

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses several sections; research background, research questions, research objectives, research significance, conceptual framework, and previous research.

A. Research Background

Reading is understanding the information obtained (George, 2018). Reading ability is one of the essential skills in learning a language. Furthermore, reading is a receptive skill that helps a person absorb and understand detailed information about something (Sonia et al., 2022). Reading is also an essential ability to deepen one's knowledge. By reading, the knowledge gained is not only about reading information but also the context of a text and the purpose of writing the text, or it can also be used as analysis material in developing an idea (Hadi & Putri, 2021).

In the implementation of teaching, both teachers and students encounter their own challenges. Teachers often struggle to find appropriate media or techniques for teaching English reading skills (Aulia et al., 2022). Moreover, it is crucial for teachers to determine effective medium for teaching English reading and to recommend suitable learning media for students. Nunan (2003) also stated that language learning media must be relevant and familiar to students. On the other hand, students face difficulties in understanding English texts they read. Additionally, they struggle to interpret texts, extract new information, and comprehend the context of English texts. In many English textbooks, the texts are often presented in a formal structure that is rarely encountered outside of academic materials (Thomas, 2020). Meanwhile, education has entered the technological era, which is characterized by various forms of social media and digital information platforms, where English serves as the primary medium of communication (Al-Mukhallafi, 2020; Auliya et al., 2021). This development is

closely related to both teaching medium employed by teachers and learning medium used by students.

Social media is frequently used by students as part of their daily consumption. Students can incorporate a social media platform that is relevant to their lives for learning English reading (Pradnyadewi & Kristiani, 2021). One of the most popular social media platforms is Instagram, which offers several features that can be utilized for instructional purposes or independent learning. These features include videos, audio, stories for sharing daily moments, feeds for posting specific moments, as well as communication tools such as direct messages (DMs) and comments (Aforo, 2014).

Furthermore, several public accounts can be utilized as media platform for English learning, one of which is @folkative. The @folkative account currently has 6.4 million followers, consisting of young people aged 24-39 years (Aulia et al., 2022). According to Aulia et al. (2002), there are several reasons why this account can be used as a media platform for English learning. First, the captions on Instagram feeds from @folkative are written in English, making them useful for both teaching and learning purposes. Second, this account provides new and up-to-date information. Third, the content not only discusses issues in Indonesia but also covers global topics. Lastly, this account is verified by Instagram, ensuring its credibility. Therefore, Aulia et al. (2022) stated that utilize the @folkative Instagram account can be an English learning media for students.

Aulia et al. (2022) stated in their article that the information presented by @folkative is not only in Indonesian but also accessible to international audiences. Thus, respondents expressed their strong preference for agreement with the idea that @folkative serves as an effective online media platform, as it helps readers learn English. Based on this statement, @folkative can be regarded as an English-language online information source that discusses social issues both domestically and internationally while providing the latest updates. it is recommended to be a learning media for English reading comprehension, allowing students to stay

informed about current social issues (Wagner, 2021). Moreover, by utilizing @folkative, students perceive the learning media as relevant to their daily lives. Additionally, they can enhance their English reading skills and independently comprehend short texts while simultaneously gaining updated information to expand their knowledge. Therefore, this study will focus on students' perceptions of using the @folkative captions to improve their English reading skills.

Several previous studies are related to this research topic. These prior studies provide valuable insights and information to support the present research. The first study was conducted by Nathania Carissa Dewi, Rudi Hartono, and Suwandi (2022), which focused on enhancing students' motivation and the effectiveness of the Instagram application in improving reading comprehension skills. In this study, the results state that Instagram media is more effective than the use of conventional media to be used as a medium for learning English reading for students. The second study, conducted by Kevin Thomas (2020), examined how Instagram activities could increase students' motivation to improve their reading and writing skills. In this study, the results stated that Instagram media can be used as a supplement to students' textbooks and help motivate students' desire to learn English reading. These results were obtained from several experiments that made Instagram a medium for learning and doing activities in the classroom. Another study by Putri et al. (2021) focused on using the Instagram account @gurukumrd as a medium for English language learning to enhance junior high school students' reading skills. This research states that the Instagram account @gurukumrd can facilitate students in improving their reading skills. This result is stated after conducting research using online qualitative and ethnographic methods. Additionally, a study by Oleksandra Kavalova explored effective strategies for cultivating and promoting a reading culture through Instagram. In general, the aforementioned studies primarily focused on increasing students' motivation to improve their reading skills. However, this study specifically examines students' perceptions of

using captions from the @folkative Instagram account as their learning strategy to enhance reading skills.

Based on the brief discussion of previous studies, this research differs from prior studies in several ways: (a) Previous studies employed a quantitative research design, a mixed-method design, and ethnography design. whereas this study adopts a qualitative design; (b) Previous studies focused on increasing students' motivation, while this research emphasizes students' perceptions, opinions, and statements based on their personal experiences; (c) This study employs a case study design to explore students' perceptions in depth and provide a detailed description of their experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2002); (d) In terms of data collection, this research utilizes interviews and questionnaires.

As discussed above, improving English reading skills is essential. The integration of English reading instruction with social media has become an inevitable choice. Furthermore, several previous studies have demonstrated that the use of social media, particularly Instagram, makes learning more engaging and innovative, leading to an improvement in students' reading skills. Additionally, social media helps students develop their reading abilities as it serves as an accessible source of information that is relevant to their daily lives.

As previously mentioned, this research focuses on "Students' Perspectives on Utilizing @Folkative Instagram Captions as an English Learning Media for Developing Their Reading Skills." This study explores students' perceptions and the challenges they face in using Instagram as an independent learning strategy for improving their reading skills.

B. Research Question

Based on the background that has been explained, the identified problems are organized into research questions below:

1. What are students' perspectives on utilizing @folkative Instagram captions as English learning media for developing their reading skills?

2. What are the challenges faced by students on utilizing @folkative Instagram captions as English learning media for developing their reading skills?

C. Research Purpose

Instagram is one of the social media that is often used as a source of current information by students. English captions are often found, such as the public account @folkative. Students' difficulties in analyzing inferences, understanding English texts and retrieving information will be explored through their perspectives in using the account as a media for learning to read English. Referring to the problems formulated in the research questions, the objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To explore students' perceptions on utilizing @folkative Instagram captions as English learning media for developing their reading skills.
2. To find out the challenges faced by students on utilizing @folkative Instagram captions as English learning media for developing their reading skills.

D. Research Significance

This research offers practical implications for educators, students, and social media users seeking innovative methods to enhance English reading skills. The findings can help instructors design engaging learning experiences that leverage students' familiarity with digital platforms. Furthermore, it encourages students to explore unconventional resources for language acquisition, fostering a more interactive and self-directed learning environment.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the growing body of research on technology-enhanced language learning, particularly in the context of social media. Analyzing students' perceptions sheds light on the relationship between informal learning tools and formal education practices. Moreover, it provides a foundation for future research to explore the pedagogical potential of integrating social media into language education.

E. Research Scope

This research focuses on students' perspectives on utilizing @folkative Instagram captions as an English learning media for developing their reading skills. The research subjects are active students in higher education institutions who have been using the Instagram application, follow the @folkative account, and usually read information from @folkative captions in their lives. The data collected was qualitative through in-depth interviews and close-ended questionnaires. In addition, the study was limited to a higher education context in a particular environment with access to technology, so the results may not be generalizable to student populations in different contexts

F. Conceptual Framework

Reading skills are the ability to decode, understand, and evaluate written text (Sonia et al., 2022). It is an essential aspect of language learning that allows students to acquire new knowledge and understand new information. As stated by Pradnyadewi and Kristiani (2021), reading plays an important role in fostering critical thinking and improving overall language skills. However, reading requires active cognitive engagement, including identifying main ideas, making inferences, and connecting new information with prior knowledge (Pradnyadewi & Kristiani, 2021). To fulfill this capability, effective teaching strategies and engaging learning materials tailored to students' needs are required (Putri & Hadi, 2021).

Learning media is important in improving students' reading skills by making the learning process engaging and interactive. Modern educational practices have shifted towards integrating technology-based media, providing diverse and dynamic learning tools. According to Puspitarini and Hanif (2019), well-designed learning media can reduce boredom, maintain motivation, and clarify complex concepts, making it easier for students to understand reading material.

Siemens (2008) suggests that modern learning is done by using network connection (Kropf, 2013). Based on today's situation, internet-based technology

can be found to help learners study by themselves (Siemens, 2005). Connectivity theory can be one of the solutions in developing digital media platform as English learning media (Kropf, 2013). Individual students can easily access the online platform as English learning media. According to Kropf (2013), students today are independent learners who have the opportunity to explore and share their knowledge. Therefore, digital media can be one of the ways students learn and improve their English reading skills.

Instagram is a widely used social media platform and an innovative media. Its multimedia features allow the presentation of text, images, and videos in an interactive format. Research shows that using Instagram as a learning tool can bridge the gap between formal education and students' digital habits, thus promoting a more engaging learning experience (Mansor & Rahim, 2017; Yusuf & Jazilah, 2020).

Instagram captions are concise textual elements that accompany posts that can stimulate students' reading comprehension. Captions provide real-world and contextually relevant content that encourages active engagement with language. Gunantar and Transinata (2019) highlighted that Instagram captions expose students to various vocabulary and writing styles, helping them familiarize themselves with authentic language use. Students can read captions, reflect on their meaning, and engage in discussions through comments. This process encourages critical thinking and collaborative learning, which are essential components of effective reading instruction. Integrating captions into reading tasks aligns with students' interests, making learning more comprehensible and enjoyable (Putri & Hadi, 2021).

Using Instagram for English language learning involves strategic implementation, such as providing text-based reading assignments or encouraging interaction through comments. Yusuf and Jazilah (2020) argue that Instagram offers a platform where students can explore topics of interest, engage in peer discussions, and receive feedback, thus fostering a sense of community and

collaboration in learning. It also supports self-regulated learning, as students can independently select content that suits their interests. Instagram's accessibility and popularity among students make it an effective tool for blending informal learning experiences with formal educational objectives.

One of the Instagram accounts that can be used as a medium for learning to read English is the @folkative account. Wagner (2021) stated that the @folkative account can be used as a learning medium to improve comprehensive reading skills while allowing students to keep up to date with the latest information. The @folkative account provides a variety of news categories, such as culture, arts, politics, health, sports, and so on (Astriani & Nanda, 2022). For this reason, @folkative is well-known as an online media platform that shares a wide range of up-to-date information. Instagram captions of @folkative also include a form of text that is contextual and relates to the real world of students (Gunantar & Transinata, 2019). Therefore, @folkative Instagram captions are suitable for student learning media.

Many students find the platform interactive and relevant to their daily lives, which increases their motivation to engage in reading activities. Research by Fitriana et al. (2021) revealed that students appreciated learning in a relaxed and unpressured environment while improving their reading skills through Instagram-based tasks. These insights highlight Instagram's potential to improve reading skills and foster positive attitudes toward learning English (Pradnyadewi & Kristiani, 2021; Yusuf & Jazilah, 2020).

G. Previous Study

Several studies have proven that Instagram apps have a role in improving students' English reading skills. Firstly, the study entitled "The Effectiveness of Instagram for Enhancing Students Reading Comprehension to Students with High and Low Motivation (A Case Study at the 9th Grade of SMPK Santo Albertus Sampit, Central Kalimantan in the Academic Year of 2022/2023) written by

Nathania Carissa Dewi, Rudi Hartono, Suwandi, focused on the effectiveness of using Instagram in improving reading comprehension skills for junior high school students. This research explores the phenomenon of students who have difficulty in understanding a text. Many students have good reading skills but cannot infer, understand, and interpret the content contained in the text. Therefore, this study experimented with teaching strategies using Instagram with 51 students of SMPK Santo Albertus Sampit, Central Kalimantan, in the academic year of 2022/2023. This research uses quantitative methods with a quasi-experimental design in which the participants are divided into two groups: the experimental and control classes. Moreover, this research produces data analysis that shows that Instagram positively impacts the experimental class compared to the control class. As a result, students are more motivated to learn by using Instagram social media because of its various features that are interesting and related to their lives.

Secondly, the research conducted in Nagoya, Japan, by Kevin Thomas with the title 'Reading and Writing Activities on Instagram' focuses on language teaching using Instagram features as reading and writing activities. Advancing on the problems in Japan regarding course books that only refer to spoken and written communication makes students less motivated in reading and writing activities. In addition, the coursebook reading and writing are not interesting and engaging for students. Therefore, this study recommends Instagram as an authentic social media for reading and writing activities. The results of this study stated that there was no improvement in memorizing new vocabulary, but there was an improvement in students' motivation to learn reading and writing. This result refers to the research objective of investigating whether using Instagram as a platform for reading and writing activities can demonstrably improve students' language ability. The secondary objective was to discover whether the students believe Instagram to be a valuable and motivating language tool. This study used a quantitative method to compare vocabulary improvement, grammatical and lexical accuracy, and students' motivation and perception by using Instagram and exercise paper as

learning activities. In addition, this study sought to determine the effectiveness of using Instagram in English classes. Therefore, the results mentioned have referred to the research objectives and problems.

In addition, Putri et al. (2021) examined the use of the @gurukumrd Instagram account to improve students' reading skills. The study showed that features such as stories, comments, and opinions on Instagram can help students understand the text's main idea and new vocabulary. Based on the problems described in this study, the researcher found that many students struggle to read and understand English texts. The researcher initially interviewed the teacher to identify the problem and recommend Instagram as a problem-solving solution. Students' weakness in understanding a text occurs because they lack independent practice at home. They also lack the motivation to hone their English reading skills, because the teaching method is monotonous and uninteresting, making students are not eager to hone their English reading skills. Therefore, students need to learn indirectly through frequently used internet platforms like Instagram to familiarize them with reading English texts. This study was conducted in grade 9 of various Yapia Pondok Aren Junior High School classes, consisting of 37 students. Using ethnographic methods, this study found that social media can create a fun and engaging learning experience. Students are more motivated to read. However, this study focuses on vocabulary development and text comprehension in general without highlighting specific learning strategies or students' views on the learning process.

In another study, Kavalova (2023) examined the role of Instagram in enhancing adolescent reading culture. This research focused on increasing adolescents' motivation for reading culture through social media. The utilization of information media serves as a solution to improving reading culture among adolescents, as it aligns with their daily lives. This study employed document analysis as its research method by monitoring the hashtag 'Bookstagram,' an Instagram community that promotes literacy by providing reading

recommendations. The findings of this study indicate that Bookstagram can enhance adolescents' reading interest through engaging book visualizations and community interactions.

Furthermore, Tirtayasa et al. (2022) also focused their research on increasing interest in reading English through Instagram. A quantitative research design was employed to determine the study's outcomes. A total of 20 sixth-semester students at KH Saifuddin Zuhri State Islamic University Purwokerto participated in the study by responding to a survey distributed via Google Forms. The results revealed that most students were more motivated to read English through Instagram due to the diverse information presented in a unique, engaging, and easy-to-understand manner.

Moreover, Staalduine (2020) also centered his research on enhancing teenagers' interest in reading. This study utilized Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter as social media platforms to improve reading habits. A mixed-method approach was implemented, incorporating surveys for adolescents aged 11–14 years as well as reading experiments using Twitter. The results indicate that interest in digital reading remains low; however, Instagram and TikTok were found to be more effective in fostering reading interest compared to Twitter.

Apart from that, this research differs from prior studies in several ways: (a) Previous studies employed a quantitative research design, a mixed-method design, and ethnography design. whereas this study adopts a qualitative design; (b) Previous studies focused on increasing students' motivation, while this research emphasizes students' perceptions, opinions, and statements based on their personal experiences; (c) This study employs a case study design to explore students' perceptions in depth and provide a detailed description of their experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2002); (d) In terms of data collection, this research utilizes interviews and questionnaires.