

# Voices on Instagram Usage in English Language Teaching: A Systematic Review

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## ABSTRACT

In this digital era, Instagram is growing rapidly not only as social media but also as an educational platform, especially in English language teaching and learning. Research investigating further Instagram usage in English language teaching and learning through systematic review is still scarcely reported. The purpose of this study is to investigate and synthesize the contribution of previous research (2017-2022) related to Instagram usage and its advantages in the ELT context. Several studies were found on the Sinta, ERIC, and Google Scholar databases. 25 articles were selected based on specified criteria stages that refer to Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and three stages of Meta-Analyses (PRISMA). The findings of this research showed the four main themes examined in Instagram in ELT context, namely students' perceptions of using Instagram in learning English (40%), the topic of improving students' English skills using Instagram (32%), exploring English learning activities through Instagram (20%), and Instagram use in English teaching and learning as perceived by teachers (8%); and the five main advantages of using Instagram for learning English: improving language skills (40%), providing fun learning to students (23%), fostering creativity, motivation, and self-confidence (19%), increasing student understanding in ESP classes (9%), and provide opportunities for collaboration (9%). This research is expected to give insightful information about Instagram usage in ELT. Furthermore, this systematic review can be a reference for a teacher to consider the learning activities integrated with Instagram.

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## Introduction

The English learning platform is currently growing rapidly with existing technological advances (Parmaxi, 2023; Qureshi et al., 2020). Student's ability to learn languages can be enhanced by the use of technology in the classroom (Khaloufi & Laabidi, 2017). Technological developments make it easy for teachers to explore learning methods that will be used and also provide interesting experiences for students when learning by using learning media that is integrated with technology (Surayya & Asrobi, 2020). Ease of accessing technology for teachers also provides opportunities for them to innovate in using learning applications to even social

media as learning media (Gonulal, 2019). Various social media are used for educational purposes, such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram (Akhiar et al., 2017; Handayani & Aminatun, 2020; Khaliq & Nasution, 2019; Montaner, 2020; Putri & Aminatun, 2021). Instagram is one of the social media platforms that teachers are starting to use to aid in the teaching and learning processes of their students. Numerous research examined the use of Instagram in teaching English (Avivi & Megawati, 2020; Mandasari & Aminatun, 2022; Sinaga & Pustika, 2021; Soviyah & Etikaningsih, 2018). However, it is still uncommon to find reports of studies that go deeper into the systematic review of Instagram in English language teaching and learning.

Instagram as a social media that functions to share the moments of its users in the form of photos and videos has become one of the most widely used social media by the world community, especially in Indonesia (Rasyiid et al., 2021). Indonesia with 93 million users ranks fourth as the country with the most Instagram users in the world. Instagram comes from a combination of two words, namely, *insta* which comes from the word *instant* and *gram* which comes from the word *telegram*. The word *insta* is interpreted as a Polaroid camera that can process and print photos instantly, so at that time it was called *instant camera*. The word *gram* is interpreted as a Telegram application that can send information quickly. In light of this, Instagram can be managed by using tools for instantaneous sharing of information, images, and videos (Syahreza & Tanjung, 2018). At first, Instagram was only used as social media in general. Many of the features provided by Instagram make it easy for users to explore the features provided. Over time, Instagram is also used for educational purposes. Instagram makes a good teaching and learning tool in the context of education. With it, students might discover a variety of accounts according to their requirements. Additionally, by reading educational sites on teaching approaches, methods, strategies, and teaching media, students could deepen their understanding.

However, behind the fun that Instagram offers, this can also have a bad impact if misused. The misuse of Instagram influences people to have a hedonistic lifestyle (Agianto et al., 2020; Pasha & Gumay, 2023), deal with mental issues (Lim et al., 2021), and addiction (Zahroh & Scholichah, 2022). Not only that, Therefore, with the start of learning that is integrated with Instagram, it is hoped that it can minimize the negative impact of using Instagram. Instagram is suggested to use in order to study English (Zarei & Rudravarapu, 2019). Instagram needs to grow greatly owing to its benefits and positive outcomes as a potential digital learning tool because it can encourage students to become active communicators. In using Instagram in ELT, it is important to know how students respond to the evaluation and improvement of the methods used.

Prior research has studied Instagram usage in English language teaching and learning. It showed positive attitudes from students. The students believed that social media is crucial to developing their command of the English language (Putri et al., 2019, Sari & Wahyudin, 2019;

Suswati & Saleh, 2019; Ubaedillah et al., 2021). Additionally, Instagram is a resource that EFL university students utilized to learn English in their free time (Zam et al., 2020). Instagram is used as a learning tool not only in Indonesia but also in Turkey. Another study also explored students' opinions about Instagram usage in English language teaching (Erarslan, 2019). Students prefer utilizing Instagram for educational and language learning objectives and it is the most popular social media network among them. Also, it was shown that Instagram helped students learn languages. They can improve their English by incorporating this platform into their regular routines (Gonulal, 2019).

Based on the background in mind, there was a call for examining to explore how Instagram was used in teaching and learning English from late 2017 until 2022. This library research was conducted to integrate research that has been conducted to gain a broader perspective on the use of Instagram for learning English in foreign-language countries, such as Indonesia, or as a second language speaker, such as Malaysia, etc. which in previous studies focused only on certain contexts. With this research, developments in the use of technology in learning and teaching English can be understood and used as a reference by teachers to consider their learning activities. In this study, researchers select quality research from various journals. Therefore, this research's purpose follows the following research questions: 1) What research contributions have been made by previous researchers since 2017 regarding the use of Instagram in the English language teaching and learning process? 2) What are the advantages of Instagram usage in the English language teaching and learning process? This systematic literature review (SLR) was conducted to understand their perspectives based on research conducted in the range of years from 2017 to 2022.

## Method

A systematic review is a sort of literature review that, by definition, aims to find all the relevant evidence on a subject in order to minimize the impact of bias on the review conclusion (Harris et al., 2014). The researcher evaluated a number of studies done by earlier researchers as this study sought to identify materials or skills that can be taught using Instagram and summarized different students' perspectives of English learning that was done with Instagram aid. By exploring and searching for data on online journal platforms such as Google Scholar and ERIC, researchers collected and report this evidence with a series of separate stages that refer to Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA), namely the identification stage, screening stage, eligibility stage, and inclusion stage (Alexander, 2020; Moher et al., 2009).

### A. Identification stage

ERIC and Google Scholar served as the databases for this systematic review. The restricted year of 2017 to 2022 was used to create the search parameters. The U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES) supports the Education Resources Information

Center (ERIC), a digital repository for information and scientific research. Meanwhile, Google Scholar is known as a search engine website that provides scholarly literature across huge publications. In searching for the articles, the researcher also used specific keywords to limit the findings based on the criteria of the research. The information on criteria in searching articles can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. The criteria for searching

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Inclusion</b>	<b>Exclusion</b>
<b>Kind of articles</b>	Article of Journal	Non-article journal
<b>Field of study</b>	The use of Instagram in ELT	Non-the use of Instagram in ELT
<b>Sinta rank</b>	>Sinta 3	<Sinta 3
<b>Context</b>	Non-English-speaking country	English-speaking country
<b>The language used in the article</b>	English	Non-English
<b>Year</b>	2017-2022	<2017

### B. Screening stage

In this stage, afterward searching both online journal platforms, namely ERIC and Google Scholar, there were the same journal articles. Therefore, after the data was collected, the same articles found were screened to reduce the number of articles to be analysed.

### C. Eligibility stage

The third stage involved determining the eligibility of the collected articles. Articles that have been chosen have had their eligibility for inclusion of Table 1 section verified once more.

### D. Exclusion stage

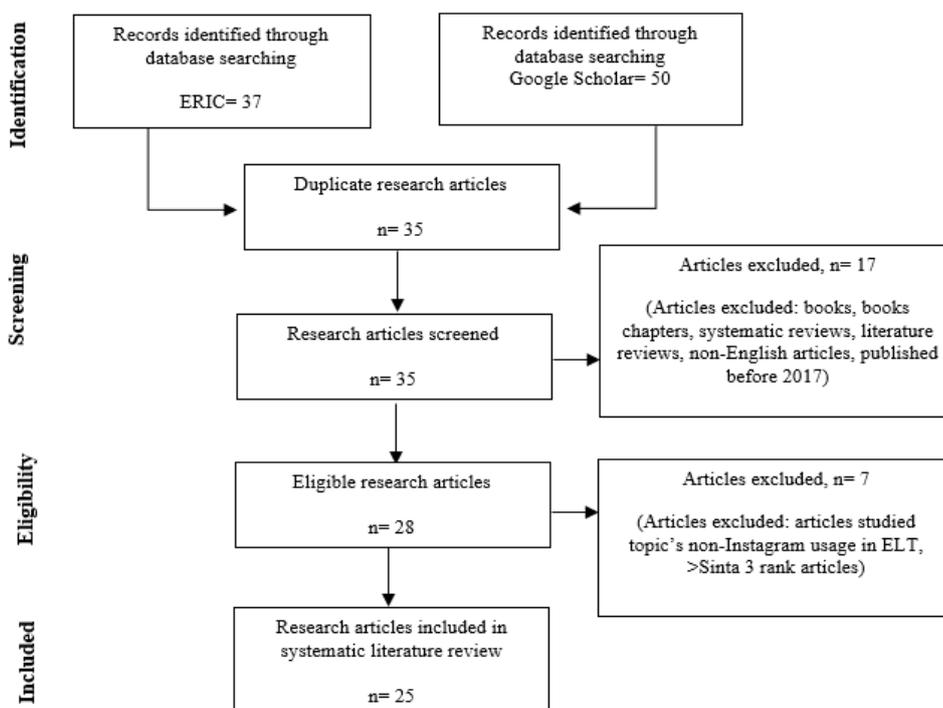


Figure 1: PRISMA flow chart of research

In this exclusion stage, the researcher conducted a final stage of checking to determine the most relevant and suitable articles for review.

## Discussion

### A. Distribution of Research on Instagram Usage in English Language Teaching

In this section, the results of the process used to choose the linked articles that were found will be in-depth discussed. After going through the four processes of selecting the articles that were eligible for examination, 25 were found to be appropriate for use in this systematic review according to the individual research's characteristics. The information from the chosen articles is shown in [Table 2](#) below.

From the table below, it can be seen that the number of published articles relating to the use of Instagram in English language teaching and learning does not change significantly every year. 2019 was the year with the highest number of publications of 20% of the average number in 2017, 2018, 2021, and 2022 (16%) and the least was in 2020 (12%). Furthermore, the largest number of studies were conducted in Indonesia (56%), and the least were in Iran and Chile (4%). while research conducted in Turkey, Malaysia, and Saudi Arabia averaged 12%. Based on the existing research, the most used research method is the qualitative method (44%), followed by the mix-method (32%), and the least is the quantitative method (24%). Meanwhile, the researcher summarized that there were four main themes studied. The most researched topic of research is students' perception of Instagram use in English teaching and learning (40%) ([Akhlar, et. al. 2017](#); [Aloraini & Cardoso, 2018](#); [Anindita, 2022](#); [Sari & Wahyudin, 2019](#); [Zarei & Rudravarap, 2019](#); [Zam, et. al., 2020](#)), followed by the topic of improving students' English language skills using Instagram (32%) ([Purwandari, 2017](#); [Yudhiantara & Nuryantini, 2018](#); [Suswati & Saleh, 2019](#); [Utomo & Bastiar, 2021](#)), exploring English learning activities through Instagram (20%) ([Purnama, 2017](#); [Avivi & Megawati, 2020](#); [Ubaedillah, et. al., 2021](#); [Misnawati, et. al., 2022](#)), and the least was regarding Instagram use in English teaching and learning as perceived by teachers (8%) ([Mandasari & Aminatun, 2022](#); [Avivi & Megawati, 2020](#); [Sarangapani & Hashim, 2022](#)).

Table 2. Summary of research studies on Instagram usage

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Publication Year</b>		
2017	4	16
2018	4	16
2019	5	20
2020	3	12
2021	4	16
2022	4	16
<b>Country</b>		
Indonesia	14	56
Turkey	3	12
Malaysia	3	12

Saudi Arabia	3	12
Iran	1	4
Chile	1	4
<b>Research Design</b>		
Qualitative	11	44
Quantitative	6	24
Mixed-method	8	32
<b>Themes of Research</b>		
Students' perception on Instagram use in English teaching and learning	10	40
Improving students' English language skills using Instagram	8	32
Exploring English learning activities through Instagram	5	20
Instagram use in English teaching and learning as perceived by teachers	2	8

### B. Advantages of Instagram Usage in English Language Teaching

The effectiveness of Instagram for teaching and studying English was discussed in 17 out of the 25 research overall. After reading these 17 study studies, which represent the majority of those found, it can be inferred that students exhibit favourable attitudes when utilizing Instagram to aid in their English-language acquisition. They claimed that learning through Instagram had improved their linguistic abilities. Instagram has been shown to help students write better narratives, recount texts, and descriptive texts. (Akhiar et al., 2017; Avivi & Megawati, 2020; Purwandari, 2017; Soviyah & Etikaningsih, 2018; Suswati & Saleh, 2019). Not only writing, but Instagram also helps students improve their speaking skills (Zam et al., 2020, Zulaefa & Rizal, 2023).

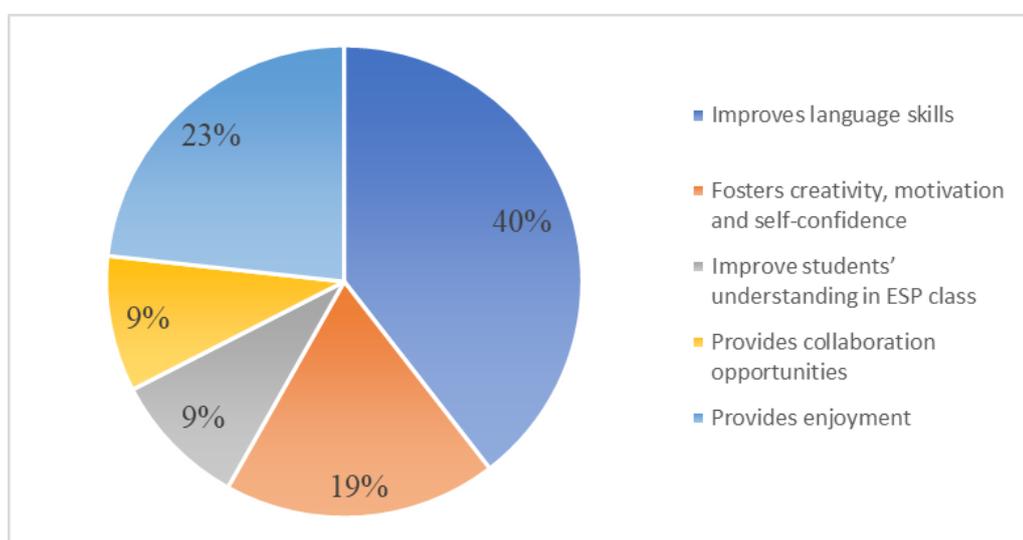


Figure 2: Students' perception of using Instagram in ELT

Furthermore, it was also found that teachers found Instagram to be effective because it was efficient in promoting students' enthusiasm for learning languages (Mahmud et al., 2022). Various Instagram accounts provide content that contains English learning materials. The content is packaged in an attractive way so students can easily remember it. In addition, the teacher gives assignments that require students to explore new vocabulary according to the material they are

studying. Some of the material obtained was shared on Instagram (Ahmadi & Tabatabaei, 2021; AlGhamdi, 2018; Aloraini & Cardoso, 2018; Gonulal, 2019; Ubaedillah et al., 2021; Utomo & Bastiar, 2020; Zárate et al., 2017).

Besides helping students improve their language skills, Instagram also develops student creativity. Some experimental research conducted by researchers directs students to be creative in making content uploaded to Instagram in accordance with the material being discussed in class (Suswati & Saleh, 2019; Utomo & Bastiar, 2020; Erarslan, 2019). Thus, they are motivated to do the task well because when they upload the content to Instagram, many people will be able to see the results. It also makes them more confident (Ubaedillah et al., 2021; Ahmadi & Tabatabaei, 2021; Salehudin et al., 2021).

Moreover, motivation is essential to the learning process. Without motivation, students would not understand the benefits of studying the subject, such as the English language. Motivation fosters a favorable perception, and as a result, students are more eager to participate in the teaching and learning process. Several studies specifically examine the role of Instagram in learning English for Specific Purposes. Instagram helps ESP students enrich their vocabulary related to the field of study they are studying (Zam et al., 2020; Sari & Wahyudin, 2019; Purnama, 2017; Yudhiantara & Nuryantini, 2019).

Instagram not only can trigger student creativity but also help students train themselves to learn to coordinate and collaborate with their group (Mandasari & Aminatun, 2022; Sari & Wahyudin, 2019). The teacher assigned students to work in groups to generate Instagram material so they could debate choosing themes. The effort involved in searching for information, editing, and uploading required good teamwork. They can also communicate anytime and anywhere because of the "comment" feature provided by Instagram. Each group can provide comments of appreciation, input, or discussion of the results of other groups' work uploaded on Instagram (Alghamdi, 2022).

Not only focusing on learning, but students also enjoy using Instagram outside of class hours. The habit that they do every time they surf in cyberspace to spend free time just like that when using Instagram for learning purposes allows them to use this free time usefully. Not being stuck in class hours or having to be at school, they can access English learning content anywhere and anytime. Apart from that, they also got a lot of new insights on Instagram which made them enjoy it (Purnama, 2017; Suswati & Saleh, 2019).

## Conclusion

This comprehensive evaluation of the literature examined how Instagram was used in earlier studies (2017–2022) to teach and learn English. According to the overview, Instagram fosters creativity, inspiration, and self-confidence in students, increases their knowledge in ESP classes,

offers opportunities for cooperation, and makes learning fun for the kids. Instagram also helps students and teachers enhance their language skills. Based on a review of all articles, it can be deduced that students view Instagram as social media or as a platform that is efficient, practical, simple to use, and motivates them to learn English as a result of the benefits it offers, including improving language skills and learning abilities. However, this research only discusses the good side of use and has not discussed further the other side regarding the weaknesses of using Instagram in learning English. Despite these shortcomings, this small-scale research still provides insightful information that can be used as a reference for teachers considering using Instagram as a learning medium that is integrated with technology. Considering the limitations of this research which has not discussed the weaknesses of using Instagram in ELT, it does not rule out the possibility that Instagram also has a negative impact on students. Therefore, the researcher recommends that future researchers explore more deeply the challenges/negative impacts of using Instagram for students.

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