

Students' Perception of the Use of Instagram as Social Media to Enhance Their Speaking Skills

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ABSTRACT

This book chapter explores students' perceptions of using Instagram as a medium to support speaking skills within the context of self-directed learning. Through a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected from interviews and questionnaires involving students of the English education study program. The results show that most students have a positive perception of using Instagram, as this platform provides space for flexible, interesting, and relevant speaking practice in everyday life. However, several obstacles were also encountered, including distractions and limited academic resources. This chapter concludes that Instagram has great potential to support the development of speaking skills, especially if used in a directed manner and integrated with learning objectives. It indicates that most students have a positive perception of using Instagram to enhance their speaking skills. Instagram features such as videos, reels, and captions are considered to help students practice speaking independently and build self-confidence. Additionally, interactions through comments or responses from other users offer further motivation for students to continue practicing. However, several challenges were also identified, including impaired focus due to non-educational content and a lack of control over the quality of the material accessed. Nevertheless, the use of Instagram is considered effective as a supporting medium for speaking and learning, especially when used in a focused and responsible manner. These findings provide positive implications for the development of

technology-based learning strategies that encourage students' self-directed learning.

Keywords: Instagram, speaking skills, students' perceptions, independent learning, social media

INTRODUCTION

The introduction sets the stage for the chapter, providing important context for the ensuing discussion. It begins with an overview of the topic to establish its significance. Next, it identifies the problem, outlining the particular issue, challenge, or gap in understanding that the chapter seeks to address.

Significance of speaking skills and rise of Instagram in English language learning

Oral communication is one of the main parts of English skills that plays an important role; moreover, learning to master this ability will allow learners to effectively and grammatically articulate their thoughts in English. According to Elder (2022), speaking is a useful ability for creating and communicating meaning through verbal and nonverbal signals such as noises. As one of the skills in English, speaking skills will be difficult to express or even difficult to develop if not trained continuously. Speaking skills are one of the most important aspects of learning English, but are often the biggest challenge for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners. This challenge is particularly prominent in Indonesia's EFL contexts where English is not widely used in daily communication (Widodo, 2016). Speaking skills require not only mastery of vocabulary and sentence structure, but also fluency and confidence to communicate directly. With limited classroom learning time, learning that encourages student independence is increasingly relevant to support the development of these skills. Advances in technology, especially social media, have opened up new opportunities in the world of education, including in language learning. One of the most popular and frequently used platforms by students is Instagram.

Speaking skills are important to pay attention to because they can make someone think critically, as when speakers

choose the right words or sentences more often, which makes our brain work more actively, effectively, and stimulates the brain to think more critically. Elder (2022) insisted that ethics has an important role to play in critical reasoning. He also emphasised the need for deliberate self-development to shape one's intellectual character. Moreover, he highlighted that universal principles in reasoning can be applied across different aspects of thought, subjects, and disciplines. These are an intellectual process that entails active and skillful conceiving, applying, analysing, synthesising, and evaluating information obtained or gained by observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication. Instagram is able to create a visual-based learning environment that encourages students to use language naturally. This platform has also been shown to increase student participation and arouse their interest in learning outside the classroom. A study by Serang & Sahib (2023) reinforces these findings, stating that social media such as Instagram encourages collaboration in learning and provides space for students to express their ideas in English. Another study by Erarslan & Bask (2019) also showed that the use of Instagram in speaking tasks, such as video presentations, positively contributes to students' speaking fluency and self-confidence.

Instagram, as a versatile social media platform, has indeed become an English language resource that can contribute to enhancing students' academic speaking skills. In addition, students now have access to a wide range of English language content that may assist them with their studies (Agustin & Ayu, 2021). Many Instagram accounts, such as @GurukumrDannis, @bbclearningenglish, @englisharound, @aarons.english, and many more, have provided English material in recent years. These accounts shared a wide range of English language content, including vocabulary lessons, pronunciation guides, grammar, conversational practice, and academic speaking tips that can help students develop academic speaking skills. Therefore, Instagram can be used to facilitate students' academic speaking skills learning by promoting exposure to authentic English language use (Albiladi et al., 2020). Instagram also provides plenty of features that may be utilized to practice and develop students'

speaking abilities. In line with this, Zein (2019) claimed that Instagram may be utilized to carry out several activities to learn and practice English speaking in academic settings, such as watching English educational content, speaking exercises through videos like role-play, describing people, pronunciation practice, and telling personal experiences. It might be an excellent teaching tool that makes learning interesting and educational Kusumoto, (2012.) Instagram allows students to learn and practice their academic speaking skills.

Topic in this chapter has raised concerns regarding the relationship between students and their use of Instagram for English language study. The first study by Kusumoto (2018) explored EFL students' perceptions of using Instagram to improve their spoken English. The findings revealed that students viewed Instagram positively as a tool for speaking practice in the classroom, offering an enjoyable alternative that boosted their motivation. A second study by Sung et al., (2016) investigated students' perceptions of Instagram as a tool for general English learning. The results showed that students found Instagram to be an engaging learning platform, with its use increasing motivation during the pandemic. While many studies have explored students' views on using Instagram, there remains a gap in research concerning the types of speaking skills that can be developed through the platform. To fill this gap, this study focuses on students' perceptions of Instagram as a social media tool to enhance their speaking skills. It not only examines how students perceive Instagram as a medium for learning speaking but also explores how they utilise it in practice.

Instagram and Digital Media in Language Learning

In the era of industry 4.0 and society 5.0, digital media is a necessity that must be mastered to continue to improve one's competence. It is felt that this needs to continue to be sharpened so that it is not eroded by time. The internet has altered the way individuals interact, perform research, and provides learners with quicker access to the learning process. Anyone may now utilise the internet to access any information at any time. Using technology is one choice, but it has also become a must. The fast growth of technology is exactly proportional to the rise of social media. This has an impact on

the students' learning in the classroom. According to McGraw-Hill's President of Higher Education, one of the most effective methods to ensure students' success in the classroom is to learn effectively - and with the right kind of technology; students' focused attitude is also vital (Syahida et al., 2022). The increasing development of social media is seen as having quite an influence on students academically. Social media has become an alternative learning medium. One of the supporting media for the digital era is the use of social media, in this case, Instagram, through mobile devices such as cell phones and so on. This gadget may be used for constructive purposes, such as learning from content providers or polishing abilities, particularly when studying English as a second language. The accessibility of these functions enables students to actively seek information relevant to their studies. As a result, smartphones function as a multimedia platform that enhances learning in ways that textbooks cannot entirely replace (Borghese & Cole, 1994). Furthermore, social networking sites and communication apps play a role in sharing valuable information.

Second, Instagram is one of the most popular applications. Almost everyone has an Instagram account, which can be a kind of media network for sharing information that can make it easier for users to absorb information properly. As a universal social media platform, Instagram acts as an English learning resource that can support the improvement of students' academic speaking skills. In addition, the variety of English content available allows students to more easily access materials that support their studies. (Agustin & Ayu, 2021). In recent years, many Instagram accounts, such as @aarons.english and others, have started to provide English learning materials. These accounts provide a variety of content, including vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, conversation practice, as well as academic speaking tips that are useful for students in improving their academic speaking skills. As such, Instagram can be utilised as a tool to support students' learning of academic speaking skills through increased exposure to authentic English usage. (Albiladi et al., 2020.)

Opportunities and Challenges in Practice

Students at Universitas Negeri Semarang report

overwhelmingly positive perceptions of using Instagram to improve their English-speaking abilities. Many appreciate the platform's flexibility, which enables them to practice at their own pace and comfort level. The ability to record and review videos, for instance, allows students to monitor their progress and refine their speaking. Instagram also provides a low-pressure environment compared to classroom settings, helping reduce anxiety and boost self-confidence.

Interactions via comments and responses serve as a form of social reinforcement that motivates students to persist in their efforts. The integration of visuals and text encourages learners to associate vocabulary with real-world contexts, thereby enhancing retention and comprehension. Students particularly value the feedback they receive from peers and content creators, which helps them improve both pronunciation and fluency.

Nevertheless, some challenges persist. The abundance of non-educational content can distract students from their learning goals. Additionally, the unregulated nature of Instagram means that content quality varies, and students may encounter incorrect or misleading information. Despite these issues, students largely consider Instagram to be an effective supplementary tool when used purposefully and responsibly. While Instagram offers numerous benefits, it also presents challenges that require strategic navigation. One common issue is the difficulty in maintaining focus amidst the entertainment-oriented nature of the platform. Notifications, advertisements, and unrelated posts can divert attention from academic goals. Moreover, the lack of a structured curriculum may lead to fragmented learning if not guided properly.

To mitigate these challenges, educators can play a crucial role by curating reliable content and integrating Instagram-based activities into formal instruction. Providing clear objectives and criteria for student-created content can help maintain academic rigor. The platform also opens opportunities for collaborative learning, where students engage in discussions, peer reviews, and group projects through Instagram features.

These opportunities align well with self-directed learning

principles. By choosing what, when, and how to learn, students take greater ownership of their educational journey. Instagram's user-friendly interface and wide accessibility make it a powerful tool for fostering autonomy, motivation, and continuous practice in language learning.

Purpose and Objectives of the Chapter

This chapter aims to explore the role of Instagram as a technological tool in EFL learning by examining students' responses, perceptions, and challenges in the implementation of Instagram to enhance their speaking skills. By addressing the gaps in existing research, the chapter seeks to provide valuable insights into the factors that influence the effective use of Instagram in the case of self-directed learning. The objectives of this chapter are as follows:

1. To find out students' response to the implementation of Instagram to enhance their speaking skills.
2. To find out students' perceptions of the implementation of Instagram to enhance their speaking skills.
3. To find out the challenges faced by the students in the implementation of Instagram to enhance their speaking skills.

Structure of the Chapter

This chapter explores students' perceptions of using Instagram as a social media platform to enhance their English-speaking skills, particularly in the context of self-directed learning. It begins by establishing the significance of speaking proficiency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education and addresses the common challenges learners face in developing this skill within the limitations of classroom settings. The introduction positions Instagram as a potential solution—an accessible, engaging, and visual-based platform that offers flexible opportunities for independent language practice.

The study continues by discussing the role of Instagram and other digital media in contemporary language education. It elaborates on the platform's features—such as video sharing, captioning, comments, and stories—that can actively support speaking development. Instagram is presented as not only a content consumption platform but also a space for interactive

and productive learning, aligning with modern pedagogical trends.

Following this, the chapter presents students' real-world experiences and perceptions. Drawing from qualitative data, it describes how students use Instagram to practice speaking, express themselves more confidently, and receive informal feedback. It also acknowledges their recognition of the platform's limitations, including distractions from non-educational content and varying quality of language input. Subsequently, the chapter delves into the practical opportunities and challenges of implementing Instagram as a learning tool. It highlights how Instagram can foster collaboration, creativity, and learner autonomy, but also notes the importance of educator guidance to ensure its educational effectiveness. The discussion encourages structured yet flexible integration into classroom practices.

The theoretical framework is then outlined, linking the findings to relevant educational theories: constructivism, which emphasizes knowledge construction through experience; computer-mediated communication (CMC), which focuses on language interaction in digital contexts; and self-directed learning, which underlines autonomy and intrinsic motivation. These frameworks support the interpretation of students' behaviors and outcomes.

The chapter concludes by summarizing key insights and affirming Instagram's potential as a supplementary medium for speaking practice. It emphasizes that with intentional use and appropriate scaffolding, social media like Instagram can meaningfully contribute to language learning. Finally, it offers recommendations for future pedagogical implementation and further research, particularly in exploring long-term impacts and developing structured learning models through digital platforms.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Introduction

In the digital era, social media platforms have transcended their traditional roles as mere communication tools and have become integral to various aspects of our lives,

including education. Instagram, with its visual-centric approach and global reach, has emerged as a potential learning tool that can significantly impact the way students engage with educational content. This chapter delves into the multifaceted perceptions of students regarding the use of Instagram as a learning tool, exploring both the positive aspects and the challenges they encounter. We will examine how Instagram facilitates flexibility self and-paced learning, enhances motivation and engagement, boosts confidence, and reduces anxiety. Additionally, we will discuss the platform's role in exposing students to authentic language use and fostering peer interaction and collaborative learning. The chapter will also highlight the importance of social reinforcement and motivation in driving students' learning experiences. Furthermore, we will address the challenges students face when using Instagram for language learning and explore strategies to overcome these obstacles. Finally, we will consider how Instagram can support self-directed learning, empowering students to take control of their educational journey in innovative ways.

2. Students Perceptions of Instagram as a Learning Tool

Students' perceptions of Instagram as a medium for improving speaking skills are overwhelmingly positive, as several studies have confirmed its efficacy in fostering student engagement and boosting motivation. These findings are supported by Riyanto & Putra (2021), who observed that learners believed Instagram provides a supportive space for experimenting with language and receiving real-time input from peers. Instagram, with its diverse features, including photos, videos, stories, captions, and live sessions, offers students a versatile platform for practicing their speaking abilities in an engaging and less formal setting. According to Serang & Sahib (2023) Instagram encourages active participation in language learning by enabling students to express their thoughts through multimedia posts and engage with peers through comments and feedback.

In this chapter, students highlighted the platform's flexibility, allowing them to practice speaking at their own pace and convenience. This aligns with findings from (Agustin & Ayu, 2021), who emphasized that Instagram provides a space

for students to learn and practice outside the constraints of traditional classroom settings. Students can record videos, share personal experiences, and receive immediate feedback, which helps reinforce their learning and boosts their confidence. The ability to repeatedly watch their videos and track progress also contributes to their improvement, as they can pinpoint areas for refinement and practice speaking more fluently.

Furthermore, students find Instagram's low-pressure environment conducive to overcoming the anxiety that often accompanies oral language practice in traditional classroom settings. As noted by Zein (2019) students are more likely to engage with content and practice speaking when the platform encourages informal, self-directed learning. The instant feedback they receive from their followers or content creators also serves as a motivator, encouraging them to continue practicing and improving their speaking skills.

Over the past decade, social media platforms have increasingly become part of educational strategies, and Instagram, in particular, has been recognized for its potential as an effective learning tool. Originally designed for image sharing, Instagram has expanded to include videos, stories, and live sessions, which offer rich media formats that appeal to a generation of students highly engaged with visual and interactive content. Its informal, social media environment allows students to interact with educational materials outside the traditional classroom, thus providing a more flexible and engaging learning experience.

Instagram's effectiveness as a learning tool is largely attributed to its ability to blend informal learning with formal educational content. As a platform that integrates rich media elements such as photos, videos, and infographics, it offers an attractive and accessible way for students to engage with academic content. Educational content on Instagram often comes in a more digestible and visually appealing format, which can improve students' understanding and retention of complex information (Sung et al., 2016). For instance, Instagram's ability to showcase short video tutorials, infographics, and concise notes can break down complex subjects into manageable, engaging pieces of content that are

easily accessible.

A key factor contributing to students' positive perceptions of Instagram as a learning tool is its social nature. Research indicates that students feel a sense of community when using the platform for educational purposes. The interactivity of Instagram, which includes features like comments, direct messaging, and likes, encourages students to engage with content in a more collaborative and participatory manner than traditional learning methods allow. Hamadi et al., (2022) explored how Instagram's social features contribute to a sense of connection among students and instructors, fostering a learning environment that is both engaging and interactive. Students appreciate the ability to interact with their peers and instructors in real-time, allowing for more dynamic discussions, immediate feedback, and access to peer-generated content.

Moreover, Instagram serves as a gateway to real-world applications and professional networking. Students can follow educators, institutions, and professionals in their fields, gaining insights into industry practices, current trends, and career opportunities. This access to up-to-date content that links theory to practice helps students bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world application. For example, students can follow organizations or professors who post about relevant news, research findings, and practical applications in their field of study, offering an extension of the traditional classroom environment. Martínez-Domingo et al., (2025) highlighted that students appreciated the opportunity to view content posted by industry professionals or academic institutions, which enhanced their understanding of how classroom concepts are applied in real-world scenarios.

However, while students express a generally positive attitude toward using Instagram as an educational tool, there are notable challenges. The informal nature of the platform can sometimes be a double-edged sword. As Instagram is primarily designed for socializing and entertainment, students may struggle to stay focused or may use the platform for non-educational purposes, which can hinder its effectiveness as a learning tool. According to Martínez-Domingo et al., (2025) some students noted that the platform's abundance of

distractions, such as unrelated posts and advertisements, could detract from the educational experience. For Instagram to be effective as a learning tool, educators must design content that is engaging but also clearly linked to learning objectives. This structure helps to mitigate the risks of distraction and ensures that the platform remains a useful educational resource.

In addition, the role of the instructor is crucial in ensuring that Instagram is used effectively in the classroom. The study by Hamadi et al., (2022) found that students felt more positively about the use of Instagram in their courses when instructors provided clear guidelines and well-structured content. Without these elements, Instagram could easily turn into a platform for casual social interactions, rather than focused academic engagement. This highlights the importance of integrating Instagram into the curriculum in a way that aligns with the course's learning goals, rather than treating it as just another tool for content delivery.

Overall, students' perceptions of Instagram as a learning tool are largely shaped by how well it is integrated into the educational environment. When used thoughtfully and strategically, Instagram can be an engaging, dynamic, and effective supplement to traditional learning methods. However, to fully capitalize on its potential, both instructors and students must be mindful of how the platform is used, balancing its interactive features with academic goals to ensure that it contributes positively to the learning experience.

2.1 Positive Perceptions of Instagram as a Learning Tool

Instagram has gained significant attention as a tool for enhancing language learning, particularly in the realm of developing speaking skills. Students perceive Instagram as an engaging and flexible platform for practicing language, offering a variety of features that can facilitate learning in a non-threatening environment. The positive perceptions surrounding Instagram as a learning tool are centered on its ability to foster creativity, encourage self-expression, and provide a space for continuous practice outside traditional classroom settings. Susanti & Listyani (2020) also found that students viewed Instagram as an exciting, motivating, and effective tool to overcome fear of speaking in English. Below

are key aspects of why students view Instagram positively in the context of language learning, particularly for improving their speaking skills.

2.2 Flexibility and Self-Paced Learning

One of the primary advantages of using Instagram for language learning is its flexibility. Students can engage with content and practice speaking at their own pace, which is particularly valuable for those who may feel anxious or under pressure in a traditional classroom setting. Al-Ali (2020) confirms that Instagram fosters independent learning by enabling personalized engagement with multimedia content that suits the learner's individual schedule and pace. This flexibility allows learners to take control of their learning process by selecting the type of content they wish to engage with, recording videos, and revisiting material as needed. (Agustin & Ayu, 2021) found that Instagram allows students to learn and practice English outside of formal classroom hours, thus enabling them to reinforce language skills in a relaxed, familiar environment. The ability to record and review videos gives students an opportunity to monitor their progress and make improvements independently, which further enhances their speaking proficiency (Sung et al., 2016).

2.3 Motivation and Engagement

Instagram's interactive features, such as likes, comments, and direct messages, provide instant feedback from peers and instructors, which enhances motivation and engagement. The social and visually rich nature of Instagram encourages students to participate more actively in language practice. Sari & Oktaviani (2020) observed that the aesthetic and interactive aspects of Instagram significantly enhance students' motivation to engage in speaking practice. The platform's multimedia elements—videos, images, and text—serve as engaging tools for students to express themselves creatively while practicing their speaking skills. According to a study by Serang & Sahib (2023) social media platforms like Instagram significantly boost student engagement by fostering interaction and collaboration among learners, which is critical for language development. Additionally, the feedback received from both peers and content creators serves as positive

reinforcement, motivating students to persist in their learning efforts. This social reinforcement encourages students to keep improving their speaking skills by maintaining regular practice and engaging in constructive conversations.

2.4 Increased Confidence and Reduced Anxiety

A significant benefit of using Instagram for language practice is the reduction of anxiety, a common barrier to developing speaking skills in EFL students. In traditional classroom settings, speaking activities can often induce stress and self-consciousness, particularly when students fear making mistakes in front of their peers. Instagram offers a more comfortable space where students can practice speaking without the pressure of an audience. This is consistent with Chou (2018), who found that reduced anxiety and increased self-efficacy are critical outcomes of low-stakes speaking environments like social media. (Hussain, 2018) highlighted that Instagram provides a more relaxed environment where students feel free to practice speaking and share content at their convenience. This lowered anxiety level helps students build their confidence over time, which is crucial for improving oral communication skills. By regularly recording and sharing videos, students gradually overcome their fear of speaking, ultimately leading to better fluency and greater self-assurance in their abilities.

2.5 Exposure to Authentic Language Use

Instagram provides students with access to authentic language content, which can be crucial for developing natural speaking skills. Through features such as Reels, Stories, and live broadcasts, students are exposed to real-world English usage in a variety of contexts. This exposure is vital for developing an understanding of pronunciation, conversational flow, and cultural nuances. Erarslan & Bask (2019) noted that Instagram offers opportunities for learners to interact with native speakers and engage in real-life conversations, providing exposure to informal language use that might not be available in traditional learning environments. This authentic exposure helps students improve not only their language skills but also their ability to communicate effectively in everyday situations. According to Rachmawati & Syakur (2023), Instagram allows

learners to emulate natural speech patterns and rhythm found in real-world content, enhancing their fluency and spontaneity.

2.6 Peer Interaction and Collaborative Learning

Instagram fosters collaboration and peer interaction, which are essential components of language learning. By participating in discussions, commenting on posts, and engaging in shared projects, students can enhance their speaking skills through peer-to-peer interactions. These collaborative efforts support the development of speaking skills by encouraging students to express their thoughts clearly, listen actively, and respond appropriately. A recent study by Fitriyani & Hidayati (2022) supports this, noting that Instagram-based group tasks stimulate active peer participation and speaking engagement. Studies have shown that collaborative learning environments, such as those provided by Instagram, promote active participation and reinforce language learning through social interaction (Zein, 2019). Additionally, the opportunity to receive and provide feedback in real-time helps students refine their speaking abilities and encourages a sense of community within the learning process.

3. The Role of Social Reinforcement and Motivation

A key finding from the study is the role of social reinforcement in motivating students to practice their speaking skills. Interactions in the form of comments and responses from peers, followers, or content creators provide positive reinforcement, which is crucial for sustained engagement in language learning. This type of social interaction aligns with social learning theory, which emphasizes the role of peer feedback in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors in the learning process.

The social aspect of Instagram also allows students to collaborate, exchange ideas, and learn from one another. As Zein (2019) noted, social media platforms like Instagram create collaborative learning environments that support the development of speaking skills. Students can participate in group activities, engage in discussions, and even create joint projects, which enhances their speaking competence and builds their confidence in a more relaxed setting. The

platform's visual-based environment allows students to connect vocabulary and concepts to real-world contexts, making the learning experience more relevant and impactful.

4. Challenges Faced by Students in Using Instagram for Language Learning

Despite the positive feedback, several challenges were identified by students in using Instagram for language learning. The most prominent issue is the potential for distractions. Instagram is primarily designed as an entertainment platform, and students often find themselves sidetracked by non-educational content, such as advertisements, personal posts, and entertainment videos. As highlighted by Sari & Wahyudin (2019), these distractions can hinder students' focus and interfere with their learning objectives.

Another challenge is the unregulated quality of content available on Instagram. While many accounts offer high-quality educational resources, others may provide inaccurate or misleading information. As emphasized by Hussain (2018), the unstructured nature of Instagram can lead to fragmented learning, where students may be exposed to inconsistent or unreliable language input. This variability in content quality can undermine the effectiveness of Instagram as a learning tool, as students might not always encounter the correct language usage or practice material.

Additionally, some students raised concerns about the lack of formal guidance and structured learning paths on Instagram. While the platform allows for self-directed learning, the absence of a clear curriculum or learning objectives can lead to scattered learning experiences. According to *Smith Mcconnel et al., (2018)* self-directed learning is highly effective when students are motivated and take ownership of their learning process. However, without proper direction or support, students might struggle to make the most of Instagram's educational potential.

5. Strategies for Overcoming Challenges

To address these challenges, educators can play a crucial role in guiding students on how to use Instagram effectively for language learning. By curating reliable educational content and integrating Instagram-based activities into the formal

curriculum, educators can ensure that students engage with the platform purposefully. Providing clear learning objectives and guidelines for creating content can help students stay focused and maintain academic rigor.

Incorporating Instagram into collaborative activities, such as group discussions or peer feedback sessions, can further enhance the learning experience. These activities encourage students to engage with each other and promote active learning. Educators can also encourage students to use Instagram to reflect on their language learning progress, setting goals and tracking improvements over time. This structured approach can mitigate the distractions inherent in social media and help students stay aligned with their educational goals.

Moreover, educators can guide students on how to filter and assess content quality, ensuring that they engage with reliable language resources. By leveraging Instagram's interactive features, such as comments and live sessions, educators can create a dynamic learning environment that fosters continuous improvement in students' speaking skills.

6. Instagram and Self-Directed Learning

The use of Instagram as a tool for enhancing speaking skills also aligns with the principles of self-directed learning, where students take responsibility for their own learning process. As noted by (Martínez-Domingo et al., 2025) students' perceptions play a significant role in their willingness to engage in the learning process. Instagram empowers students to choose what, when, and how they learn, providing them with the autonomy to select language content that aligns with their interests and goals. Wahyuni (2018) emphasized that learners using Instagram often develop stronger metacognitive awareness, making them more self-regulated and intentional in their learning practices.

Instagram's accessibility, coupled with its user-friendly interface, makes it an ideal platform for fostering self-directed learning in language education. As emphasized by Syahida et al., (2022) Students who engage in self-directed learning are often more motivated and responsible for their learning outcomes. By encouraging students to take initiative and

engage with authentic English language content, Instagram helps cultivate intrinsic motivation and continuous practice, essential components of successful language acquisition.

Here is a summary of the findings related to the use of Instagram in self-directed learning, presented in a table format:

Key Finding	Description	Implications for Self-Directed Learning
Flexibility of Instagram	Instagram allows learners to access content at any time, giving them control over their learning schedule.	Learners can adapt their learning according to their individual schedules, promoting autonomous learning.
Interactive and Engaging Content	Instagram's visual and multimedia features (photos, videos, stories) engage learners and provide dynamic learning experiences.	Learners are more likely to stay engaged with content that is interactive, which enhances retention and learning.
Sense of Community and Collaboration	Learners can interact with peers, instructors, and experts globally through comments, likes, and direct messaging.	Encourages collaborative learning, providing social support and feedback, which can boost motivation.
Curation and Personalization	Users can curate content by following accounts, saving posts, and	Learners can create personalized learning

	creating collections, tailoring learning content to their specific goals.	pathways, enhancing relevance and engagement with the content.
Potential for Distraction	Instagram's social nature may lead to distractions from non-educational content, reducing focus.	Learners must manage their time effectively to ensure they remain focused on educational goals.
Quality of Educational Content	Instagram hosts a variety of user-generated content, which may vary in quality, accuracy, and reliability.	Critical thinking and content evaluation skills are essential for learners to identify credible sources.
Limited Instructor Involvement	The platform does not provide direct interaction with instructors, which may limit personalized feedback.	Learners may need to seek additional resources or feedback through other channels, such as study groups or mentors.
Encouragement of Active Learning	Instagram encourages learners to engage actively by creating, sharing, and reflecting on their own content, fostering ownership of their learning.	Active participation in content creation helps learners internalize knowledge and develop skills.

Global Learning Opportunities	Instagram connects learners with a diverse community of global learners, exposing them to different accents, perspectives, and cultural contexts.	Learners can benefit from exposure to diverse learning environments, broadening their understanding of the subject.
Visual Learning Style Suitability	Instagram's strong focus on visual content is highly beneficial for visual learners.	Visual learners may find Instagram more effective, though other learning styles might need complementary resources.

Table 1. table summarizes the main findings on Instagram’s use for self-directed learning, highlighting its strengths, challenges, and implications for learners.

CONCLUSION
Conclusion

Instagram has become a prominent social media platform known for its visual-centric and interactive nature, and it has increasingly found applications beyond entertainment and social interaction, particularly in the context of self-directed learning (SDL). Self-directed learning refers to a process where individuals take control of their own learning journey, setting their own goals, identifying resources, and evaluating their progress. In an era where technology plays a central role in education, platforms like Instagram offer new possibilities for students to engage with learning materials, expand their knowledge, and develop skills outside of traditional educational settings.

Instagram’s user-friendly interface, combined with its multimedia features, makes it a valuable tool for self-directed

learners. The platform's ability to share photos, videos, and stories enables users to learn in an interactive, personalized, and engaging manner. Students can access content created by experts, educators, and peers, participate in discussions, and share their own learning experiences. This level of engagement allows learners to customize their educational experiences and pursue topics of interest that may not be readily available through conventional educational channels.

One of the defining characteristics of Instagram as a tool for self-directed learning is its flexibility. Instagram is available to anyone with an internet connection and can be accessed at any time, making it ideal for learners who prefer to take charge of their own learning schedules. Unlike traditional education systems, which may have fixed class times and curricula, Instagram provides learners with the autonomy to engage with content whenever and wherever they wish. This flexibility is crucial for individuals who may be balancing education with other responsibilities or for those who prefer to learn at their own pace.

Instagram also fosters a sense of community, which is an essential element of self-directed learning. The platform encourages users to interact with each other by liking, commenting, and sharing content, which allows learners to communicate with a broader audience of individuals with similar interests. Learners can connect with peers, instructors, or professionals in the field they are interested in, creating opportunities for collaboration, feedback, and shared learning experiences. This sense of belonging to a learning community enhances motivation and accountability, as learners are more likely to remain engaged with the content when they feel connected to others.

The ability to curate content is another significant advantage of Instagram as a tool for self-directed learning. Instagram's visual nature encourages learners to create, share, and reflect on content that resonates with them. Learners can follow accounts related to specific topics, save posts for future

reference, and organize content according to their learning goals. By engaging with and sharing educational content, learners actively construct their own learning pathways, allowing them to engage with material in a way that suits their learning style. This active participation aligns with the principles of SDL, where learners are responsible for managing and directing their own educational experiences.

Instagram's combination of visual and social features makes it an ideal platform for learners who are interested in more dynamic, multimedia-based learning. For example, learners can access instructional videos, participate in online discussions, and explore tutorials or step-by-step guides that facilitate a deeper understanding of specific topics. Moreover, the accessibility of diverse content on Instagram allows learners to explore a wide range of subjects and discover new interests, providing opportunities for lifelong learning.

However, the use of Instagram for self-directed learning is not without challenges. One of the primary concerns is the potential for distraction. Instagram is primarily a social media platform designed for entertainment, and its engaging nature can sometimes lead learners to spend excessive time on non-educational content, such as scrolling through unrelated posts or interacting with advertisements. For self-directed learners, the key challenge is managing their time effectively and using Instagram purposefully to avoid the temptation of distraction.

Another issue is the quality and reliability of the educational content available on Instagram. While the platform offers vast amounts of user-generated content, not all of it is accurate, credible, or well-curated. Self-directed learners must develop critical thinking skills to evaluate the quality of the resources they engage with on Instagram. This is especially important for learners who are using Instagram as a primary resource for acquiring knowledge. Educators and experts in the field must also be cautious in providing accurate and well-researched content, as misinformation could easily spread on such an open platform.

Furthermore, while Instagram promotes collaboration and community, the interactions on the platform are often superficial. Unlike traditional learning environments where students have direct interactions with instructors, Instagram may not provide the depth of personalized feedback necessary for in-depth learning. The lack of direct instructor involvement can hinder learners' ability to clarify doubts or receive tailored guidance. To overcome this limitation, self-directed learners may need to seek out additional resources or find ways to supplement their Instagram-based learning with more structured educational opportunities.

In addition to these challenges, Instagram's emphasis on visual content may not suit all learning styles. While visual learners may find the platform highly beneficial, those who learn better through written text, auditory means, or hands-on experiences may find Instagram less effective. Therefore, it is essential for learners to incorporate a variety of resources and methods into their self-directed learning journeys to ensure a well-rounded educational experience.

Recommendations

1. Setting Clear Learning Goals and Objectives

One of the most effective ways to ensure that Instagram is used purposefully for self-directed learning is to set clear learning goals and objectives. Before engaging with content on Instagram, learners should define what they hope to achieve, whether it is acquiring knowledge in a particular subject, developing a new skill, or gaining insights into a specific industry. Having clear goals helps learners remain focused and motivated, reducing the risk of distraction. For instance, a learner interested in digital marketing could follow accounts that provide tutorials, case studies, and tips related to the field, ensuring that all content they engage with is aligned with their learning objectives.

2. Curating High-Quality Educational Content

Self-directed learners should focus on curating high-

quality educational content to ensure that they are receiving accurate and reliable information. Rismaya & Hafsari (2022) suggested that structured content curation through Instagram features like highlights and saved collections helps learners organize learning materials efficiently in blended learning contexts. Instagram offers a vast range of educational accounts, from professionals in the field to academic institutions, and learners should prioritize following accounts that are reputable, well-curated, and aligned with their learning objectives. To aid in the selection process, learners can also use Instagram's features, such as saving posts or creating collections, to organize content for future reference. This approach helps to create a more structured and purposeful learning environment within the platform.

3. Minimizing Distractions

To make the most of Instagram for self-directed learning, learners need to develop strategies for minimizing distractions. One way to achieve this is by setting specific time limits for using Instagram for educational purposes. Learners can allocate a set amount of time each day or week to engage with learning content on Instagram, ensuring that they are not spending excessive time on non-educational posts. Furthermore, learners should consider using tools like "Do Not Disturb" or app blockers to prevent distractions from notifications or unrelated content during their study time. Setting clear boundaries for Instagram use helps to maintain focus and productivity.

4. Participating in Interactive Learning Communities

One of the most valuable aspects of Instagram for self-directed learning is its ability to foster a sense of community and interaction. Learners should take advantage of this by participating in discussions, commenting on posts, and sharing their own experiences with others. By engaging with peers, instructors, and professionals in the field, learners can enhance their understanding of the material and receive valuable feedback on their progress. Joining Instagram groups, hashtags,

or challenges related to specific topics can further increase opportunities for collaborative learning and engagement.

5. Complementing Instagram with Other Learning Resources

While Instagram can be an excellent tool for self-directed learning, it should not be relied on exclusively. Learners should aim to complement their Instagram-based learning with other educational resources, such as online courses, books, academic journals, or in-person learning experiences. This well-rounded approach ensures that learners are exposed to different perspectives, teaching methods, and learning styles, which can help to deepen their understanding of the subject matter.

6. Developing Critical Thinking and Information Evaluation Skills

Since Instagram is an open platform where anyone can share content, it is essential for learners to develop critical thinking and information evaluation skills. Learners must be able to distinguish between credible and unreliable sources, assess the quality of the content, and verify the information they encounter. Instructors and self-directed learners alike should focus on fostering these skills, as they are essential for navigating the vast array of educational content available on social media platforms.

7. Establishing Feedback Mechanisms

To overcome the limitations of Instagram's lack of personalized feedback, self-directed learners should seek out ways to establish feedback mechanisms. This could include joining study groups, participating in online forums, or reaching out to experts in the field for advice and guidance. While Instagram offers valuable opportunities for learning, the absence of structured, one-on-one feedback can limit its effectiveness in fostering deeper learning. Therefore, integrating other forms of support, such as mentoring or peer review, is crucial for maximizing the educational value of Instagram.

Final Thoughts

Instagram presents a promising opportunity for self-directed learners to engage with educational content, interact with peers and experts, and take control of their own learning journeys. Its visual and interactive features, combined with its flexibility and accessibility, make it an ideal platform for learners seeking to develop new skills, explore topics of interest, and engage with a global learning community. However, for Instagram to be an effective tool for self-directed learning, learners must take steps to set clear goals, curate quality content, minimize distractions, and seek feedback. By adopting these strategies, self-directed learners can optimize their use of Instagram and create a meaningful, engaging, and productive learning experience.

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