photographs of different nations. Allow students to choose their favorite and write a descriptive paragraph about it. We can also ask the students to share their opinion about the picture they have chosen.

   b.   Post our picture and ask students to write their comment providing adjectives or words related to the vocabulary they are studying. We can also ask them to write it in a complete sentence describing the picture so that they learn tenses too. We may give an award point to challenge students who have written the right answer. In the end of the learning, student who gets the most score will get a prize.

2. Instavideo: Using short videos

   a.   Get a short video of the lesson we consider relevant to the material and upload it. Allow the students to return to the previous lesson as homework. It will be better if our students post a short presentation of a certain topic that they could watch again. We might even ask them to do a follow-up task based on their work.

b.   Depending on the target language being taught at the time, ask students to record themselves talking about something or someone each week. Their classmates are required to ask questions or make predictions regarding the item or person discussed in the film. This activity can help them improve their listening and grammatical skills while also increasing their interaction.

3. Instar search
a. Using Instastory

Create a film that introduces a topic that is relevant to a phenomenon. Students will observe and listen before conducting studies on the assigned topic. They have the opportunity to write a summary of the facts and characteristics of the phenomenon.

b. Using Hashtags

When we want our students to look for someone or something, we can create a picture using various hashtags. If we want our students to undertake research on Shakespeare in a literary class, we may include the following hashtags in our post: Shakespeare's #poet #poetry #sonnets #actor #writer #England, and so on. Allow students to post about the relevant topic by clicking on the hashtags.

c. Using Other Accounts

Offer the students the task of finding a free topic and allow them to look through various Instagram accounts. They can use the material they've obtained to compose an essay or create a presentation on it.

Instagram is an extremely beneficial application that can assist us in keeping up with technological developments. It provides us fun and meaningful English materials both inside and outside the classroom. It likes having a successful teaching recipe only in using one application.

3.5.2. Sample of the Material

Writing is a complex and difficult activity. Alfin Candra (2020) mentions that it requires attempt to have good writing. Here, we are trying to teach descriptive writing to our students using Instagram as one of popular social media platform.

Table 1. Sample of Teaching Descriptive Text Writing

Context	:	Descriptive Text Writing
New words	:	- Some adjective related to animal: funny, cute, white fur, long tail, - Simple Present Tense: I have a lovely cat.
Preparation	:	Some pictures of pet and materials' slides to be posted on Instagram
Procedure	:	- First Posting: Post a picture of animal and a caption of, "What do you think about this picture?" - Second Posting: Post some slides of material about Descriptive Text - Third Posting: Post a picture of another pet and ask the students to write a sentence describing the picture. - Fourth Posting: Post an instruction for students to describe their own pet. Ask them to post their writing on Instagram by also adding hashtags of our Instagram account to let us see their writing.

3.6. The Report of Instagram Application in the Classroom

Writing descriptive text is started to learn by students from junior high school in grade seven. But it becomes the basic material for the students in the next level. Below are the steps of applying Instagram in the classroom.

3.6.1. First Posting

In the first posting, we post a picture of a bird as one of the animals to be described. Here is the stage of brainstorming. Matt Ellis (2021) says that brainstorming is the process when we consciously try to think a new idea to a certain problem. It becomes a useful preliminary stage that helps writers to know exactly what's going on their projects [7]. It is recommended to be the first step in writing process since when we know the content we want to write from the beginning, we will be easier in writing all the following steps. Here is the link for the first posting: https://www.instagram.com/p/CUMoqgPnPH/?utm_medium=share_sheet
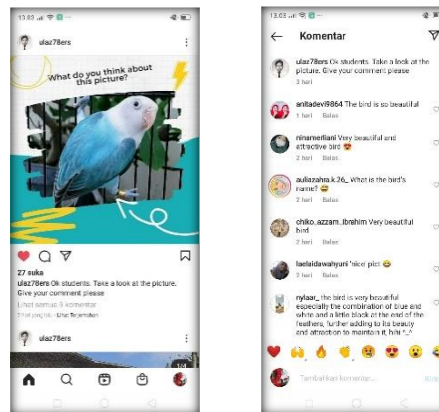
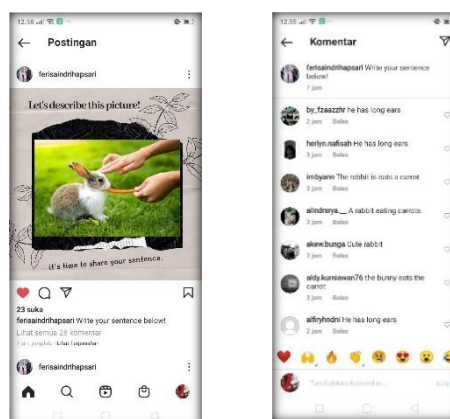**Picture 1**. First Posting and Its Comments

3.6.2. Second Posting

Some slides of the descriptive text material are uploaded in the second posting. The goal of this step is to provide the students' understanding about descriptive text. The materials are described in seven slides including the slides to get the students' engagement in the beginning and in the last slide. Here is the link for the second posting: https://www.instagram.com/p/CURhQmvPb3a/?utm_medium=share_sheet
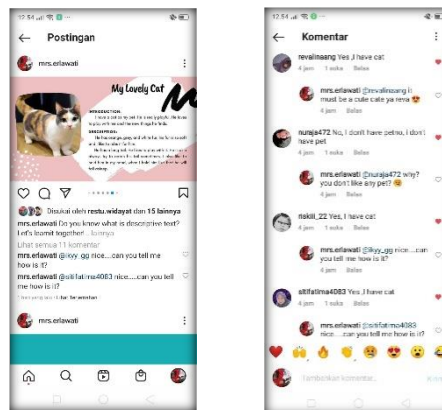
Picture 2. Second Posting and Its Comments

3.6.3. Third Posting

In the third posting, we share a picture of another animal for the students to describe. Students have to write a sentence described the picture posted. Its goal is to give an exercise for students to write a simple description. The animal's picture to describe is a rabbit. Here is the link for the third posting: https://www.instagram.com/p/CUTUS0OBr5h/?utm_medium=share_sheet

Picture 3. Third Posting and Its Comments

3.6.4. Fourth Posting

An instruction to describe the students own pet is the last posting of this lesson. They are asked to describe it in a simple descriptive text then post it on their Instagram by also inserting hashtag to the teacher and their friends. We can check the students' writing by finding their work on the hashtag column. Here is the link for the las posting: https://www.instagram.com/p/CUTsiQHviY3/
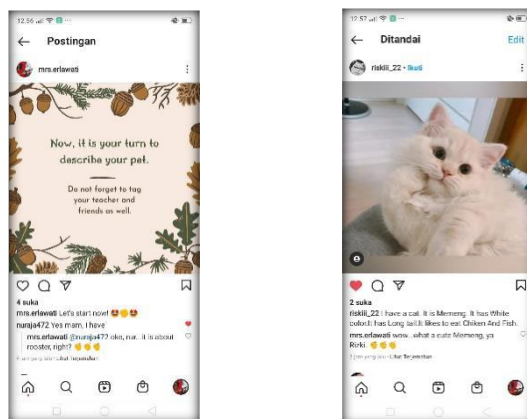
Picture 4. Fourth Posting and One of the Student's Writing

3.7. Teachers' Perceptions in Using Instagram to Teach Writing Descriptive Text

The teachers were asked about their general opinion of using Instagram to teach writing descriptive text. Based on the interview, T1 agreed that Instagram was a challenging application to teach writing.

> "In my opinion, teaching writing descriptive text using Instagram was so challenging. For me, it was the first time to teach using Instagram. I must prepare the material well before uploading them to the Instagram post."

According to T2, teaching writing descriptive text using Instagram can be fun and meaningful activity.

> "I think Instagram can be one of the media that makes my teaching learning activity becomes fun and meaningful. The students can interact well by sharing their comments on every posting I made. They are free to write their idea based on the instruction I have posted."

While T3 has an opinion that using Instagram to teach descriptive text helped the students to give an idea to write.

> "I feel that Instagram attract the students' attention in learning. The posted images on Instagram helped them to give an idea to write something, for example about the color, the shape and size, etc. From those images, they began to write what they see."

The second question was "What do you think about the level of students' engagement in your teaching and learning process using Instagram?" T1 exposed about the internet connection trouble that cause some of his students became inactive.

> "Frankly speaking, there are only little of my students who were active in the teaching and learning process. When I asked them why they were not active, they proposed many excuses, such as bad internet signal, no quota data, and some others said that they were not confident enough to write on the Instagram Post"

Meanwhile T2 mentioned that teaching writing descriptive text using Instagram can engage students' interest.

> "I get surprised to see my students are exciting to use Instagram in our learning. Many of them have not had this application so I ask them to have it installed on their mobile phone. Having understood the steps, they do the activity with great joy."

T3 highlighted about Instagram gave the students new experience of learning English.

> "Most of my students are having Instagram application and Instagram account in their cellphone but they use it only for uploaded their photos or explore something. These activities give them new experience of learning English especially in writing descriptive text."

The third question was "According to your experience in using Instagram, what should the teacher do to make the use of Instagram to teach writing descriptive text becomes effective?"
T1 believes that well preparation will create the class activity run well.

> "For me, the most important thing is preparation. The teacher should prepare the material to be uploaded. It must be attractive for the students. It must be easy to understand. The step must be well

arranged. The second is build the students engagement by giving some reward for those who are active in the process. The third is making an assessment after the process is over."

Clear instruction is believed by T2 can make the class activity run well.

"I will make sure that all students have installed the application on their mobile phone and have enough data to access since it is not supported by kuota belajar Kemdikbud. Then, I have to arrange the interesting materials to post on Instagram. The instruction in every posting must be clear too otherwise they will feel hard to respond. If so, then the class activity will not run well."

T3 agrees that prepare interesting materials in Instagram post can attract the students' interest.

"I think the teacher should create interesting images in Instagram post to attract the students' attention. Clear and attractive images will attract the visual attention and help them to give an idea to write something"

4.   CONCLUSION

Writing descriptive text can be very interesting for the students. It can motivate their interest to write in a fun and meaningful way. As result, using Instagram to improve students' writing skills is a good idea. However, there are some problems occur in using Instagram. The most common problem is about the engagement of the students in Instagram. It is caused by the limitation of internet quota and the poor internet signal in the students' environment. The teacher must find the strategies to increase the students' engagement by giving some rewards to the most active students in the learning process.

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