



# Utilizing Instagram to improve students' recount text writing in English class

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# Utilizing Instagram to improve students' recount text writing in English class

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the use of social media, particularly Instagram, in improving students' ability to write recount texts. A quantitative experimental design was employed with 70 eleventh-grade students divided into an experimental group (Instagram-assisted instruction) and a control group (traditional instruction). Data were collected through pre- and post-tests, questionnaires, classroom observations, and document analysis to measure writing improvements in structure, vocabulary, grammar, and coherence. The findings indicate an improvement in writing skills in both groups, with a more significant increase observed in the experimental group. The average pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental class rose from 4.25 to 5.54, while the control class increased from 3.87 to 4.93. A paired sample t-test confirmed statistical significance with a Sig. value of 0.000 in both groups, underscoring the effectiveness of using social media in learning. Questionnaire results revealed that students experienced increased motivation, creativity, and confidence, while minor technical challenges were reported. Instagram proved to be an effective, interactive, and contextual learning medium.



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## Introduction

English has become a global lingua franca essential for communication in education, business, technology, and culture. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language rather than a mother tongue, which presents challenges, particularly for students who seldom use English in daily life (Ambarita, 2021). Most learners start English instruction at elementary or junior high levels, resulting in widely varied proficiency. In this context, teachers play a central role in helping students not only understand theoretical concepts but also apply English in meaningful, real-life situations (Prayoga & Khatimah, 2019).

Learning English involves four main skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing is widely considered the most complex skill because it requires students to express ideas, experiences, and information systematically and logically while mastering grammar, vocabulary, and spelling. One important textual genre in the Indonesian curriculum is Recount Text, which trains students to narrate past experiences in a structured format, improving overall language proficiency.

Writing instruction entails planning, drafting, revising, and editing, supporting students in expressing ideas clearly and cohesively (Hyland, as cited in Yusuf, 2023). It requires linguistic knowledge vocabulary and grammar as well as higher-order skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and structured communication (Abidin, 2020). According to constructivist theory, writing develops through active engagement with personal experiences and social contexts (Jean, as cited in Ardiansyah, 2021), highlighting the need for authentic, meaningful writing opportunities.

Digital tools, including Instagram, have transformed writing processes by allowing students to compose, share, and receive feedback in real time. Such platforms align with multimodal, technology-integrated learning approaches that foster creativity, reflection, and collaboration (Jou, 2020). Instagram supports recount writing through visual prompts, caption writing, and peer interactions, encouraging chronological narration, storytelling skills, and grammar accuracy in authentic contexts (Greenhow & Lewin, 2022; O'Bannon & Thomas, 2021).

Despite the availability of digital tools, low English proficiency, particularly in remote areas, remains a significant obstacle. Limited language mastery restricts access to global knowledge, further education, and competitiveness (Khatimah & Prayoga, 2019). Motivation is crucial, as learners exposed to engaging and contextual activities demonstrate higher confidence and classroom participation (Nikijuluw et al., 2023). Interactive activities can improve students' understanding of text structures and enable broader application, enhancing writing confidence (Rofii et al., 2023; Kurniawan et al., 2024).

Mastery of Recount Text extends beyond grammar and vocabulary; it requires the ability to convey information coherently. Students must organize ideas and compose compelling narratives, skills essential for academic and professional success (Lutfi & Hanifa, 2022). The Recount Text structure orientation, series of events, and re-orientation supports narrative skills and personal expression, particularly when integrated with visual and interactive tools such as Instagram (Anderson & Anderson, as cited in Rahayu, 2021; Shih, 2021; O'Bannon & Thomas, 2023).

The advent of Society 5.0 and digital technologies has enabled ubiquitous learning through smartphones and internet access. Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube can facilitate collaborative learning, improve communication skills, and provide access to diverse learning materials (Xu et al., 2023). Despite this, many students struggle with English writing due to low motivation, limited vocabulary, and frequent errors, while platforms like Instagram remain underutilized in formal instruction.

Instagram, as a visually oriented and familiar medium, has potential to improve writing motivation and skills, especially in narrating personal experiences. Teachers can utilize Instagram features such as posts, captions, comments, and hashtags to model texts, guide sentence construction, and provide immediate feedback, fostering interactive and engaging learning atmospheres (Apoko et al., 2023; Monny, 2022). The combination of visual and textual elements facilitates interaction, reflection, and contextualized learning, aligning with students' daily digital habits.

Although digital tools have been explored in previous studies, limited research specifically investigates Instagram's impact on high school students' writing performance in Recount Texts. Most studies focus on motivation or general social media benefits without examining structural, lexical, and grammatical improvements or providing comparisons with traditional instruction. To address these gaps, this study explores the effectiveness of Instagram in enhancing students' writing proficiency, focusing on text organization, vocabulary, and grammar, aiming to provide evidence of Instagram as a pedagogically relevant tool for 21st-century EFL classrooms.

## Method

This study employed a quantitative experimental design to investigate the effect of Instagram integration on students' writing proficiency in English, specifically in crafting Recount Texts. The population consisted of all 11th-grade students at SMA Negeri 24 Batam, totaling 210 students across six classes. A sample of 70 students was selected using random sampling to ensure representativeness

and minimize selection bias, and they were equally divided into an experimental group (Instagram-assisted instruction) and a control group (traditional instruction).

The study utilized pre-tests and post-tests to measure writing improvements, with assessment criteria focusing on text structure, vocabulary, grammar, and coherence. In addition, questionnaires, classroom observations, and document analysis were employed to triangulate data and provide a more comprehensive understanding of students' learning experiences and engagement. The instruments were validated through expert review and pilot testing to ensure reliability and accuracy.

The intervention involved integrating Instagram as a learning medium where students could draft, post, and comment on Recount Texts within a class-specific account. Students' motivation, engagement, and linguistic development were monitored using Likert-scale questionnaires and reflective journals. Classroom observations documented behavioral responses, peer interactions, and students' ability to follow Recount Text structures during the learning process.

Data analysis included both descriptive and inferential statistics. Post-test results were analyzed to determine significant differences between the experimental and control groups. Normality tests were conducted to choose appropriate statistical tests, and non-parametric tests were applied where data were not normally distributed. This methodological design ensured rigorous analysis while capturing the contextual depth of Instagram-assisted instruction. By combining experimental treatment with multiple data sources, the study aimed to provide a detailed understanding of Instagram's impact on students' writing performance and to evaluate its potential as an effective tool in EFL instruction.

## Results and Discussions

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of using Instagram as a learning medium to improve students' ability to write recount texts in English class. To determine the impact, both the control group and the experimental group were given a pre-test and a post-test. The control group was taught using conventional methods, while the experimental group received treatment through the integration of Instagram-based activities. The descriptive statistics of the students' scores in both groups are presented in the following table:

**Table 1.** Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Scores Between Control and Experimental Groups

Group	Test Type	Mean	Median	Mode	Min	Max
Control	Pre-test	3.8743	4.0000	4.00	1.00	4.60
Control	Post-test	4.9314	4.8000	4.80	4.40	5.40
Experimental	Pre-test	4.2457	4.2000	4.60	3.40	5.00
Experimental	Post-test	5.5429	5.6000	5.40	5.40	6.00

As shown in Table 1, the control group's mean score increased from 3.87 in the pre-test to 4.93 in the post-test. This indicates a moderate improvement in students' writing performance even without the use of Instagram. The slight increase might be attributed to regular classroom instruction and students' ongoing exposure to the subject matter.

In contrast, the experimental group, which used Instagram as a tool to write and share recount texts, showed a more significant improvement. Their average score rose from 4.25 in the pre-test to 5.54 in the post-test. This substantial gain suggests that the integration of Instagram had a positive impact on students' writing abilities. Notably, the minimum and maximum scores also increased, indicating more consistency and higher performance across the group.

The use of Instagram likely contributed to increased student engagement, motivation, and opportunities for authentic writing practice. By posting recount texts in a public (or class-shared) space, students became more aware of audience, grammar accuracy, coherence, and creativity in their writing. Moreover, peer interaction through comments and likes may have fostered a more dynamic and encouraging learning environment.

To validate these results, the data were further analyzed using several statistical tests. Normality tests were conducted to determine the distribution of the data. Since the control group data were not

normally distributed, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was applied, while the paired sample t-test was used for the experimental group. Both tests showed statistically significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) between pre-test and post-test scores, confirming that the use of Instagram had a positive and measurable effect on students' ability to write recount texts in English.

These findings support the notion that incorporating digital platforms such as Instagram into classroom activities can be an effective strategy to enhance writing skills, especially in recount text writing which relies heavily on students' personal experiences and narrative structure. The results also align with previous research highlighting the benefits of social media in language learning.

The normality test was conducted to determine whether the data were normally distributed. In this study, the normality test was applied to both pre-test and post-test scores of the control and experimental groups. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk methods were used, considering the sample size was fewer than 50. The decision criterion is: if the significance value (Sig.)  $< 0.05$ , the data are not normally distributed; if Sig.  $> 0.05$ , the data are considered normally distributed. The results of the normality tests for both groups are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Normality Test Results for Pre-Test and Post-Test

Group	Test Type	Kolmogorov Smirnov Sig.	Shapiro-Wilk Sig.	Distribution
Control Group	Pre-test	0,001	0,000	Not normal
Control Group	Post-test	0,000	0,009	Not normal
Experimental Group	Pre-test	0,040	0,005	Not normal
Experimental Group	Post-test	0,000	0,000	Not normal

Based on Table 2, all significance values for both Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests are below 0.05. This indicates that all data sets are not normally distributed. However, this does not diminish the meaning of score changes observed, as the subsequent analysis uses a non-parametric approach, specifically the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, which is appropriate for non-normally distributed data.

The results of the Wilcoxon test showed a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, suggesting that the instructional intervention still had a positive effect on students' writing skills, even in the control group.

The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was applied to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the control class. This non-parametric test was selected due to the non-normal distribution of the data, ensuring the validity of the analysis under these conditions.

**Table 3.** Normality Test Results for Pre-Test and Post-Test

Group	Total N	Test Statistic	Standard Error	Standardized Test Statistic	Asymptotic Sig. (2-tailed)
Control Group	35	630.000	60.694	5.190	.000
Experimental Group	35	630.000	60.832	5.178	.000

Based on the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test results presented above, both the control and experimental classes showed a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores, as indicated by the Asymptotic Significance (2-tailed) value of 0.000, which is less than the significance threshold of 0.05.

In the control class, the significant difference suggests that even with conventional teaching methods, students exhibited improvement in writing recount texts. However, the experimental class, which was taught using Instagram as a learning medium, also showed a significant improvement, implying that the use of Instagram had a positive and effective impact on enhancing students' recount text writing skills.

The findings support the notion that integrating social media platforms like Instagram into English writing instruction can be beneficial for student engagement and learning outcomes.

The homogeneity test was conducted to determine whether the variances of the experimental and control groups were equal before comparing the post-test results. This test used Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, available in the Independent Samples T- Test analysis.

**Table 4.** Results of Levene's Test and Independent Samples T-Test

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
41.957	.000	-15.848	41	.000	-6.486	.409

Based on the Levene's Test, the significance value is 0.000, indicating that the variances between the experimental and control groups are not homogeneous. Therefore, the analysis used the "Equal variances not assumed" row in the Independent Samples T- Test. The T-Test results show a significance value (2-tailed) of 0.000, which is less than

0.05. This means that there is a statistically significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups. The mean score of the experimental group was higher, indicating that using Instagram in English writing classes was more effective in improving students' recount text writing skills compared to conventional teaching methods. The effectiveness of using Instagram as a learning medium was evaluated by comparing the mean scores of Pre-tests and post-tests in the control group (conventional learning) and the experimental group (Instagram-based instruction). The summary is presented below.

**Tabel 5.** Mean Scores of Pre-Test and Post-Test

Group	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Difference (Post – Pre)	Sig. (2-tailed)	t-value
Control	3,87	4,93	1,06	0,000	-9,930
Exsperimental	4,25	5,54	1,29	0,000	-19,274

Both groups showed a statistically significant improvement in recount text writing skills ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, the experimental group experienced a greater mean increase (+1.29) than the control group (+1.06). This indicates that Instagram-based instruction was more effective than traditional teaching in enhancing students' writing performance.

The structural aspect of students' Recount Texts was evaluated based on their ability to organize key elements, including Orientation, Series of Events, and Re-orientation/Closing, as well as maintaining chronological order and coherence. After the intervention, a notable increase was observed in the experimental group's ability to sequence events logically. This aligns with questionnaire results where 77.1% of students agreed and 11.4% strongly agreed that they could write chronologically, confirming that Instagram facilitates meaningful engagement with text structures (Anderson & Anderson, as cited in Rahayu, 2021; Hyland, as cited in Yusuf, 2023).

The use of temporal connectors improved significantly, with 51.4% agreeing and 17.1% strongly agreeing that they used connectives such as "first," "then," and "finally." Qualitative observations showed that the integration of images with narrative captions on Instagram provided visual scaffolding, supporting coherence and preventing gaps in students' writing (Shih, 2021; O'Bannon & Thomas, 2023). Teachers were able to guide students more effectively through comments, which facilitated the gradual mastery of schematic Recount Text structures (Jean, as cited in Ardiansyah, 2021).

Vocabulary development was also enhanced through the use of photo-based captions, encouraging students to replace vague words with more precise verbs (e.g., "visited," "celebrated") and incorporate past-tense verbs accurately. Peer and teacher feedback on Instagram promoted lexical revisions and

active vocabulary expansion, consistent with the constructivist principle that authentic interaction fosters productive language skills (Hashemi & Ghaemi, as cited in Yuliana, 2020; Abidin, 2020).

Grammar improvements were evident in past-tense consistency, subject-verb agreement, and sentence construction. Students corrected errors such as “goed → went” or “bued → bought” after receiving teacher feedback via Instagram comments. The repeated exposure to model captions, both from peers and teachers, acted as guided input, reinforcing accurate grammatical structures (Greenhow & Lewin, 2022; Jean, as cited in Ardiansyah, 2021).

Questionnaire data further revealed that students felt more motivated and confident using Instagram. Approximately 90% of students reported increased engagement due to the familiar platform and appreciated the immediate feedback from peers and teachers. They also reported that revising drafts, commenting on peers' posts, and integrating visuals with text enhanced collaborative learning and emotional engagement in writing activities (Jou, 2020; Apoko et al., 2023; Monny, 2022).

Challenges were noted, including distractions from non-academic content, connectivity issues, and privacy concerns. Despite these constraints, teacher guidance and clear instructions on ethical content sharing mitigated potential negative impacts, ensuring a productive learning environment (Greenhow & Lewin, 2022; Yuliana, 2020).

The findings suggest that Instagram not only supports Recount Text writing but also fosters higher-order language skills such as creativity, reflection, and critical thinking (Abidin, 2020; Hyland, as cited in Yusuf, 2023). This confirms previous research indicating that social media platforms can effectively engage learners in multimodal, authentic language tasks (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2022; O'Bannon & Thomas, 2021).

Overall, the study highlights that Instagram integration in writing instruction provides contextual, interactive, and student-centered learning opportunities. It promotes mastery of text structures, vocabulary enrichment, grammatical accuracy, and collaborative learning, all of which are essential competencies for 21st-century English learners (Hashemi & Ghaemi, as cited in Yuliana, 2020; Prensky, as cited in Widodo, 2023).

## Conclusions

This study examined the effectiveness of Instagram as a learning tool to enhance students' ability to write recount texts in English, showing that the experimental group, which received Instagram-integrated instruction, achieved greater improvement than the control group. Statistical analyses, including the Wilcoxon signed-rank test and independent samples t-test, confirmed significant increases in post-test scores ( $p < 0.05$ ), highlighting the positive impact of Instagram-based learning. These findings suggest that integrating Instagram into English writing instruction can foster creativity, collaboration, and student-centered learning, providing an engaging and familiar platform that bridges formal education with students' digital experiences, ultimately making writing activities more relevant and effective.

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