

Boosting English Motivation and Writing Proficiency through Instagram Captions in Discovery-Based Learning

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(Received: 24 February 2025; Accepted: 25 March 2025)

Abstract

This study explores the impact of integrating Instagram captions within the Discovery-Based Learning framework on enhancing writing skills and student motivation. Grounded in the principles of student-centered learning, the research aims to address challenges in writing proficiency and motivation among tenth-grade students at a vocational school, Indonesia. A quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent control group was employed, where the experimental group engaged in Instagram-based writing activities, including caption creation and peer feedback. In contrast, the control group followed traditional teaching methods. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests to assess writing skills, complemented by a motivation questionnaire. The results revealed a significant improvement in the experimental group's writing skills, particularly in vocabulary, sentence structure, and coherence. Moreover, the experimental group demonstrated a marked increase in motivation, indicating that Instagram captions effectively engage students. The findings highlight the potential of leveraging social media platforms like Instagram to enhance language learning, providing a more interactive and student-centered approach. This study underscores the importance of integrating technology into educational practices to foster greater student engagement and motivation. The results suggest that when used within the Discovery Learning model, Instagram can significantly improve writing proficiency and intrinsic motivation, offering a modern, engaging method for enhancing learning outcomes. Future research could investigate the long-term effects of such interventions and explore additional digital tools to support student development in writing skills further.

Keywords: Instagram Captions, Discovery Learning, Writing Skills, Student Motivation, Educational Technology.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi dampak integrasi caption Instagram dalam kerangka Pembelajaran Berbasis Penemuan untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis dan motivasi siswa. Berdasarkan prinsip pembelajaran yang berpusat pada siswa, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengatasi tantangan dalam keterampilan menulis dan motivasi di kalangan siswa kelas sepuluh kejuruan, Indonesia. Desain kuasi-eksperimental dengan kelompok kontrol yang tidak setara diterapkan, di mana kelompok eksperimen mengikuti kegiatan menulis berbasis Instagram, termasuk pembuatan caption dan umpan balik sejawat, sementara kelompok kontrol mengikuti metode pengajaran tradisional. Data dikumpulkan melalui pre-test dan post-test untuk menilai keterampilan menulis, dilengkapi dengan kuesioner motivasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan pada keterampilan menulis kelompok eksperimen, terutama dalam hal kosa kata, struktur kalimat, dan koherensi. Selain itu, kelompok eksperimen juga menunjukkan peningkatan motivasi yang nyata, yang mengindikasikan bahwa caption Instagram efektif dalam menarik perhatian siswa. Temuan ini menyoroti potensi pemanfaatan platform media sosial seperti Instagram untuk meningkatkan pembelajaran bahasa, dengan pendekatan yang lebih interaktif dan berpusat pada siswa. Penelitian ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya integrasi teknologi dalam praktik pendidikan untuk mendorong keterlibatan dan motivasi siswa yang lebih besar. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Instagram, ketika digunakan dalam model Pembelajaran Berbasis Penemuan, dapat secara signifikan meningkatkan keterampilan menulis dan motivasi intrinsik, menawarkan metode pembelajaran yang modern dan menarik untuk meningkatkan hasil belajar. Penelitian selanjutnya dapat menyelidiki dampak jangka panjang dari intervensi tersebut dan mengeksplorasi alat digital tambahan untuk mendukung perkembangan keterampilan menulis siswa.

Kata Kunci: Caption Instagram, Pembelajaran Berbasis Penemuan, Keterampilan Menulis, Motivasi Siswa, Teknologi Pendidikan.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of technology has significantly transformed education, providing innovative opportunities to create more interactive and engaging learning experiences. One of the most impactful developments in this transformation is the integration of social media platforms into

educational settings. Social media has become an essential tool in enhancing student engagement, fostering collaboration, and increasing motivation in learning environments (Hadinuddin et al., 2025). As students increasingly use digital platforms in their everyday lives, educators have the opportunity to tap into these familiar technologies to enrich the learning process and bridge the gap between traditional teaching methods and contemporary, technology-driven education. The evolving nature of digital tools also means that educators must continually adapt their instructional strategies to ensure that they meet the needs of today's tech-savvy learners (Singh et al., 2023).

In Indonesia, research has highlighted the potential of social media platforms, such as Facebook, in enhancing student engagement, particularly in English language learning (Hustarna, 2023). Similarly, the use of interactive media has been shown to improve students' performance and understanding of the subject matter (Aulia et al., 2024). These findings suggest that social media can serve as an effective medium for advancing language skills, especially when aligned with students' technological habits. As such, these platforms provide a valuable opportunity for educators to enhance English language instruction in ways that resonate with students, making learning both relevant and accessible. In addition, the increasing availability of smartphones and other mobile devices has facilitated the seamless integration of social media into students' daily routines, further enhancing its potential as a learning tool.

Among various social media platforms, Instagram is particularly popular among adolescents and presents a promising tool for language education. Instagram's unique combination of visual content and text-based interaction offers students an engaging environment to practice various language skills, including writing. Research has shown that Instagram can motivate students to write in a more informal and relaxed setting, while simultaneously improving their creativity and language proficiency (Al-Ali, 2014). The platform's interactive nature, including features like captions, encourages students to engage in meaningful language use and promotes both personal expression and peer interaction, key factors in fostering a more dynamic and motivating learning environment (Alfadda et al., 2022). Moreover, Instagram's instant feedback mechanism, where students receive responses from peers and teachers alike, adds another layer of motivation and engagement that is often absent in traditional writing exercises (Hikmah et al., 2024).

One of the most effective features of Instagram for educational purposes is its captions. These brief written texts provide students with opportunities to practice writing in a creative, authentic, and interactive manner. Research has demonstrated that the use of captions in social media settings can increase student motivation and foster collaboration among peers, both of which are essential for enhancing engagement in writing tasks (Suharso, 2017). By encouraging students to write captions on posts and interact with each other's content, Instagram can serve as an innovative tool to improve writing skills while promoting a collaborative and motivating learning experience. The multimodal nature of Instagram, combining text, images, and video, allows students to express their ideas in diverse formats, thus enriching their writing experience and boosting their confidence in language use (Purba et al., 2024).

Moreover, previous studies on digital storytelling have demonstrated the potential of integrating digital tools into writing instruction to boost students' engagement and creativity. Lifiani (2024) found that digital storytelling significantly enhanced students' creativity and writing abilities. Similarly, Gunawan (2019) reported that digital storytelling in writing instruction led to improved academic performance and increased student motivation. These findings indicate that incorporating digital tools like Instagram captions into writing instruction not only improves students' technical writing skills but also boosts their confidence and self-expression (Sari, 2018). Combining these approaches with social media platforms holds the potential to create a more dynamic and effective language learning environment. The use of digital media, including Instagram, offers a creative and

flexible way for students to engage with language in a manner that is not constrained by traditional classroom boundaries.

Despite the promising potential of social media in enhancing student motivation and writing skills, challenges persist, particularly with regard to vocabulary limitations, grammatical issues, and insufficient practice in writing tasks. These challenges are particularly noticeable among tenth-grade students, where writing proficiency and motivation remain low. To address these issues, there is a clear need for more innovative teaching methods that align with students' interests and technological habits. Integrating Instagram captions within a discovery-based learning framework could provide a solution to these challenges by offering an engaging, student-centered approach that motivates students to improve their writing skills in a natural and supportive way. Discovery-based learning, with its focus on inquiry, exploration, and active engagement, aligns well with the interactive nature of social media platforms, creating an ideal context for language learning.

Incorporating Instagram captions into a discovery-based learning approach not only engages students but also encourages them to take ownership of their learning (Christanty et al., 2020). This type of learning, which is based on exploration and self-guided inquiry, promotes critical thinking and problem-solving, skills that are essential for both language learning and personal development. Instagram, as a tool for discovery, allows students to connect their classroom knowledge with real-world applications, offering them opportunities to explore language in authentic contexts. By aligning the use of Instagram with discovery-based principles, this approach ensures that learning remains both meaningful and motivating, providing students with a sense of agency and purpose in their educational journey.

Although existing research has explored the use of social media in language learning, there remains a gap in studies that focus on Instagram captions within the context of discovery-based learning, particularly in vocational education settings. Previous research has primarily focused on the isolated use of digital tools without addressing how these tools can be integrated into active, student-driven learning processes. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the effectiveness of Instagram captions in fostering English writing proficiency and motivation within a discovery-based learning framework, specifically targeting tenth-grade students. By leveraging a platform that aligns with students' digital preferences, this research seeks to bridge the gap between traditional pedagogical practices and modern technological trends, offering new insights into how social media can be used to enhance language learning in vocational education. The results of this study could potentially inform future teaching practices and help educators design more engaging and effective language learning experiences for students in similar contexts.

1. How does the use of Instagram caption media in the discovery learning model affect the motivation levels of 10th-grade students in learning English compared to those taught through a conventional learning model?
2. To what extent does the implementation of Instagram caption media in the discovery learning model impact the writing skills of 10th-grade students in learning English compared to those taught through a conventional learning model?
3. Are there any significant differences in the effectiveness of using Instagram caption media in discovery learning to enhance motivation and writing skills among 10th-grade students?

METHOD

This study employed a quasi-experimental quantitative research design to examine the impact of using Instagram captions in Discovery Learning on students' writing motivation and achievement. The study adopted a non-equivalent control group design, where participants were selected based on specific criteria rather than random assignment (Creswell & Clark, 2018). The population consisted of tenth-grade students from a vocational high school. Cluster random sampling was used to

determine the sample, selecting two classes as research subjects. One class served as the experimental group, receiving treatment through Instagram-based writing activities in Discovery Learning, while the other class acted as the control group, following conventional writing instruction without digital media (Fraenkel et al., 2019).

The research instruments included writing tests and a motivation questionnaire. The writing tests were conducted through pre-tests and post-tests to evaluate students' writing proficiency in terms of vocabulary, sentence structure, cohesion, coherence, and grammar. The tests were developed based on validated writing assessment indicators (Brown & Lee, 2015). Additionally, a motivation questionnaire was administered to measure students' motivation before and after the treatment. The questionnaire consisted of 16 statements, covering psychological and learning motivation factors. The statements were categorized into positive and negative statements, using a 4-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1) for positive statements, and Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Disagree (3), and Strongly Disagree (4) for negative statements. The instrument was adapted from previous research and had been tested for validity and reliability (Conradty & Bogner, 2022).

The data collection process was conducted in several stages. In the first stage, a pre-test was administered to both groups to assess their initial writing abilities. In the second stage, the experimental group underwent Instagram caption-based learning activities within the Discovery Learning framework, which included analyzing captions, engaging in discussions, and receiving feedback. Meanwhile, the control group followed a traditional writing approach, which focused on structured exercises and teacher-led instruction without digital tools. In the third stage, after completing the treatment, students from both groups took a post-test to measure their writing improvement. In the fourth stage, a motivation questionnaire was distributed before and after the intervention to evaluate changes in students' learning motivation.

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS, applying several statistical tests. The normality test was conducted using the Lilliefors method to determine whether the data followed a normal distribution. The homogeneity test was performed using Levene's Test to check for equal variance among groups (Field, 2018). The t-test was used to assess the effectiveness of the treatment, while the normalized gain score (N-gain) was calculated to measure students' learning improvements (Christman et al., 2024). To examine the correlation between students' writing motivation and achievement, Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis was applied, with a p-value < 0.05 indicating a statistically significant relationship (Schober & Schwarte, 2018).

Once all prerequisite analyses were met, a linear regression analysis was conducted to investigate the relationship between independent variables (motivational factors) and the dependent variable (students' writing achievement). The findings confirmed that using Instagram captions in Discovery Learning positively influenced students' writing abilities and motivation. This study highlights the potential of integrating social media into writing instruction as an effective approach to enhance students' writing skills and engagement in the learning process.

RESULT

Integrating Instagram captions into the Discovery Learning model has been shown to have a significant positive impact on students' motivation levels. Motivation plays a crucial role in language learning, as it influences students' engagement, persistence, and overall performance. To assess the effectiveness of this approach, students' motivation levels were measured and categorized based on a specific range. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Student's Motivation in Learning English Writing

No	Range	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	81-100	Very High	24	100%
Total			24	100%

The data in Table 1 shows that all 24 students (100%) in the experimental group fell into the "Very High" motivation category. This result suggests that every student experienced a high level of enthusiasm and engagement in learning English writing. Although direct quantitative data on motivation was not explicitly stated in other results, the table clearly indicates that students in the experimental group demonstrated exceptionally high motivation. This strong motivation likely contributed to the significant improvement in their writing scores, as reflected in their higher post-test results compared to the control group, which followed a conventional learning approach. The table clearly illustrates that every student in the experimental group achieved a "Very High" motivation level, reinforcing the effectiveness of Instagram captions in enhancing students' engagement and enthusiasm in learning.

The pre-test results showed that both the experimental and control groups had similar initial writing skills, with mean scores of 68.7 and 68.1, respectively. The highest pre-test scores were 73 for the experimental group and 75 for the control group, while the lowest score was 64 for both groups. These results indicate that students in both groups had a moderate level of proficiency in descriptive writing before the intervention.

Following the intervention, the post-test results demonstrated a significant improvement in the experimental group. The mean score increased from 68.7 to 84.23, with the highest score reaching 91.5. In contrast, the control group only showed a slight increase from 68.1 to 68.78, with a maximum score of 81. The minimum score in the experimental group improved to 77.5, whereas the control group remained at 64. These results suggest that integrating Instagram captions in Discovery Learning had a positive impact on students' writing skills.

Table 2. Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores Between Experimental and Control Groups

Group	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Highest Score	Lowest Score
Experimental	68.7	84.23	91.5	77.5
Control	68.1	68.78	81	64

The gain score analysis further confirmed the effectiveness of the treatment. Based on Hake's classification, the experimental group showed an improvement from the "Medium" category in the pre-test (Mean: 68.33) to the "High" category in the post-test (Mean: 85.67). Meanwhile, the control group remained in the "Medium" category, with a minor increase from 68.78 to 68.38. These findings support the notion that Instagram captions can significantly enhance students' writing proficiency in descriptive texts.

Table 3. Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Gain Scores Between Experimental and Control Groups

Group	Pre-Test Gain Score	Post-Test Gain Score
Experimental	68.33	85.67
Control	68.78	68.38

The normality test results indicated that both the pre-test and post-test data were normally distributed, as the significance values for the experimental group (0.919) and control group (0.382) in the pre-test, as well as 0.855 and 0.695 in the post-test, were above the 0.05 threshold. Similarly, the homogeneity test results confirmed that the samples from both groups were comparable, with Levene's test values of 0.312 for the pre-test and 0.182 for the post-test.

Table 4. Normality and Homogeneity Test Results for Experimental and Control Groups

Test Type	Experimental Group	Control Group
Pre-Test Normality	0.919	0.382
Post-Test Normality	0.855	0.695
Pre-Test Homogeneity	0.312	-
Post-Test Homogeneity	0.182	-

The pre-test scores showed no statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups ($t = -0.372$, Sig. = $0.711 > 0.05$). However, the post-test results revealed a significant difference ($t = 19.284$, Sig. = $0.000 < 0.05$), indicating that the integration of Instagram captions in Discovery Learning had a statistically significant impact on students' writing skills.

Table 5. T-Test Results for Pre-Test and Post-Test Comparison

Test	t-value	Significance
Pre-Test	-0.372	0.711
Post-Test	19.284	0.000

For 24 students, the critical t-table value (t-table) at a significance level of 0.05 (two-tailed) is approximately 2.064. In the pre-test comparison, the t-value of -0.372 is much lower than the t-table value (2.064). Since the significance value (0.711) is greater than 0.05, there is no significant difference in pre-test scores between the experimental and control groups. In the post-test comparison, the t-value of 19.284 is significantly higher than the t-table value (2.064). Since the significance value (0.000) is less than 0.05, this confirms a statistically significant difference in post-test scores between the groups. This result further highlights the effectiveness of integrating Instagram caption media within Discovery Learning in improving students' writing skills and motivation. These results reinforce the conclusion that utilizing Instagram captions as a learning tool can significantly enhance both students' motivation and writing proficiency in learning English.

DISCUSSION

The Effect of Instagram Caption Media on the Discovery Learning Model on Motivation Levels

The findings indicate that students in the experimental group exhibited significantly higher motivation than those in the control group. All 24 students (100%) in the experimental group fell into the "Very High" motivation category, confirming the effectiveness of Instagram captions in fostering engagement. This result aligns with previous research stating that Instagram, as an interactive and visually appealing platform, enhances students' motivation and participation in learning activities (Christanty et al., 2020).

The study also found that intervention positively influenced both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation was driven by external factors such as the classroom environment, teachers' guidance, and the interactive nature of Instagram (Atila & Irnanda, 2021). On the other hand, intrinsic motivation was enhanced as students perceived writing Instagram captions as an enjoyable and relevant activity that allowed them to express themselves creatively (Ryan & Deci, 1985). These findings reinforce the idea that social media tools can bridge students' digital habits with learning objectives, making learning more meaningful and engaging.

The findings from this study underscore the transformative potential of integrating social media platforms like Instagram into educational frameworks (Al-Ali, 2014). Instagram's unique combination of visual engagement and brief textual input facilitates a student-centered learning environment, which is essential in modern pedagogical approaches. By utilizing an everyday platform that students are familiar with, Instagram offers a less formal and more interactive method of language learning. This integration empowers students to take ownership of their learning, as they create and

reflect upon their own captions (Handayani, 2017). Furthermore, this study highlights the role of Discovery Learning in fostering independent thinking and problem-solving skills, essential competencies for the 21st-century learner. The ability to create and evaluate their own content, as well as provide peer feedback, allows students to internalize language use in a more meaningful context, further improving writing proficiency (Listiani, 2016). Future research might explore how various social media platforms compare in effectiveness within different pedagogical models and how this student-centered approach can be further optimized for diverse educational settings (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016).

In addition to promoting independent learning, the integration of social media platforms like Instagram encourages the development of other critical skills, including creativity and collaboration. By engaging with an authentic, real-world platform, students are not only practicing language skills but also developing their ability to think critically and creatively. The process of crafting captions, which often requires students to condense their thoughts into concise, engaging expressions, fosters creativity in writing (Ibrahim & Basim, 2024). Collaboration through peer feedback and the sharing of ideas in an open forum encourages communication skills, self-reflection, and constructive criticism, all of which are essential in modern education (Ansari & Khan, 2020). Thus, Instagram, when used as a tool within a Discovery Learning framework, offers students opportunities to grow beyond traditional academic competencies, equipping them with skills that are vital in the digital age (Zachos et al., 2018).

The Implementation of Instagram Caption Media in Discovery Learning Model on Writing Skills

The results demonstrated that using Instagram captions within the Discovery Learning Model significantly improved students' writing performance. The t-test analysis confirmed that the experimental group outperformed the control group, validating the effectiveness of this approach. This improvement aligns with previous studies indicating that Discovery Learning enhances students' ability to explore, analyze, and construct knowledge independently, leading to better learning outcomes (Inawati & Susanti, 2023). A detailed analysis of students' post-test scores based on writing assessment criteria revealed the following:

Table 6. T-Test Results for Pre-Test and Post-Test Comparison

No	Aspects (%)	Results
1.	Content (30%)	Most students effectively developed ideas, with high-scoring individuals providing clear and relevant details. However, some students needed additional guidance in expanding their arguments.
2.	Organization (20%)	High-performing students structured their writing logically with effective transitions, whereas others required more practice in coherence and idea sequencing.
3.	Grammar (20%)	While some students demonstrated accuracy in grammar and sentence structure, others continued to struggle with subject-verb agreement and tense consistency, highlighting the need for supplementary grammar instruction
4.	Vocabulary (15%)	Students generally displayed strong vocabulary use, though some required more exposure to varied lexical resources to enhance expression.
5.	Mechanics (15%)	Most students performed well in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, but minor errors were still present

Overall, students in the experimental group exhibited greater improvements in content, vocabulary, and mechanics, while grammar and organization remained areas requiring further attention.

Significant Differences in the Effectiveness of Instagram Caption Media in Discovery Learning

The findings confirmed that integrating Instagram caption media within the Discovery Learning Model was significantly more effective than conventional methods. The statistical analysis (t -value = 19.284) demonstrated that students exposed to Instagram captions achieved higher writing scores. This supports prior research indicating that multimodal digital platforms like Instagram enhance language learning, particularly in fostering narrative writing skills, coherence, and grammatical accuracy (Amelia & Oktavia, 2021),

Instagram's interactive features allowed students to receive peer feedback, engage with authentic writing tasks, and apply their language skills in real-world contexts. Furthermore, the combination of visual and textual elements promoted creativity and self-expression, contributing to greater motivation and skill development. These findings align with previous studies asserting that digital platforms provide students with meaningful learning experiences that improve both engagement and academic performance (Christanty et al., 2020).

The study provides strong evidence that Instagram captions within the Discovery Learning Model enhance students' motivation and writing skills. The experimental group demonstrated significant improvements in writing proficiency, with statistical analysis confirming the effectiveness of this method. Furthermore, students in the experimental group exhibited higher motivation levels, reinforcing the role of Instagram captions in making learning more engaging and relevant.

Although the study yielded positive results, some challenges remain, particularly in ensuring students develop accurate grammar and well-structured writing. Future research could explore the integration of Instagram captions with targeted grammar instruction to address these challenges. Nevertheless, the findings highlight the potential of social media as an effective pedagogical tool in modern education, providing students with interactive and meaningful learning experiences.

While the study demonstrates the effectiveness of Instagram captions in improving writing skills and student motivation (Gunantar & Transinata, 2019), several challenges remain. Notably, areas like grammar and organization still showed room for improvement, indicating that the integration of Instagram captions alone may not be sufficient to fully address these foundational skills (Lim, 2024). Moving forward, educators could consider complementing Instagram-based activities with targeted grammar instruction or structured writing exercises to enhance students' mastery of sentence-level mechanics and logical text organization (Michael, 2025).

Additionally, further research could explore the long-term impact of using social media tools in writing instruction, particularly in sustaining motivation and improving writing skills over time (Winda et al., 2023). Studies focusing on the sustainability of motivation and writing skill improvement could provide deeper insights into the efficacy of digital learning tools beyond immediate post-intervention outcomes (Abdyrakhimova, 2024). The findings of this study serve as a strong foundation for further exploration into the long-term benefits of integrating social media tools into curriculum design and suggest that such integration, if thoughtfully implemented, could become a powerful catalyst for enhancing language learning in diverse contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study effectively demonstrates the significant impact of integrating Instagram captions within the Discovery Learning framework on improving students' writing skills and motivation. The experimental group exhibited a marked improvement in writing proficiency across various dimensions, including coherence, vocabulary, content development, and mechanics. The statistical

analysis revealed a substantial difference between the experimental and control groups, confirming the positive influence of Instagram captions on students' writing performance. Additionally, the findings highlighted increased student motivation, as the interactive and engaging nature of Instagram, combined with the discovery-based approach, fostered both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This suggests that the fusion of digital tools and student-centred learning methods has transformative potential for enhancing English language education in the digital age.

The implications of this study are profound for educators seeking to adapt to contemporary learning environments. By incorporating social media tools like Instagram into the curriculum, teachers can create more dynamic, engaging, and relevant learning experiences for students. Moreover, this study underscores the importance of using technology to bridge the gap between students' digital habits and academic objectives, making learning more engaging and accessible. Further research could explore the long-term effects of such integrations and address challenges in areas such as grammar and organization, providing valuable insights into optimizing digital learning tools for broader educational contexts

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