Students' Perception of Using Instagram Learning Account Towards Their Vocabulary Mastery

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the perceptions of junior high school students on the use of Instagram learning accounts to support their English vocabulary acquisition. The research used descriptive quantitative design with a survey approach. The data were collected from 112 ninth grade students at SMP Negeri 12 Purworejo through a closed-ended questionnaire based on cognitive, affective, and conative aspects. The results showed that in general, students have a high perception of the role of Instagram in vocabulary development. The cognitive component received the highest mean score (M = 3.71), followed by the affective (M = 3.60) and conative (M = 3.59) components. Students perceived Instagram as a helpful, enjoyable, and convenient learning, with visual content significantly helping vocabulary comprehension and retention. In addition, students reported increased motivation, emotional engagement, and autonomy in vocabulary learning through the platform. These results shows that Instagram can aid as a valuable supplementary tool to support formal English language education, particularly in enhancing students' vocabulary acquisition.

I. Introduction

In the digital era, social media has become a pervasive tool that reshapes the way individuals communicate, share, and consume information. Among its many functions, social media has also emerged to become a potential educational tool [1], [2], [3], particularly in enhancing English vocabulary learning. Learning English is essential nowadays because it plays a key role in today's era, where technology advances quickly and information is easily accessible. For students, learning English is also important because it helps them acquire new knowledge and connect with the global community [4]. As English continues to function as a global language, leveraging social media platforms for educational purposes is becoming increasingly relevant. With students spending a significant amount of time online, integrating social media into language learning presents a promising avenue, especially as it blends learning and leisure where vocabulary development happens naturally as students come across new words, often without realizing they are learning. In language, vocabulary refers to the collection of words or word families in a language that a person needs to recognize or use effectively in communication [5]. It is a foundational component of learning English. One must be familiar with its vocabulary to communicate well in a foreign language. Those who lack proper vocabulary may struggle with these four essential language skills: speaking, reading, listening, and writing. However, mastering English can be challenging for many Indonesian learners since it is not their first language. This difficulty can be caused by various factors, such as limited exposure and insufficient opportunities to practice [6]. The gap between formal instruction and real-world application often leaves students struggling to develop and expand their English knowledge better, especially in vocabulary learning.

To address this gap, technological advancements have introduced various media to support language learning, including social media. Since gaining popularity in the early 2000s, social media has continued to grow, with Instagram becoming one of the most widely used platforms. Launched in 2010, Instagram has evolved from a simple photo-sharing app into a multifunctional platform with various multimedia features such as carousel, reels, and other interactive posts, that have the potential to facilitate language learning [1], [2]. Thus, it can also integrate learners with real-life language use and opportunities to practice their English skills beyond their formal learning [7]. Since it's a social platform, many profile accounts are available that share some language educational content, especially in the English subject. Accounts like @aarons.english, @englishnesia.id, and @mrbobkampunginggris, for example, share some vocabulary content with Indonesian-to-English (and vice versa) explanations that can help students understand more about what the context is being discussed. In addition, some of these accounts not only share vocabulary learning but also share other broader English skills content that students can look up to [8], for instance, on how to spell or read the word with the support of the platform's multimedia features. The availability of such content can make Instagram a beneficial learning tool that offers flexibility to students and allows them to explore the topics at anytime and anywhere [2], [9].

Many studies have also discussed the utilization of social media like Instagram for language learning based on the student's perspective. The study conducted by Priskila (2023) investigated the third-semester students' perceptions of using Instagram carousel for learning English vocabulary. The findings revealed that most students interviewed had a positive attitude towards the carousel content mainly because of the accessibility, the content variety, and visually easy to understand that led to the improvement of their vocabulary [9]. The following study, conducted by Saputra et al. (2023), also examined the third-semester students' use of Instagram as a learning platform. The study found that 76% of students had positive perceptions and high motivation to use Instagram for learning English due to its attractiveness and fun experience that also led to the improvement of their English skills, including vocabulary [10]. Similarly, the study conducted by Syafi'i et al. (2024) explored the first-semester students' perceptions of using Instagram as a mobile learning tool to support vocabulary acquisition and found that on the beneficial side, students perceived Instagram as enjoyable, supports exposure to new vocabulary knowledge such as slang and idioms, and helped them learn anytime and anywhere in a more informal way [2]. Another study conducted by Fauziah and Sutrisno (2024) also found that the senior high school students positively perceived using social media, especially YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, for learning English based on the three perception components. Students reported strong motivation, comfort, and happiness and recognized social media as an effective tool for enhancing their English skills [11].

Student perception refers to how students comprehend and interpret their educational experiences based on various factors, such as sensory input, prior knowledge, expectations, and social influences. It involves the integration of the human senses to create a coherent and meaningful perception of the environment [3], [12]. According to McDonald, perception can be defined as the unique way in which an individual or a group views of something. This process contains the processing of sensory stimuli and incorporates memories and experiences that leads to understanding and response [13]. Meanwhile, Walgito stated that perception is a process preceded by sensing, which is a process received by an individual through their sensory organs, then processed by the nervous system with the brain as its center, so that the individual becomes aware of what they see, hear, feel, etc [14]. Furthermore, Walgito mentioned three aspects of perception: cognitive, affective, and conative. First, the cognitive aspect relates to knowledge, beliefs, views, and expectations toward an object. Second, the affective aspect is based on a person's feelings toward an object. The last aspect, conative, refers to the tendency to action or motivation toward an object [11], [14]. All of these three components are interconnected and collectively shape an individual's perception of their environment.

Based on the information above, there remains limited research specifically focused on how junior high school students perceive the use of Instagram learning accounts for vocabulary mastery. While previous studies have examined university and senior high school students, there is a need to understand how younger learners engage with and benefit from such tools. Therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap by exploring junior high school students perceptions through the lens of three key components of perception as adapted from Fauziah's research. The research question for this study is stated as follows: *How do junior high school students perceive the use of Instagram learning accounts*

for vocabulary mastery?. This research is expected to contribute to the growing discourse on digital learning tools and provide insights for educators on integrating social media into their teaching strategies for vocabulary development.

II. Method

This research employed a descriptive quantitative approach using a survey method to explore students' perceptions of Instagram learning accounts as tools for vocabulary mastery. According to Creswell, quantitative research involves collecting and analyzing numerical data to explain a particular phenomenon. For this research, a survey design was used to obtain a numerical description of students' attitudes, as it allows for the measurement of perceptions from a broad sample through standardized questions [15], [16].

The population of this study was made up of ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 12 Purworejo in the academic year of 2024/2025, with a total of 188 students divided into six classes (IX-A to IX-F). The sampling technique employed a non-probability with an approach of convenience sampling type, namely the selection of respondents based on anyone who was willing and available at the time when the data was collected. The number of respondents who were willing to participate and filled out the questionnaire is 112 students, about 60% of the total population. The sample size met when the threshold calculated using the Slovin formula with a 6% margin of error and 95% confidence level.

The data was collected through the distribution of an online questionnaire, which was accessed through a Google Form link and shared with each class WhatsApp group. Prior to this, students were instructed to explore educational Instagram accounts that had been determined for approximately one week. This was done so that students would have hands-on experience before filling out the questionnaire. As Walgito stated, perception cannot happen without sensing first. The questionnaire was then distributed and made available to the students from 16th to 20th April 2025.

The instrument uses a five-point Likert scale with a closed-ended questionnaire consisting of 15 items designed to measure students' attitudes toward educational Instagram accounts based on three aspects of perception. Each component consists of several statement items, and respondents are asked to give a score on the following scale [17]:

Table 1. Five-point Likert Scale

Items	Score
Strongly Agree	5
Agree	4
Neutral	3
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

After collecting the data, the results were analyzed using descriptive analysis statistics to determine the tendency of students' responses. The analysis was carried out by calculating the average value (mean) of each statement item. Furthermore, the results of the average value is then interpreted into the perception category as follows [18]:

Table 2. Interpretation of mean score

No	Interval mean score	Interpretation
1.	1.00 – 1.79	Very Low
2.	1.80 – 2.59	Low
3.	2.60 – 3.39	Medium
4.	3.40 – 4.19	High

5.	4.20 – 5.00	Very High

III. Results and Discussion

A. Results

After analyzing the data, the result of this study shows a high level of interpretation regarding to students' perception of using Instagram learning account towards their vocabulary mastery. The aforementioned perception was classified under categories namely cognitive, affective, and conative components.

As shown in the table below, the mean data for each component indicate that the cognitive component scoring the highest average of M = 3.71. This was followed by the affective component, which attained a mean score of M = 3.60. And lastly, the conative component achieved a mean score of M = 3.59. The following table presents the overall mean score for each of these three components:

Table 3. Mean data of each components of perception

Components of perception	Mean score	Interpretation
Cognitive	3.71	High
Affective	3.60	High
Conative	3.59	High

1) Students' Cognitive Perception

The cognitive aspect of the study measured students' recognition and comprehension of vocabulary gained through Instagram learning account. Overall, the cognitive aspect scored a high mean of M = 3.71, which indicated that students generally had a positive perception toward the learning experience. Each item is elaborated below.

Table 4. Students' cognitive perception on the use of Instagram learning account towards their vocabulary mastery

No	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	M	Int.
1.	I can find new vocabulary that I did not know before from Instagram learning account	9 (8%)	62 (55,4%)	39 (34,8%)	1 (0,9%)	1 (0,9%)	3.69	High
2.	Visual content (images, reels, etc) on Instagram learning account can provide me a clear vocabulary explanations	21 (18,8%)	59 (52,7%)	26 (23,2%)	6 (5,4%)	0 (0,0%)	3.85	High
3.	Using an Instagram learning account helps me remember vocabulary easily	10 (8,9%)	55 (49,1%)	44 (39,3%)	3 (2,7%)	0 (0,0%)	3.64	High
4.	I think learning vocabulary through Instagram learning account could improve my writing, speaking, reading, or listening skills	19 (17%)	50 (44,6%)	37 (33%)	5 (4,5%)	1 (0,9%)	3.72	High
5.	I think Instagram learning account can be an effective tool for increasing my vocabulary knowledge	12 (10,7%)	52 (46,4%)	42 (37,5%)	6 (5,4%)	0 (0,0%)	3.63	High
	Overall Mean						3.71	High

For the first item, "I can find new vocabulary that I did not know before from Instagram learning account", the mean score was M = 3.69, with 8% of students strongly agreed and 55.4% agreed. This

result indicates that the majority of students find the Instagram learning account to be beneficial in introducing them to some new English vocabulary that they may not have been covered in their daily formal learning.

In the second item, "Visual content (images, reels, etc.) on Instagram learning account can provide me a clear vocabulary explanation", received the highest mean among cognitive items, with M = 3.85, with 18.8% of students strongly agreed and 52.7% agreed. The result shows that students found multimedia elements like images (carousel) or short videos (reels) particularly good in clarifying the meaning of the English words that they have discovered.

The third item, "Using an Instagram learning account helps me remember vocabulary easily", the mean was M = 3.64, with 8.9% of students strongly agreed and 49.1% agreed. This reveals a positive perception that students experienced a certain degree of retention support from how the visual content presented on the Instagram account when learning vocabulary.

In the fourth item, "I think learning vocabulary through Instagram can improve my writing, speaking, reading, or listening skills", the students gave a mean score of M = 3.72, with 17% of students strongly agreed and 44.6% agreed. This finding demonstrates that vocabulary learning on Instagram learning account can also contributes to their development of broader English language skills, like how to pronounce or spell the word correctly with the presence of audio-visual features.

Lastly, the fifth item, "I think Instagram learning account can be an effective tool for increasing my vocabulary knowledge", the mean scored was M = 3.63, with 10.7% of students strongly agreed and 46.4% agreed. This shows that the most of the students recognized Instagram to be an effective media for their alternative learning resource, especially when it comes to vocabulary enrichment.

2) Students' Affective Perception

The affective aspect of the study reflects students' emotional responses and feelings during vocabulary learning using Instagram. The mean score for this dimension was M = 3.60, which is categorised as "high", indicating that students experienced positive emotions while engaging with Instagram learning content. Each item is elaborated below.

Table 5. Students' affective perception on the use of Instagram learning account towards their vocabulary mastery

No	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	M	Int.
6.	For me, learning vocabulary through Instagram learning account is fun	17 (15,2%)	50 (44,6%)	43 (38,4%)	0 (0,0%)	2 (1,8%)	3.71	High
7.	I enjoy learning vocabulary through Instagram learning account	11 (9,8%)	46 (41,1%)	53 (47,3%)	1 (0,9%)	1 (0,9%)	3.58	High
8.	Learning vocabulary through Instagram learning account can boosts my confidence in English vocabulary knowledge	7 (6,3%)	46 (41,1%)	56 (50%)	2 (1,8%)	1 (0,9%)	3.50	High
9.	I feel that Instagram learning account can reduce my boredom when studying english vocabulary	14 (12,5%)	48 (42,9%)	40 (35,7%)	8 (7,1%)	2 (1,8%)	3.57	High
10.	I feel learning vocabulary through Instagram learning account is more interesting than textbooks	20 (17,9%)	40 (35,7%)	46 (41,1%)	2 (1,8%)	4 (3,6%)	3.63	High
	Overall Mean						3.60	High

For the first item, "For me, learning vocabulary through Instagram learning account is fun", received the highest affective mean score of M = 3.71, with 15.2% of students strongly agreed and 44.6% agreed. The majority of students had positive emotional engagement with the content, giving that the content provided and relatable topics on some of the Instagram learning account can create a fun learning experience and could enhance their motivation.

In the second item, "I enjoy learning vocabulary through Instagram learning account", scored M = 3.58, with 9.8% of students strongly agreed and 41.1% agreed. This finding indicates that the majority of students derived pleasure from the learning experience, likely due to the platform's familiarity and interactivity, which have been demonstrated to enhance the enjoyment of students when encountering with vocabulary content.

The third item, "Learning vocabulary through Instagram learning account boosts my confidence in English vocabulary knowledge", the score was M = 3.50, with 6.3% of students strongly agreed and 41.1% agreed. This result shows that a considerable amount of students experienced an enhancement in their confidence in vocabulary proficiency with the content presented on Instagram learning account because of the platform's informal and engaging nature likely helps reduce their anxiety or pressure that can create a supportive learning environment.

For the fourth item, "I feel that Instagram learning account can reduce my boredom when studying English vocabulary", showed a mean of M = 3.57, with 12.5% of students strongly agreed and 42.9% agreed. It reflects that many students found that Instagram could be a refreshing alternative to conventional learning tools, especially during their free time on the platform, which can break the monotony of textbook-based study that they usually had.

And lastly, on the fifth item, "I feel learning vocabulary through Instagram learning account is more interesting than textbooks", the score was M = 3.63, with 17.9% of students strongly agreed and 35.7% agreed. This reinforces that Instagram's informal and visually appealing content makes it more engaging than printed materials, especially for younger learners nowadays who are already to be more active on social media.

3) Students' Conative Perception

The conative aspect relates to students' tendencies and willingness to act on what they experience after exploring Instagram learning account. This dimension scored a total mean of M = 3.59, again within the "high" category, indicating that students are inclined to take real action, such as continuing to use Instagram learning account as a vocabulary resource. Each item is elaborated below.

Table 6. Students' conaitive perception on the use of Instagram learning account towards their vocabulary mastery

No	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	M	Int.
11.	I became motivated to use Instagram learning account for learning vocabulary	8 (7,1%)	41 (36,6%)	58 (51,8%)	5 (4,5%)	8 (7,1%)	3.46	High
12.	I can practice my english skills from learning vocabulary in Instagram learning account	9 (8%)	56 (50%)	41 (36,6%)	4 (3,6%)	2 (1,8%)	3.59	High
13.	I can apply new vocabulary words I learned from Instagram learning account to my real-life situation	11 (9,8%)	49 (43,8%)	49 (43,8%)	2 (1,8%)	1 (0,9%)	3.60	High
14.	I can access Instagram learning account for learning vocabulary whenever I want to	17 (15,2%)	53 (47,3%)	39 (34,8%)	3 (2,7%)	0 (0,0%)	3.75	High
15.	I will probably use Instagram learning account as one of my sources of English informal learning	15 (13,4%)	39 (34,8%)	53 (47,3%)	5 (4,5%)	0 (0,0%)	3.57	High
	Overall Mean						3.59	High

For the first conative item, "I became motivated to use Instagram learning account for learning vocabulary", the mean score was M = 3.46, with 7.1% of students strongly agreed and 36.6% agreed. The result falls under the "high" category reflects that a significant number of students experienced an initial spark of motivation after engaging with the learning content because of how fun and

interesting, which means that the platform could boost learners' interest to crave more vocabulary content through Instagram.

In the second item, "I can practice my English skills from learning vocabulary in Instagram learning account", the score was M = 3.59, with 8% of students strongly agreed and 50% agreed. This shows that after the students learning vocabulary through Instagram learning account, they can also practice the other English skills such as reading, writing, listening, or speaking.

The third item, "I can apply new vocabulary words I learned from Instagram learning account to my real-life situation", scored M = 3.60, with 9,8% of students strongly agreed and 43.8% agreed. This implies that students see Instagram vocabulary learning as practical and can be actively applied to the real language use.

For the fourth item, "I can access Instagram learning account for learning vocabulary whenever I want to", the score was M = 3.75, with 15.2% of students strongly agreed and 47.3% agreed, which the highest in conative item. This indicates that accessibility and flexibility of Instagram can support students' vocabulary learning at anytime and anywhere.

In the last conative item "I will probably use Instagram learning account as one of my sources of English informal learning", the mean score was M = 3.57, with 13.4% of students strongly agreed and 34.8% agreed. This result shows that a significant number of students are likely willing to continue learning vocabulary via Instagram learning account as one of their sources of vocabulary informal learning.

B. Discussion

Finding of this study shows that most of the ninth grade students have a favorable opinion of using Instagram learning accounts for English vocabulary mastery, indicating that they primarily value Instagram as a tool that can support them in enhancing vocabulary knowledge based on the three components of perception, namely cognitive (students' perception and knowledge), affective (students' emotional responses), and conative (students' tendency behavior after exploring Instagram learning account).

The mean score for the cognitive component was found to be highest for the statement, "Visual content (images, reels, etc.) on Instagram learning accounts can provide me a clear vocabulary explanation" is (M = 3.85). This results supports Priskilla's finding with one of her respondents saying that using Instagram carousel content to learn the meaning of vocabulary is effective, because the images can provide context and help them better connect words to their meanings [9]. The availability of images, videos, and other interactive content on the platforms has been shown to facilitate students' vocabulary comprehension by presenting contextuallized definitions of vocabulary. In addition, this can also helps them to remembers the word easily. Furthermore, this proven that the accessibility of media like videos and images posts is important for enhancing learners' processing and retention of new words that they encounter when exploring Instagram learning account.

In the context of affective perception, the item "For me, learning vocabulary through Instagram learning accounts is fun" demonstrated the highest mean score (M = 3.71). which is a key factor in maintaining motivation. This results allign with Saputra's research that the students reported fun experiences because of the platform's attractiveness and easy to use that leads to increased motivation [10]. The use of social media has also been shown to promote a positive emotional atmosphere conducive to learning, generates enjoyment that can also giving the less pressure and anxiety feeling to the learners [19], which results in students being able to more easily digest the knowledge they are studying. In conclusion, Instagram could be a good media to support learning activity, especially for younger learners, because of it's dynamic and fits well with how students use digital technology.

Last but not least, the highest mean for the conative component was, "I can access Instagram learning account for learning vocabulary whenever I want to" was (M = 3.75). This finding indicates that students value the flexibility and accessibility offered by the platform, which is consistent with Syafii's research where students also pointed out Instagram's flexibility in supporting their vocabulary learning [2]. The opportunity for self-directed learning through social media allows learners to set their own pace and choose content according to their individual interests and preferences, which in turn can potentially increases their motivation. One of the defining characteristics of social media is its ability to extend learning beyond the classroom and provide sustained language practice by

allowing access to learning materials anytime, anywhere, unlike traditional and formal learning methods [20]. This accessibility and flexibility parts can helps students to eliminate the limitations of conventional learning.

IV. Conclusion

This study concludes that the utilization of Instagram learning accounts has a beneficial impact on students' English vocabulary acquisition based on their perspective. The results show that students' perceptions across the cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions are consistently high, indicating that they find the platform helpful, enjoyable, and convenient. The cognitive benefits of Instagram are particularly evident, especially in terms of the clarity offered by visual content. Students acknowledge that Instagram content facilitates vocabulary comprehension. From an affective perspective, students reported that learning through Instagram was more enjoyable and less monotonous than traditional methods. This finding supports the notion that emotional satisfaction plays a pivotal role in successful language learning. From a conative perspective, students expressed strong agreement that Instagram's flexibility and accessibility allowed them to learn and practice at any time and in any place, thus enhancing their personalized learning. These findings shows that educators can uitilize platforms like Instagram into vocabulary instruction strategies to support their formal learning. Despite these advantages, the students and the teachers should also be aware and be able to filter out the inappropriate content that sometimes appears on the platform.

Acknowledgment

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