

THE EFFECT OF USING INSTAGRAM PHOTOGRAPHY MEDIA ON STUDENTS' WRITING ABILITY IN DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the effect of using Instagram Photography Media on students' writing ability in descriptive texts at SMP Negeri 15 Tegal. The study was conducted because many students experienced difficulties in generating ideas, organizing paragraphs, and using appropriate vocabulary when writing descriptive texts. This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test control group. The participants consisted of two eighth-grade classes selected through purposive sampling. Class VIII B served as the experimental group and was taught using Instagram Photography Media, while Class VIII C served as the control group and received conventional instruction. The data were collected through writing tests and analyzed using descriptive statistics and an Independent Samples t-test. The findings revealed that the experimental group achieved better writing performance than the control group after the treatment. The post-test mean score of the experimental group was higher than that of the control group, and the Independent Samples t-test showed a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.000, which was lower than 0.05. These results indicated that the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted, confirming that Instagram Photography Media had a significant positive effect on students' writing ability.

Keywords: Instagram Photography Media; writing ability; descriptive text; quasi-experimental research;.

1 INTRODUCTION

Language is an essential tool for communication, and English has become the dominant international language used in education, science, and global interaction. Consequently, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia from elementary school to university to develop students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (Suwartono, 2024; Prayogo, 2022). Among these four skills, writing is considered the most challenging because it requires learners to generate ideas, organize them coherently, and apply appropriate grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics simultaneously.

Under the Kurikulum Merdeka, descriptive text is one of the fundamental genres taught in junior high school. Students are expected to describe people, places, animals, or objects using clear organization, appropriate vocabulary, and accurate language features. However, classroom observations at SMP Negeri 15 Tegal revealed that many students still experienced difficulties in developing ideas, organizing information, and selecting appropriate vocabulary. As a result, their descriptive texts were often short, repetitive, and lacked sufficient detail. These findings are consistent with previous studies reporting that traditional teacher-centered instruction provides limited opportunities for students to develop meaningful writing skills (Ratnawati et al., 2018; Ji & Chang, 2024).

The rapid development of educational technology has encouraged teachers to integrate digital media into language learning. Among various social media platforms, Instagram has attracted considerable attention because of its visual and interactive features. Through photographs, captions, and comments, Instagram provides authentic learning experiences that encourage students to express ideas in meaningful contexts. Research has shown that Instagram enhances students' writing motivation, creativity, and engagement by allowing them to interact with visual content and receive feedback from others (Handayani et al., 2018; Saleh & Muhayyang, 2021).

Photography, as the primary visual element on Instagram, plays an important role in supporting descriptive writing. Photographs provide concrete visual stimuli that help students observe details, generate ideas, organize descriptions, and expand vocabulary. Santoso and Kartikawati (2021) found that Instagram-based photography activities improved students' ability to organize descriptive texts, while Putri et al. (2024) reported that visual media positively influenced students' participation and language literacy. Despite these findings, previous studies have generally focused on Instagram as a social media

platform rather than specifically examining the effectiveness of Instagram Photography Media in teaching descriptive writing to junior high school students.

Therefore, this study investigates the effect of using Instagram Photography Media on students' writing ability in descriptive texts at SMP Negeri 15 Tegal. It is expected that integrating authentic photographs into writing instruction will provide a more engaging learning environment, improve students' motivation, and significantly enhance their descriptive writing performance.

2 METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test control group design to examine the effect of Instagram Photography Media on students' writing ability in descriptive texts. The design compared the writing achievement of students who received instruction using Instagram Photography Media with those taught through conventional teaching methods.

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 15 Tegal during the 2025/2026 academic year. The population consisted of all eighth-grade students, while the sample was selected using purposive sampling. Two classes were chosen: Class VIII B (31 students) as the experimental group and Class VIII C (31 students) as the control group.

Both groups received the same learning objectives, teaching materials, and assessment criteria. However, the experimental group was taught using Instagram Photography Media, whereas the control group learned through conventional instruction using textbooks and teacher explanations. The study consisted of three stages: (1) administering a pre-test to determine students' initial writing ability, (2) implementing the treatment in the experimental class through Instagram photographs as visual prompts for descriptive writing while the control class received conventional instruction, and (3) conducting a post-test to measure students' writing achievement after the treatment.

The research instrument was a writing test administered in both the pre-test and post-test. Students' descriptive texts were assessed using the Brown and Bailey (2004) analytic scoring rubric, which evaluates five components: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics.

The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics were first used to calculate the mean, minimum score, maximum score, and standard deviation. Before testing the hypothesis, the data were examined using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test and Levene's homogeneity test to ensure that the statistical assumptions were met. Finally, an Independent Samples t-test was performed at a significance level of 0.05 to determine whether there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. The alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted if the significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) was less than 0.05, indicating that the use of Instagram Photography Media had a significant effect on students' descriptive writing ability.

3 RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the study, including descriptive statistics, prerequisite analyses, and hypothesis testing. The results were obtained from the pre-test and post-test scores of both the experimental and control groups after the implementation of Instagram Photography Media.

3.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to describe students' writing achievement before and after the treatment. The scores were analyzed to determine the mean, minimum score, maximum score, and standard deviation of both groups.

Table 3.1 Descriptive Analysis

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretes kelas eksperimen	31	30	70	49.61	8.732
Pretes kelas kontrol	31	34	71	50.16	7.904
Postes kelas eksperimen	31	81	100	90.13	5.078
Postes kelas kontrol	31	68	91	77.39	6.596
Valid N (listwise)	31				

Based on the descriptive statistical analysis, both groups had comparable writing abilities before the treatment, with mean pre-test scores of 49.61 for the experimental class and 50.16 for the control class. After the treatment, both groups showed improvement; however, the experimental class demonstrated substantially greater progress. The post-test mean score of the experimental class increased to 90.13, compared to 77.39 in the control class. Furthermore, the experimental class showed a lower standard deviation ($SD = 5.078$), indicating more consistent writing performance among students. These findings suggest that Instagram Photography Media was more effective than conventional instruction in improving students' descriptive writing ability.

3.2 Normality Test

The normality test was conducted to verify if the data acquired from the sample was distributed normally or otherwise. The data is considered to be normally distributed if the significance was higher than 0.050. The Shapiro-Wilk test formula was used to check for normality in this research because the sample size was 62 students.

Table 3.2 Normality Test

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Group	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Result	1	.146	31	.089	.968	31	.473
	2	.153	31	.061	.936	31	.062
	3	.149	31	.079	.950	31	.151
	4	.134	31	.165	.944	31	.109

The normality of the data was examined using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The results showed that all datasets were normally distributed, as the significance values (0.089, 0.061, 0.079, and 0.165) were greater than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the normality assumption was satisfied, indicating that the data were suitable for further analysis using parametric statistical tests.

3.3 Homogeneity Test

Table 3.3 Test Homogeneity of Variance

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Hasil	Based on Mean	1.893	3	120	.134
	Based on Median	1.690	3	120	.173
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.690	3	98.249	.174
	Based on trimmed mean	1.840	3	120	.144

The homogeneity of variance was assessed using Levene's Test. The analysis produced a significance value of 0.134, which exceeded the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the data met the assumption of homogeneity, indicating that the variances of the experimental and control groups were homogeneous and suitable for further analysis using the Independent Samples t-test.

3.4 T-Test

Table 3.4 T-Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Post	Equal variances assumed	2.836	.097	8.522	60	.000	12.742	1.495	9.751	15.733
	Equal variances not assumed			8.522	56.314	.000	12.742	1.495	9.747	15.737

The Independent Samples t-test revealed a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed = 0.000), which was lower than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted, indicating a significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups. The obtained t-value (8.522) and mean difference (12.742) further confirmed that the use of Instagram Photography Media significantly improved students' descriptive writing ability compared with conventional teaching methods.

4 CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that the use of Instagram Photography Media has a significant positive effect on students' writing ability in descriptive texts at SMP Negeri 15 Tegal. The findings showed that students in the experimental group achieved significantly higher post-test scores than those in the control group. This result was supported by the Independent Samples t-test, which produced a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05), indicating that the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted.

The use of Instagram photographs as visual learning media helped students generate ideas, organize descriptive information, expand vocabulary, and produce more coherent descriptive texts. In addition, the interactive and authentic nature of Instagram increased students' motivation and participation during the writing process.

Therefore, Instagram Photography Media can be considered an effective and innovative instructional medium for teaching descriptive writing in EFL classrooms. Future research is recommended to investigate its implementation in other language skills, text genres, or educational levels with larger samples to further validate its effectiveness.

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