

## **The Effectiveness of Instagram as a Medium for Learning English Vocabulary**

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**Rosinta**

Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan  
Timur, Indonesia

**Ade Ismail Ramadhan Hamid**

Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan  
Timur, Indonesia

**Dzul Rachman**

Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan  
Timur, Indonesia

### **Abstract**

This study aims to see how effective the use of Instagram Story as an innovative way to help students learn English vocabulary in class VIII MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Samarinda. This study was conducted with a quantitative approach and used a pre-experiment design, specifically one-group pre-test and post-test. The study participants consisted of 20 students who took the vocabulary test before and after the treatment. The test was in the form of multiple choice questions which aimed to measure how well they understood the vocabulary. In three meetings, students were taught to use Instagram Story features such as pictures, quizzes, and charades to learn English vocabulary. The results showed that the students' average score increased from 7.15 in the pre-test to 9.35 in the post-test. The paired t-test analysis showed a t-count of -5.311 with a significance of less than 0.001, which means there was a highly significant difference before and after the treatment. These findings prove that Instagram Stories serve as an effective learning medium that significantly improves students' English vocabulary mastery.

### **Keywords**

Instagram Story, Vocabulary Learning, Pre-experimental Design

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### **Corresponding author:**

Rosinta, Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan Timur, Samarinda, Indonesia  
Email: 2111102421010@umkt.ac.id

## INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an important part of everyday life, including in education. One of the most popular social media platforms among teenagers is Instagram. Apart from being used for fun, Instagram is also starting to be utilized as a learning tool. According to (Al-Ali, 2014) integrating social media such as Instagram into the learning process can increase student engagement and enthusiasm. With attractive features such as images, videos, reels and interactive stories, Instagram can be an innovative tool to support the learning process, especially in teaching English. Compared to other platforms such as Facebook which is simpler and text-based, or TikTok which focuses on short videos without a clear learning structure, Instagram offers a combination of text, images and videos. This makes it more flexible and suitable to help make learning English more fun.

One of the features that can be utilized from Instagram is Stories. This feature allows teachers to deliver material through interactive images, polls, quizzes and short videos that can make students more active in learning vocabulary. As pointed out by (Kianti Athavania Putri Anky, 2022) the interactive nature of Stories encourages students to participate more actively, which certainly helps them in mastering the language. With features that allow direct and accessible communication, as well as an engaging multimedia approach, Instagram was chosen as the focus of this study to see how effective it is in improving students' English vocabulary.

One of the main challenges when learning English in secondary school is mastering vocabulary. Vocabulary is a basic part of language acquisition that supports listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. However, traditional approaches such as memorizing vocabulary are often ineffective, as students tend to forget and become less motivated (Rokhmawati & Mastuti, 2019). Research shows that incorporating social media into vocabulary learning can help overcome this problem, as it makes the learning process more interactive and engaging (Maharani et al., 2024). This is in line with Generation Z's habit of preferring to use casual and contextualized language when they interact in the digital world. Generation Z, often referred to as the iGeneration or digital natives, is a group of people born between 1997 and 2012. They are the first generation to grow up with digital technology and the internet, so they have been familiar with social media since childhood. In Indonesia, many junior high school students fall into this age group. As described by (Telaumbanua et al., 2024), adolescents from Generation Z usually use a relaxed language style in their Instagram posts, including slang, colloquialisms, abbreviations, and casual greetings. So, we need an approach that is more in line with their habits to make it more relevant and understandable.

Similarly, at MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Samarinda, there are still some obstacles in learning English vocabulary. Some students have difficulty in remembering new vocabulary because the methods used tend to be passive and less interactive. This is consistent with (Fengyu, 2023) who states that traditional methods such as memorization and flashcards often fail to facilitate the practical use of vocabulary, so a

more contextual and interesting approach is needed. In addition, the limited time in class makes students lack more applicable and meaningful learning experiences. (van den Broek et al., 2022) highlighted that vocabulary learning through contextual inference during reading significantly enhances the retention and application of new vocabulary compared to isolated memorization techniques. Therefore, innovative methods that are more in line with students' current interests and learning habits are needed.

The pre-test results, with an average score of 7.15 out of 10, indicate that students still face considerable challenges in recognizing and applying vocabulary in varied contexts. The use of Instagram in English vocabulary learning can be a fun and innovative way to overcome learning challenges. Instagram has various features that allow students to learn new words in a more engaging and interactive way. For example, Instagram Stories can be used for vocabulary practice through short quizzes or interactive polls. Reels allows students to view and create short videos that explain the meaning and use of words in real contexts. According to (Almohesh & Altamimi, 2024), incorporating Instagram feed-based activities in the language learning process can greatly help improve the vocabulary acquisition of students learning English as a foreign language. Captions and comments on Instagram posts can also be utilized to encourage students to write and use new vocabulary in sentences. In addition, IGTV or live sessions can be used by teachers to share additional material or have direct discussions with students.

In addition, data from Hootsuite shows that in 2021, there will be 85 million Instagram users in Indonesia, with an average monthly usage of 17 hours. Research by (Setiawati & Sunra, 2023) found that students who learned English vocabulary through captions on social media such as Instagram felt there was a significant improvement in their mastery of words. These findings support the idea that Instagram can be an effective tool for improving English language skills, as most students are already accustomed to and actively use the app in their daily lives.

Numerous prior studies have underscored the advantages of utilizing Instagram to enhance vocabulary acquisition among students. Students engaged in learning via Instagram often exhibit greater enthusiasm and active participation, as the platform offers real-world contexts and interactive elements that enrich the learning experience. Furthermore, (Maharani et al., 2024) research corroborates that the integration of textual and visual content in Instagram posts facilitates more profound cognitive engagement, thereby markedly enhancing students' ability to recall vocabulary.

Despite its potential, there are also some challenges in using Instagram in English language learning. Students can be distracted by non-educational content and reduce focus on learning objectives. A study by (Pipit Mulyah, Dyah Aminatun, Sukma Septian Nasution, Tommy Hastomo, Setiana Sri Wahyuni Sitepu, 2020) highlights that students may perceive social networking sites like Instagram primarily as entertainment platforms, leading to a lack of participation in educational activities. This underscores the importance of educators clearly communicating the educational value of such

platforms and integrating them into the curriculum. In addition, teachers should also carefully design Instagram-based activities to meet educational objectives and provide meaningful learning experiences.

Based on this background, this study aims to explore the use of Instagram as an innovative medium in learning English vocabulary at MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Samarinda. This research will analyze the effectiveness of using Instagram as a medium for learning English vocabulary. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the world of education, especially in the development of digital technology-based learning methods that are more interesting and relevant to students.

Although some previous studies have addressed the use of Instagram in English language learning, most of them focus on students' perceptions or the use of Instagram features in general, rather than specifically addressing how effective the Instagram Story feature is in helping students master vocabulary. In addition, very few studies have been conducted at the junior high school level, let alone using a quantitative approach with pre-test and post-test. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by measuring exactly how well the Instagram Story feature can help junior high school students in improving their English vocabulary acquisition, through data from pre-test and post-test which are statistically analyzed.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This research is based on basic theories of vocabulary acquisition in educating and supporting English, technology in learning and the utilization of Instagram as an innovative learning tool. Vocabulary plays an important role in the understanding of English. As it is the basic element of vision, speaking, analysis and writing. Without adequate vocabulary, students cannot understand texts, express ideas or communicate. Conventional vocabulary teaching methods, such as memorization and textbook-based exercises, are still widely used in schools, but often fail to actively engage students. (Rokhmawati & Mastuti, 2019) stated that traditional methods are passive and monotonous, leading to low vocabulary retention in students. Therefore, educators have begun to explore strategies that are more interactive and in line with the characteristics of the current generation, in order to improve vocabulary acquisition.

One form of interactive approach is the utilization of the Instagram Story feature. Whereas traditional methods limit the teacher's options in terms of word lists and meanings, in the case of Instagram Story, learners upload images and short videos with interactive polls or multiple-choice quizzes. This feature paves the way for students to see words in a real-life context, listen to how they are spoken, and interact directly with the teaching material. This approach not only improves contextual understanding of vocabulary, but also helps students' memory retention more effectively than conventional methods.

The development of digital technology has encouraged educators to integrate various technological tools into the language learning process. Social media, in particular, has gained recognition as a medium capable of offering a more engaging and

interactive learning experience. (Zam Zam Al Arif, 2019) social media provides a flexible learning environment and allows students to be exposed to native language use, interact with native speakers, and participate in discussions. (Maharani et al., 2024) ) added that digital tools can increase students' engagement and motivation in learning, making the learning process more effective than traditional classroom methods.

With the advancement of technology, language learning is no longer limited to the classroom - it can now be done through various digital platforms. Technology gives teachers the opportunity to present more diverse materials, such as videos, images, audio and interactive quizzes, all of which help students understand language concepts better. Social media such as Instagram also provides space for students to be actively involved in the learning process, both by consuming educational content from teachers and participating in discussions and content creation themselves. This interaction makes learning more natural and relevant, something that is difficult to achieve through traditional methods.

Instagram, as one of the most popular social media among students, has great potential to be utilized in academic activities, especially English language learning. Its advantages lie in a variety of interactive features such as Stories, Reels, Caption, and IG Live, which can be used to improve vocabulary acquisition more effectively. For example, through Stories, students can recognize and recall new vocabulary in a fun way through interactive quizzes or polls. Reels allows them to view and create short videos that showcase the use of words in everyday life. Captions can be used to develop writing skills by applying new vocabulary in descriptions or comments. IG Live can also be used as an interactive discussion forum between teachers and students, to discuss word meanings, synonyms, and their use in everyday dialog. A study by (Lestari & German, 2021) showed that Instagram's interactive features, such as quizzes and polls, were helpful in English language learning. EFL students reported that quizzes were helpful in correcting common mistakes, and illustrated content such as cartoons helped them remember vocabulary through humorous and relevant contexts.

Several studies support the effectiveness of using Instagram as a learning tool. (Tunji-Olayeni, 2014) states that Instagram can enhance English language learning as it allows students to be exposed to the language in their daily routine. (Alfu et al., 2021) found that students who used Instagram to learn vocabulary showed better recall and higher learning motivation than those who used conventional methods. (Mirković, 2022) added that the multimodal nature of Instagram that combines text and visuals can significantly improve cognitive processes and vocabulary recall.

However, the use of Instagram in learning also has some challenges. One of the main issues is the potential to be distracted by non-educational content, as Instagram is known to be a platform that contains a lot of entertainment. Students may be more interested in viewing viral or irrelevant content than following a lesson from the teacher. In addition, not all students have enough self-discipline to effectively utilize Instagram as a learning medium. So, the successful use of Instagram largely depends on the teacher's strategy in managing and designing learning activities that use this platform.

When compared to other social media such as TikTok and YouTube, Instagram has its own advantages and disadvantages in vocabulary learning. TikTok, for example, also allows for short video-based learning, but it tends to be impulsive and too fast, which can hinder deep understanding of vocabulary. In addition, the uncontrolled flow of TikTok's algorithm can make students more easily distracted by irrelevant content. (Opara et al., 2025) ), the speed of content flow on TikTok can reduce students' attention. In contrast, YouTube offers longer and more structured videos, so the material can be conveyed more fully. However, YouTube does not provide interactive features such as quizzes or polls directly on the app, so the level of student engagement tends to be lower than Instagram Story. (Damayanti, 2022) also mentioned that although students felt YouTube helped them learn English, they complained about the lack of interactive features on the platform. Therefore, it can be concluded that the interactive features in Instagram Story are more effective in building immediate and repeated engagement from students as they learn vocabulary contextually, when compared to YouTube and TikTok.

So while Instagram is not without its flaws, its features that combine text, images, short videos and live interaction make it a more flexible and engaging tool for vocabulary learning compared to other platforms. With proper planning and supervision, Instagram can be an innovative solution to increase student engagement in English learning while still maintaining the entertainment aspect that students enjoy.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study uses a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental design of one-group pre-test and post-test type. In this design, one group of participants first undergoes an initial test (pre-test), then is given treatment, and finally tested again with a final test (post-test) to see the changes that occur. According to (Ummah, 2019), this one-group pretest-posttest design is a form of pre-experiment where a group is observed before and after receiving treatment. This design was chosen because it provides an opportunity for researchers to assess the impact of the independent variable, namely the use of Instagram, on the dependent variable, namely students' mastery of English vocabulary, without involving a control group. This approach is considered practical, especially when random assignment is not possible, such as in the context of classroom learning (Ishtiaq, 2019). In this study, the subjects were 20 class VIII students from MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Samarinda who all participated in the data collection process. They started by taking a pre-test to find out how far their ability in English vocabulary was. After that, they received treatment in the form of vocabulary learning through Instagram Story for three meetings. After that, they took a post-test to measure how much their vocabulary mastery improved after the treatment.

**Table.1 Research Design Sequence**

<b>Research Phase</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Activities Conducted</b>
Pre-Test	20 students	Measuring initial English vocabulary mastery
Treatment (3 meetings)	20 students	Learning using Instagram Stories
Post-Test	20 students	Measuring vocabulary growth after treatment

The population in this study was all eighth-grade students at MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Samarinda who participated in English language learning. The selection of this school was based on the need to improve vocabulary mastery as an important part of language competence. The research sample was selected using purposive sampling technique, which is the selection of samples based on certain criteria in accordance with the research objectives. The criteria include students from certain classes who are learning English vocabulary, students who actively use Instagram in order to be able to follow the learning through the Story feature, and students who are willing to participate in the entire series of research activities, including pre-test, treatment, and post-test. This approach allows the researcher to focus more on the group of students who actually experience learning through Instagram, so that the results of the study become more accurate and relevant.

Data collection was conducted through two main stages, namely pre-test and post-test, which were designed to measure the effectiveness of vocabulary learning using Instagram Story. Prior to the implementation of the treatment, students were given a pre-test consisting of multiple choice questions and matching pictures with words, to determine their initial mastery of vocabulary. This pre-test instrument has been adjusted to suit the comprehension level of junior high school students. After that, students attended vocabulary learning sessions through Instagram Story for several meetings. In this session, the material is delivered through pictures, interactive polls, and quizzes that are visually and contextually designed to make it easier for students to understand and remember vocabulary. After all learning sessions were completed, students were given a post-test with a question format similar to the pre-test, to measure the improvement of learning outcomes.

Data from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using the Paired Sample t-Test statistical technique. This technique is used to compare the average value between two measurements made on the same group, namely before and after treatment. The purpose is to find out whether there is a statistically significant difference in students' vocabulary mastery after following Instagram Story-based learning. Because this technique is suitable for measuring the average difference between two measurements taken on the same group, namely before and after receiving treatment. According to ("Discovering Statistics Using SPSS: (And Sex, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll)," 2006), the paired sample

t-test is used when we want to know whether there is a statistically significant difference between two paired conditions in one group. This approach is also frequently recommended in quantitative experimental research, particularly in pre-experimental designs, as it allows for the direct evaluation of the treatment's effect on the dependent variable (Ummah, 2019). In addition, descriptive analysis is also used to see the average pre-test and post-test scores, as well as the difference between them. If the analysis shows a significant increase in the post-test score, it can be concluded that the use of Instagram is effective in helping students improve their English vocabulary. The results of this analysis also serve as the basis for answering the research questions and providing recommendations for the application of social media in language learning.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This study aims to determine the effectiveness of using Instagram Story as a learning media in improving the mastery of English vocabulary of class VIII students of MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Samarinda. Data were collected from one group of students before and after receiving the treatment, and analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired sample t-test. The following results show the comparison between students' vocabulary scores before and after the implementation of the Instagram-based learning intervention. These discoveries are as follows:

### **1. Students' Classification Score**

The following table presents the results of the pre-test and post-test scores of the 20 students who became the research sample. The pre-test was conducted before learning using Instagram Story, while the post-test was given after treatment for three meetings.

**Table. 2 Pre-test and Post-test Results**

<b>Responden</b>	<b>PRE-TEST</b>	<b>POST-TEST</b>
Student 1	9	9
Student 2	6	10
Student 3	10	10
Student 4	8	9
Student 5	7	10
Student 6	6	10
Student 7	10	10
Student 8	7	10
Student 9	5	10
Student 10	4	10
Student 11	5	7
Student 12	6	9
Student 13	6	7
Student 14	6	10
Student 15	9	10



Student 16	7	8
Student 17	4	8
Student 18	9	10
Student 19	9	10
Student 20	10	10

Based on the table, it can be seen that most students experienced an increase in scores after being treated. The pre-test scores ranged from 4 to 10, while the post-test scores increased with a range from 7 to 10. Only one student did not experience an increase, while the rest showed a significant increase. This indicates that the use of Instagram Story has a positive impact on students' mastery of English vocabulary.

## 2. Mean Score and Standard Deviation

The mean scores and standard deviations of the students' pretests and posttests are presented in the following table:

**Table. 3 Mean Score and SD**

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PRE	7,15	20	1,981	,443
	POST	9,35	20	1,040	,233

Based on the results of data analysis using SPSS, the average pre-test score of students was 7.15 with a standard deviation of approximately 1.981. This indicates that students' vocabulary mastery before learning was still moderate to low. After participating in the learning process using Instagram Stories for three sessions, the average post-test score increased to 9.35, and the standard deviation decreased to 1.040. This decrease in standard deviation indicates that students' learning outcomes became more consistent. The minimum score also improved, from 4 on the pre-test to 7 on the post-test, while the maximum score remained at 10. This means that nearly all students experienced improvement, including those who previously had lower proficiency levels.

## 3. T-test Value of Students

To determine whether the improvement was statistically significant, a Paired Sample t-Test was conducted.

**Table. 4 T-test Value of Students**

		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	PRE - POST	-2.200	1.852	.414	-3.067	-1.333	-5.311	19	<.001

Based on the results of the Paired Sample t-Test analysis, the average value of the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores is -2.200 with a standard deviation of 1.852 and a standard error of the mean of 0.414. The resulting t-count value is -5.311 with a degree of freedom (df) of 19. The significance value (2-tailed) is <0.001 which means it is smaller than the 0.05 significance limit. This shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the students' pre-test and post-test results after being given the learning treatment using Instagram Story. The 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference ranges from -3.067 to -1.333, which does not include zero, thus strengthening the conclusion that the increase in scores did occur and was not due to chance. The negative sign on the mean difference indicates that the post-test score is higher than the pre-test score.

Thus, it can be concluded that the use of Instagram Story as a vocabulary learning media has a significant positive effect on improving students' mastery of English vocabulary. The conclusion that the use of Instagram Stories has a positive effect comes from the results showing an increase in student scores after the treatment. Before learning, the average score of students was 7.15, and after learning with Instagram Stories, it increased to 9.35. This means that students understood vocabulary better after using this medium. In addition, statistical test results show that this difference in scores is very significant, meaning that the increase in scores did not occur by chance, but was indeed due to learning with Instagram Stories. Therefore, it can be concluded that Instagram Stories do help students learn vocabulary better. This result supports the research hypothesis that interactive digital media can effectively improve students' learning outcomes. This is also supported by (Thornburry, 2020) who showed that interactive media-based learning techniques can significantly improve students' vocabulary mastery. In addition, (Alhazmi, 2024) asserts that the use of multimedia in vocabulary learning allows students to remember and understand new words more effectively due to visual and contextual support. Research from (Aulia et al., 2024) also shows that interactive learning media can improve student engagement and overall learning outcomes, especially in online learning environments involving digital platforms such as Instagram.

The results of this study show that Instagram Story media can be used effectively to support English vocabulary learning at junior high school level. This result is evidenced by the increase in the average test scores of students, from 7.15 before the lesson to 9.35 after it. In addition, the standard deviation also decreased from 1.981 to 1.040, indicating a more consistent improvement. Statistical analysis using a paired t-test showed a t-value of -5.311 with a significance level of less than 0.001, meaning that this difference is statistically significant. This can be seen from the significant increase in the average score between the pre-test and post-test results, which shows that students are able to understand and remember vocabulary better after receiving treatment through this media. The use of Instagram Story, which presents material in visual form such as images, short videos, polls, and interactive quizzes, provides a different learning stimulus compared to conventional text-based methods. The interactive nature of the

Story feature also encourages students' active involvement, making them not only as recipients of information, but also as participants involved in the learning process directly. This study also supports previous findings (Aprialiana, 2025), which showed a significant increase in students' vocabulary skills after they received the treatment.

This finding is in line with research conducted by (Maharani et al., 2024), who stated that the integration of visual and text content in social media such as Instagram can increase students' cognitive engagement and make it easier for them to remember vocabulary. In vocabulary learning, context is very important, and Instagram provides a contextualization space through image illustrations, examples of word usage in real situations, and comments written by students themselves. Thus, students not only recognize the form of the word, but also understand its meaning and use in daily communication.

In addition, the use of Instagram Story is proven to be able to arouse the learning motivation of students who previously may have felt bored or had difficulty understanding vocabulary through lecture or memorization methods. The students' engagement during the treatment also reflects that this approach fits well with the learning style of generation Z, the digital-native generation who are familiar with social media and are more interested in fast, visual, and responsive learning. This is reinforced by the study of (Alfu et al., 2021), which found that students who use Instagram in language learning tend to show increased motivation and higher learning outcomes than those who learn through conventional methods.

Considering the findings above, it can be concluded that Instagram Story is a learning media that is not only innovative but also relevant to the times and the needs of today's learners. This social media-based learning strategy not only enriches the variety of teaching methods, but also brings the learning process closer to students' reality and daily habits. Therefore, English teachers at the junior high school level can consider using Instagram Story as part of a creative, interesting and effective learning strategy in improving students' vocabulary acquisition.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of this study, we can conclude that the use of Instagram Stories is quite effective in helping students improve their English vocabulary. The average score of students rose from 7.15 before learning to 9.35 after learning, and the decrease in score variation shows that learning outcomes are becoming more evenly distributed among students. This indicates that interactive digital media such as Instagram Stories are able to engage students of various ability levels. Visual and interactive features—from quizzes, polls, images, to guessing games—provide a more relevant learning experience that aligns with the habits of today's students, who are already familiar with digital media.

This study also supports the idea that social media can be more than just entertainment. When used appropriately and strategically, Instagram can serve as an engaging and effective learning tool in language education. For future research, it is

recommended to use a quasi-experimental method with a control group to better generalize the results. Additionally, researchers could explore other learning aspects, such as student motivation, speaking and writing skills, and use a mixed-methods approach to gain a more comprehensive understanding of students' and teachers' perspectives.

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