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STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF SITUATED AND TRANSFORMED PRACTICES IN EFL VOCABULARY LEARNING ON INSTAGRAM

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ABSTRACT

Although Instagram offers several multimodal features that aid vocabulary learning, the presence of entertainment content and the lack of explanations for certain words can still affect how useful the platform is used as a learning tool. This study aims to explore EFL students' perspectives on the use of Instagram in English vocabulary learning and how this platform supports both situated and transformed practices. The participants in this study consisted of 45 students in the English Language Teaching Department at Islamic State University in Cirebon. The method used in this study was a quantitative approach using an online questionnaire to assess students' views on the use of Instagram across aspects of multimodality, technology in language learning, knowledge processes, and learning outcomes. The results of this study indicate that students generally responded positively to the use of Instagram as a tool for learning vocabulary. The findings also suggest that Instagram is perceived as capable of supporting vocabulary learning through the presentation of multimodal content, ease of access, and a learning experience aligned with the daily digital activities undertaken by students. In addition, Instagram is considered capable of supporting both situated and transformed practices by facilitating the understanding and application of vocabulary in various contexts, including education and social communication. Therefore, this study suggests that Instagram has the potential to serve as a supportive medium in English vocabulary learning, although it still requires appropriate pedagogical guidance to ensure its use provides maximum benefit to students' learning processes.

Keywords: *Instagram, vocabulary learning, Situated and Transformed practices*

INTRODUCTION

Learning vocabulary is a way to understand and master words in a language. This process is not only about understanding the meaning of a word, but also an important part of mastering a language. Alqahtani and Khan (in Arumugam et al.,

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2020) stated that knowledge of vocabulary is very important for students who are learning a second language, because a lack of vocabulary can hinder their ability to communicate effectively. Vocabulary helps students understand texts, keep up with conversations, and express their ideas more clearly (Kulsum et al., 2025). Without adequate vocabulary mastery, EFL students will have difficulty with the four essential language skills: speaking, reading, listening, and writing.

As digital technology continues to evolve, the process of learning languages is no longer limited to formal classrooms; students can now learn English through various digital platforms. In this case, social media has become one of the platforms that students frequently use in their daily lives. Through social media, students are often exposed to various English vocabulary and expressions in their daily lives (Zainal & Rahmat, 2020). Among the various social media platforms, Instagram is one of the most popular among the youth. In addition, Instagram is one of the fastest-growing platforms in terms of user numbers and popularity (Al Fadda, 2020).

Students often use Instagram as a way to improve their English skills. On this platform, students can find various content that supports vocabulary learning, such as well-designed videos, pronunciation guides, and information about commonly used slang terms (Fauziah et al., 2023). Instagram also allows users to share content such as captions, hashtags, and comments, which generally use informal language. Singh et al. (2021) explain that activities on Instagram include taking photos, writing captions, commenting, and sharing videos. These activities encourage students to participate and communicate more actively. Through these interactions, students can discover new vocabulary in more relevant contexts, thereby helping to improve their understanding of these words.

Students also view the use of Instagram in vocabulary learning as a key element of the learning experience that is directly linked to daily life. In this context, Instagram serves not only as a medium for delivering content but also as a connected learning space, one that is embedded in the social and cultural practices of the social media platform. Various studies indicate that students view Instagram as a useful, enjoyable, and practical tool for expanding their vocabulary (Arun et al., 2025; Garini, 2025; Gonulal, 2019; Syafi & Ramadhani, 2024). Instagram's distinctive feature of offering multimodal content allows vocabulary to be learned in real-life contexts, while interactive features such as comment sections and direct messages support language use in social interactions. Thus, vocabulary learning using Instagram reflects learning practices that are integrated into students' daily digital activities.

Learning in a digital environment can be understood through a multiliteracy approach, in which literacy is considered a process of meaning-making that occurs not only through text, but also through speech, visuals, audio, and digital media



related to social and cultural contexts (Fadila et al., 2021; Nabhan & Hidayat, 2018; Hong & Hua, 2020). This concept comes from the New London Group (1996), which emphasizes the importance of literacy in an increasingly diverse world with many forms of media. In this approach, students are considered both readers and text writers (Kulju et al., 2018). Within multiliteracies, there are four main concepts, two of which are situated practice, which is based on students' real experiences, and transformed practice, which is the stage when students apply and develop knowledge creatively in new contexts (Misa, 2023; Cao & Yao, 2018; Ilmi et al., 2020). This approach shows that vocabulary learning is not only about understanding the meaning of words, but also about how students can use those words in various real-life situations.

Digital technology developments have led to the widespread use of social media as a tool for language learning. Instagram, one of the most widely used platforms, offers a diverse and flexible learning environment, making it easier for users to experience the language in a variety of real-life contexts. In the context of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), Instagram serves not only as a communication tool but also as a learning platform that can boost student engagement and motivation (Lailiyah & Setyaningsih, 2020; Nasution, 2023). Several studies have shown that social media can support EFL learning. Ismail & Shafie (2019) found that students in Malaysia learn informally through various activities such as saving quotes in English, watching videos, and reading news. In Indonesia, Lailiyah & Setyaningsih (2020) also found that Instagram can be used effectively to practice speaking skills and enrich vocabulary more interactively. In terms of motivation, Ebadi et al. (2024) found that engagement with learning on Instagram is positively related to motivation to learn a second language, particularly through cognitive engagement. While Abdullah et al. (2022) highlighted that each platform has its own strengths, for example, Twitter for enriching vocabulary. It shows that social media is not only a medium of entertainment but can also support the learning process.

Several research studies have shown that integrating Instagram into the learning process has a positive effect on vocabulary learning. Almohesh & Altamimi (2024) found that using Instagram feeds in EFL classrooms can improve vocabulary scores, students' engagement, and informal digital learning, while also reducing technological stress compared to traditional methods. Qisti (2020) also found that combining word map strategies with Instagram resulted in a more significant increase in vocabulary compared to not using Instagram. Additionally, the use of video content on Instagram has proven effective for gradually improving vocabulary mastery (Tuahman Sipayung, 2021; Evafaliyanti & Usmawita, 2019). These findings indicate that Instagram has the potential to be a learning tool that not only provides language input but also supports the vocabulary learning process more interactively and contextually.



Vocabulary mastery is a crucial element in language learning, and various studies show that social media platforms can help in its improvement. Singh et al. (2021) in the InstaWRITE program found that using Instagram to write image captions can increase the enthusiasm and vocabulary mastery of ESL students in Malaysia. Similarly, Arun et al. (2025) found that secondary school students in Indonesia had a positive attitude toward using Instagram for vocabulary learning, particularly because visual content supports understanding and retention of new words. Furthermore, a literature review by Alharthi et al. (2020) shows that social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter can increase engagement, motivation, and vocabulary mastery for English learners. Moreover, students not only acquire vocabulary but also reconstruct knowledge through various activities, such as writing captions, creating content, and applying vocabulary in communication (Baruti & Subekti, 2023; Wardana et al., 2025; Hasbi & Cahyaningsih, 2024; La'biran et al., 2024). Additionally, activities such as saving content, noting down vocabulary, and applying new words in different contexts show the process of language transfer and adaptation (Aslan & Sirojtdinovna, 2025; Almohesh & Altamimi, 2024; Pratama & Dari, 2025). Overall, this evidence shows that social media has great potential as a tool for vocabulary learning because it can present language in a visual, interactive, and engaging way for students.

The idea of literacy in language learning is changing because of advances in digital technology. Nabhan & Hidayat (2018) found that students in Indonesia tend to use digital texts more often than printed texts, even though classroom learning still relies heavily on print-based literacy. This shows that today's reading habits increasingly combine printed texts with various other types of texts that use different media. Other studies also point to the potential for using tech in language learning. Huertas-Abril (2021) found that the interactive video platform Flipgrid can help develop new literacy skills, speaking abilities, and positive attitudes toward language learning. Cao & Yao (2018) also found that multiliteracy methods can improve concept understanding, critical thinking, and academic writing skills in English language students. These results suggest that the multiliteracy approach is capable of linking theoretical learning with actual practice.

Despite several studies showing that social media, including Instagram, can support English language learning and improve students' vocabulary, there is still little research examining the use of Instagram from a multiliteracy pedagogy perspective. In particular, there is still limited research discussing the role of this platform in supporting situational and transformed practices in language learning. Therefore, this study aims to explore how EFL students perceive the use of Instagram in English vocabulary learning and how this platform supports situated and transformed practices.



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Multiliteracies in Language Learning

The concept of multiliteracy emerged in response to advances in digital technology that have transformed the way people interact with language and meaning. This is in line with Fadila et al. (2021), who argue that the demands for change within new digital communities may influence the emergence of multiliteracy. The New London Group (in Ghimire & Pandeya, 2020) emphasises that multiliteracies pedagogy embraces and encourages diverse perspectives and linguistic, cultural, communicative, and technological resources used to help students become better prepared to face a rapidly evolving global world. Furthermore, Cope and Kalantzis (in Papadopoulos & Bisiri, 2024) state that the multiliteracies pedagogy focuses on the ability to view the process of meaning-making as a form of design or as an active and dynamic engagement with the social world. Thus, multiliteracy can be defined as an expansion of traditional literacy that not only focuses on reading and writing skills, but also involves various forms of multimodal communication, such as visual, audio, gestural, and digital, as well as cultural and linguistic diversity, to understand meaning. Therefore, a multiliteracies approach is essential for understanding the language learning process in the digital era, including through social media platforms such as Instagram.

Moreover, Kalantzis & Cope (2025) state that there are four elements in multiliteracies pedagogy: experiencing (situated practice), conceptualizing (overt instruction), analysing (critical framing), and applying (transformed practice). These four elements show that students do not merely acquire information but also process, analyse, and apply it in various situations. In language learning in this digital age, the process of experiencing is crucial because students interact directly with various forms of language use through a variety of content. This process itself is the initial stage of learning, beginning when students draw on their existing experiences while being exposed to new ones (Fadila et al., 2021). These experiences are linked to the concept of Situated Practice, which emphasises problem-solving through context and serves as an initial stage for students to gain hands-on experience. Language and context must be interconnected so that learning activities are designed based on communication needs that align with real-life situations (Liu, 2021). Furthermore, the application process or transformed practices process is also important because in this process, students not only acquire knowledge but are also able to adapt and use language in different contexts (Liu, 2021; Özyer & Özcan, 2020).

METHOD

Research Design

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This study used a quantitative, descriptive survey design without experimentation. The design aimed to describe how students view the use of Instagram in learning English vocabulary. According to Creswell & Guetterman (2018), surveys are used to collect quantitative information regarding the attitudes, views, or tendencies of a population through data collection from a specific sample group. Non-experimental quantitative research is also frequently used in EFL studies that incorporate technology and social media because it allows researchers to identify respondents' perceptions and experiences without altering existing variables (Asmara, 2021). In this study, information was collected via an online questionnaire designed to determine students' views on multimodality, technology in language learning, the knowledge process, and learning outcomes in the context of vocabulary learning via Instagram.

Sample and Setting

The participants of this study consisted of 45 students in the English Language Teaching Department at Islamic State in Cirebon who actively use Instagram and have been exposed to English-language content on that social media platform. The method used in this study was convenience sampling, in which participants were selected based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study. This method is considered appropriate for use in survey research involving respondents who are easily accessible to the researcher (Creswell & Guetterman, 2018). Convenience sampling is also frequently used in EFL research related to social media and technology for language learning (Lai et al., 2022; Hidayat et al., 2022). The questionnaire was distributed online via Google Forms to students through communication groups and social media platforms. The use of online questionnaires is considered an efficient method for obtaining responses from participants quickly and easily in research related to learning technologies and social media (Gonulal, 2019).

Instruments

The instrument used for this study was an online questionnaire created using Google Forms. Online questionnaires are considered an efficient way to collect information from a large number of respondents more quickly; they are easy to distribute and reduce the likelihood of errors in the data collection process (Salama et al., 2020). The questionnaire in this study consists of two main sections. The first section contains information regarding the respondents' profiles. The second section comprises four subsections that assess students' views on learning English vocabulary through Instagram. The first subsection examines multimodality in language learning with five different statements (items 1- 5). The second subsection focuses on technology in language learning (items 6-10). The third subsection examines knowledge processes in language learning with five statements focusing on the elements of situated and transformed practices (items 11-15). Meanwhile,



the final subsection discusses Learning Outcomes (items 16-20). Respondents were asked to respond to each statement using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. This scale aims to assess the extent of respondents' support for each statement in the questionnaire. Before distribution, the questionnaire will be reviewed to ensure the language used is clear and the content aligns with the research objectives.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Before collecting data, the researcher thoroughly reviewed all questionnaire items to ensure they aligned with the research objectives and were clearly understandable to the respondents. Afterward, the researcher shared a Google Form link with ELTD students via groups and social media. In the introductory section of the questionnaire, the researcher explained the research objectives and emphasised that all respondents' answers would be kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes. The data collected from the participants were analysed using Microsoft Excel. First, the data from Google Forms was downloaded in CSV format and imported into Excel. The researcher then coded the data by assigning numerical values to each Likert scale response. After that, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to calculate the frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation for each questionnaire item using Excel formulas and features. Finally, the results were interpreted and presented in the form of tables and descriptive explanations to support the research findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Demographics

The data in this study involved 45 ELTD students at UIN Siber Syekh Nurjati Cirebon from various semesters. As shown in Table 1, the majority of respondents were from the sixth semester, with 25 students (55.6%). The fourth semester came next with 16 students (35.6%), followed by the second semester with 3 students (6.7%), and the eighth semester with just 1 student (2.2%). These data clearly show that the majority of the study participants were from the middle semesters, particularly the sixth semester.

By gender, the number of female respondents was significantly higher than that of male respondents. Of the 45 respondents, 41 students (91.1%) were female, whilst the remaining 4 students (8.9%) were male. These data clearly demonstrate the significantly higher participation of female students in this study.



Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N=45)

Academic Level	n	Gender			
		Male		Female	
		f	%	f	%
Semester 2	3	1	33.3	2	66.7
Semester 4	16	0	0	16	100
Semester 6	25	3	12	22	88
Semester 8	1	0	0	1	100

EFL Students' Perceptions of Instagram-Based Vocabulary Learning

To understand how students perceive Instagram as a tool for learning English vocabulary, they responded to 20 statements using a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA). The first ten items highlighted students' perceptions of Instagram, categorised into two subdomains: Multimodal in Language Learning (items 1–5) and Technology in Language Learning (items 6–10). The data on students' responses to each item are shown in Table 2. Most students selected "Agree" and "Strongly Agree," indicating that Instagram is viewed positively as a medium for learning English vocabulary.

Table 2. Frequency Percentages of Students' Responses (N=45)

No.	Item	Percent (%)			
		SD	D	A	SA
1	I find it easier to understand English vocabulary when it's presented through a combination of text and visuals on Instagram	0.0	0.0	48.9	51.1
2	The images and videos on Instagram help me understand the meaning of vocabulary words in specific contexts.	0.0	0.0	57.8	42.2
3	I have a hard time understanding the meaning of vocabulary, even when it's presented through a combination of text and visuals on Instagram	6.7	62.2	24.4	6.7
4	Presenting content in various formats (text, images, video) helps me remember vocabulary better.	0.0	0.0	53.3	46.7
5	The visual content on Instagram helps me understand how vocabulary is used in real-life situations.	0.0	2.2	44.4	53.3
6	Instagram makes it easy for me to access English-language content.	0.0	4.4	48.9	46.7
7	I use Instagram features (such as captions and comments) to understand English vocabulary.	0.0	4.4	55.6	40.0
8	Instagram lets me learn English vocabulary more flexibly.	0.0	2.2	55.6	42.2



No.	Item	Percent (%)			
		SD	D	A	SA
9	Interactions on Instagram (such as likes, comments, and shares) boost my engagement in learning English.	0.0	6.7	73.3	20.0
10	I feel that using Instagram to learn vocabulary is often interrupted by distractions (such as entertainment content).	0.0	11.1	44.4	44.4
11	I learn English vocabulary from the context in which it's used on Instagram.	0.0	11.1	62.2	26.7
12	I have a hard time understanding the vocabulary just from looking at content on Instagram without any additional explanation.	4.4	37.8	33.3	24.4
13	I reuse the vocabulary I learned from Instagram in other situations.	0.0	6.7	66.7	26.7
14	I try to use new vocabulary in conversation or writing after coming across it on Instagram.	0.0	2.2	68.9	28.9
15	I can adapt the vocabulary I've learned from Instagram to different contexts.	0.0	4.4	71.1	24.4
16	Using Instagram has helped me improve my English vocabulary.	0.0	2.2	62.2	35.6
17	I find it easier to remember English vocabulary after learning through Instagram.	0.0	17.8	53.3	28.9
18	I feel that using Instagram hasn't really helped me expand my English vocabulary.	2.2	35.6	37.8	24.4
19	I feel more confident using English vocabulary when communicating.	0.0	20.0	64.4	15.6
20	I feel that learning vocabulary on Instagram has improved my English skills.	0.0	4.4	66.7	31.1

The Role of Multimodal Content in Vocabulary Learning

It received an average score of 3.2 (Table 3), indicating that students have a positive perception of the use of multimodal elements on Instagram in English vocabulary learning. They find the combination of text, images, and videos to be genuinely helpful in understanding new vocabulary. The highest levels of agreement in this subdomain were found for items 1 and 2. All students responded positively to item 1. They found it easier to understand English vocabulary when text was combined with visuals on Instagram; 48.9% selected 'Agree', whilst the remaining 51.1% selected 'Strongly Agree'. A similar pattern was observed for item 2. A total of 57.8% of respondents selected 'Agree,' and 42.2% selected 'Strongly Agree' that images or videos help them understand the meaning of vocabulary in a specific context. These findings confirm that visual elements do indeed play a significant role in helping students understand vocabulary on Instagram. The results for items



4 and 5 clearly indicate a positive response. Of all respondents, 53.3% agreed, and 46.7% strongly agreed that content presented in various formats helped them to remember vocabulary better.

Furthermore, regarding the role of visual content (Item 5), 44.4% agreed, and 53.3% strongly agreed that visual content helps them understand how vocabulary is used in real-life situations. Thus, students are not only aware of the meaning of vocabulary, but also gain a clear understanding of how it is used in everyday life. Item 3, which is a negative statement, reveals a fairly clear pattern of responses. A total of 62.2% of respondents disagreed, and 6.7% strongly disagreed with the statement that they found it difficult to understand vocabulary, even when it was presented in both text and visual form. Meanwhile, only 31.1% of respondents agreed with this statement. These data indicate that the majority of students feel they do not experience difficulty understanding vocabulary when it is presented using a combination of visual and verbal elements on Instagram. Overall, students view Instagram's multimodal features, such as text, images, and videos, as key factors in enhancing their understanding and retention of English vocabulary. The presence of these three elements makes it easier for them to grasp the meaning of vocabulary words within clear and realistic contexts.

Instagram as a Flexible Language Learning Tool

As shown in Table 3, this subdomain achieved the highest average score compared to the other subdomains ($M=3.3$), indicating that students genuinely view Instagram as an effective technological medium for learning English vocabulary. The majority of students felt that Instagram offered an easy way to access and learn vocabulary (Table 2). For item 8, 55.6% of respondents selected 'Agree', whilst 42.2% selected 'Strongly Agree'. This clearly indicates that almost all respondents recognised the flexibility of learning vocabulary via Instagram. Similar findings emerged in items 6 and 7. In these two items, 95.6% of respondents stated that they could easily access English-language content via Instagram, and an identical percentage utilised features such as captions and comments to understand vocabulary. These findings confirm that students view Instagram as an accessible, practical platform that encourages them to learn independently. Furthermore, most students feel that the interactive features on Instagram make them more engaged in language learning. In item 9, 73.3% of respondents agreed, and 20% strongly agreed that interaction through likes, comments, and shares genuinely helps them to learn English more actively. This suggests that the social aspect of Instagram helps to create a more engaging and dynamic learning experience for students. The results for item 10 reveal a different issue, where students perceived real challenges when using Instagram for learning. A total of 44.4% of respondents agreed, and another 44.4% strongly agreed that the process of learning vocabulary via Instagram is often disrupted by the entertainment content they find. Only 11.1% disagreed with this statement. These findings show that whilst Instagram offers many benefits for



vocabulary learning, it can also easily cause students to lose focus on their learning goals. Thus, students perceive Instagram as a practical and easily accessible learning tool. However, problems arise when many entertaining posts on the platform can sometimes be distracting or become a challenge in themselves when Instagram is used to learn English vocabulary.

Situated and Transformed Practices in Vocabulary Learning

Overall, the data collected in this subdomain indicate that Instagram is truly helpful for learning vocabulary in both contextual and practical ways. Students are not only exposed to new vocabulary from the digital environment they access every day, but they also actively reuse that vocabulary in various communication situations. Instagram, in this context, is not merely a place where they discover new words, but also a space for practicing and applying them directly. It received an average score of 3.1 (Table 3); this indicates that students viewed Instagram positively as a tool for learning English vocabulary. Most students stated that they not only discovered new vocabulary through Instagram but also tried to understand it and then apply it in various communication situations. In Table 2, item 14 had the highest level of agreement. For this item, students agreed that they make an effort to use new vocabulary they encounter in both conversation and writing. A total of 68.9% of students selected “Agree,” while the remaining 28.9% selected “Strongly Agree.” The total agreement rate reached 97.8%. This indicates that students not only recognize new vocabulary from Instagram but also actively practice using those words in their daily lives.

Item 15 (Table 2) indicates that students can apply the vocabulary they learned from Instagram to various contexts. The majority of students (71.1%) selected “Agree,” and 24.4% selected “Strongly Agree.” Thus, the total agreement rate reached 95.5%. Additionally, for item 13, 66.7% of students selected “Agree,” while the remaining 26.7% selected “Strongly Agree.” The majority of students not only learned vocabulary from Instagram but also reapplied it in various situations. Item 11 (Table 2) also showed a positive response; 62.2% selected “Agree” and 26.7% selected “Strongly Agree.” This shows that students not only learn vocabulary through Instagram but also grasp its meaning from the real-life contexts they encounter daily on the platform. Exposure to natural language on Instagram helps students understand and reuse new vocabulary. However, item 12 (Table 2) revealed mixed responses from the students. When asked whether they found it difficult to understand the vocabulary solely through Instagram content without additional explanations, 33.3% agreed, and 24.4% strongly agreed. On the other hand, 37.8% disagreed, and 4.4% strongly disagreed. This clearly shows two sides: some students feel that the context provided by Instagram is adequate, while others still need additional explanations for a complete understanding of new vocabulary. While Instagram is helpful, it does not fully replace the need for further explanation for some students.



Learning Outcomes

The overall results for this subdomain show that students consider Instagram to be a platform that has a positive impact on English vocabulary learning. However, the data from item 18 indicate that the benefits students perceive in expanding their vocabulary vary. It can therefore be concluded that Instagram can indeed support vocabulary learning, but the extent of its benefits depends on how and how often students use it. The highest level of agreement in this subdomain was found in item 16, where the majority of students felt that using Instagram helped them understand English vocabulary. A total of 62.2% selected “Agree,” and another 35.6% selected “Strongly Agree” (Table 2). This means that 97.8% of students agreed with this statement. Thus, most students perceive Instagram as a medium that supports the vocabulary learning process. A similar result was found in item 20, which states that learning vocabulary through Instagram benefits overall English proficiency. 66.7% of respondents selected “Agree,” while 31.1% selected “Strongly Agree.” This indicates that students highly appreciate Instagram’s role in improving their English proficiency. Unlike the other items, Item 18 is a negative statement highlighting Instagram’s limitations in expanding English vocabulary. As shown in Table 2, 35.6% of respondents disagreed, and 2.2% strongly disagreed. On the other hand, 37.8% agreed, and 24.4% strongly agreed, meaning that 62.2% of respondents agreed with the statement. These results show that although most students have a positive perspective on the use of Instagram for vocabulary learning, many still feel that this platform does not help them expand their English vocabulary enough.

Summary of Students’ Perceptions Across Subdomains

The overall summary of students’ perceptions regarding the four research subdomains is presented in Table 3. This summary provides an overview of how students view the use of Instagram as a medium for learning English vocabulary and its role in supporting situated and transformed practices in vocabulary learning. The overall average score obtained from the four subdomains was 3.2, indicating that students tend to have a positive response to all the elements of the study. The results show that students view Instagram not merely as a tool to help them access and understand vocabulary through various features and content, but also as a platform for using and applying that vocabulary in various situations. These findings confirm that Instagram has great potential to support English vocabulary learning while facilitating situated and transformed practice.

Table 3. *Distribution of Mean Scores for Students' Perception of Situated and Transformed Practices in EFL Vocabulary Learning on Instagram (N=45)*

ASPECT	MEAN	MEDIAN	MODE	RANGE	SD
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Multimodal in Language Learning (1-5)	3.2	3.2	3.2	1.6	0.55
Technology in Language Learning (6-10)	3.3	3	3.2	2	0.57
Knowledge Processes in Language Learning (11-15)	3.1	3	2.8	2.2	0.61
Learning Outcomes (16-20)	3.1	3	3	2.2	0.63
Overall	3.2	3.05	3.05	2.00	0.59

The Technology in Language Learning subdomain had the highest average score, 3.3 (Table 3). Multimodal in Language Learning followed with 3.2. Thus, students clearly have a positive perception of the technology and multimodality that Instagram offers. All of this helps make the learning process more effective and engaging. On the other hand, the subdomains Knowledge Processes in Language Learning and Learning Outcomes both recorded an average score of 3.1 (Table 3). From this data, it is evident that students not only use Instagram to enrich their vocabulary but also apply that vocabulary in various communication situations. They feel its impact on their English language development. These results confirm that the use of Instagram supports contextual and applied learning processes, in line with the concept of situated and transformed practice.

DISCUSSION

Instagram as a Multimodal and Technological Tool for Vocabulary Learning

The findings show that students have a positive perception of the use of Instagram in learning English vocabulary. This positive perception is clearly seen in the Multimodal in Language Learning and Technology in Language Learning (Items 1-5), which recorded the highest average scores compared to the other subdomains. This indicates that students view Instagram as a medium that truly helps in learning vocabulary. They feel assisted by the various ways of presenting available meanings, as well as the ease of accessing English learning materials anytime through the platform. One of the factors contributing to the strong positive perception of Instagram is the platform's multimodal characteristics. Students tend to prefer using images, videos, and combinations of text and visuals to understand English vocabulary. This is in line with Kalantzis & Cope (2025), who argue that meaning emerges not only from text but also from images, sounds, and videos. All



these forms of representation complement one another when we try to understand something. In the context of language learning, the combination of these various modes helps students gain a deeper understanding than if the material were presented through text alone. Kalantzis & Cope (2025) also emphasize that learning can be more effective when text and images are integrated into a single process.

The findings of this study are in line with the results reported by Arun et al. (2025). They found that students view Instagram as a helpful, enjoyable, and practical medium for learning English vocabulary. Through visual content and short videos, vocabulary no longer feels like a list of words detached from context. Instead, the words appear in situations that are more realistic, easy to understand, and relevant to students' daily lives. Instagram's multimodal features, such as images and videos, do indeed make it easier for students to understand the meaning of vocabulary while also remembering how to use it in specific contexts. Alongside multimodality, the Technology in Language Learning subdomain (Items 6-10) recorded the highest average score in this study. This indicates that students truly view Instagram as a technology that helps them learn English vocabulary. Instagram is perceived as easily accessible, flexible, and has become part of students' daily digital routines. These are aligned with Gonulal's (2019) research, which shows that Instagram can serve as a bridge between formal and informal learning. Through this platform, students encounter English vocabulary not only in academic contexts but also in their various daily digital activities. This study also supports the findings of Almohesh & Altamimi (2024), which confirm that Instagram fosters learning engagement and supports informal digital learning of English. Students not only gain access to learning materials but also have the opportunity to interact with English outside the classroom, anytime and anywhere.

Instagram as a Space for Situated and Transformed Practices in Vocabulary Learning

On the Knowledge Processes in Language Learning (Items 11-15), students seem comfortable using Instagram to understand vocabulary through their usage contexts. They no longer memorize words in isolation. Instead, they learn through interaction with various content on Instagram. New vocabulary emerges from posts, videos, captions, or chats with other users. From there, the meaning of words feels more authentic because it is directly linked to their original context. This study aligns with the findings of Gonulal (2019), who noted that Instagram can indeed serve as a dynamic language-learning environment, providing natural language exposure through social media activities. Wardana et al. (2025) also found similar results that students acquire new vocabulary, sometimes by actively seeking it out, and other times without realizing they've learned from the content they encounter on Instagram.



It is clear when viewed through the concept of situated practice in multiliteracies. Kalantzis & Cope (2025) emphasize that learning is always tied to the context and experiences of each learner. Knowledge does not simply appear out of nowhere, nor is it separate from daily life. Instead, students build their knowledge through direct engagement in real-world social practices. When students use Instagram, they learn English vocabulary within a digital environment that is already part of their daily routine. Vocabulary ultimately isn't just classroom material, but genuinely emerges in daily activities, such as scrolling through posts, watching videos, reading comments, or chatting with other users. Instagram not only helps students learn new vocabulary; it also makes it easier for them to review and reuse words they've already learned. In the Learning Outcomes (Items 16-20), students don't just gain new understanding, but they actively try to apply that vocabulary in various communication situations. The words they discover through Instagram come up again during conversations, while writing, or when interacting digitally. Zainal & Rahmat's (2020) findings support this, as social media does indeed enable users not only to learn new vocabulary but also to use those words in appropriate contexts. Wardana et al. (2025) found similar results, as students genuinely utilize vocabulary from social media in their daily communication activities.

It shows how the concept of transformed practice by Kalantzis & Cope (2025) truly works. In multiliteracy, learning isn't just about understanding information; it's a continuous process that involves applying and adapting that knowledge to new contexts. When students take vocabulary from Instagram and use it in everyday conversations, they aren't merely copying what they've learned. Instead, they adapt that vocabulary, constructing new meanings that align with their personal needs and experiences. Thus, using Instagram in vocabulary learning not only strengthens language comprehension but also encourages students to be truly active and contextually engaged in language use.

Pedagogical Implications, Limitations, and Future Directions

This study offers several pedagogical implications for policy-makers, educators, and students regarding the learning of English vocabulary through social media. Instagram is not only seen as a social media platform for entertainment and communication, but also functions as a learning space that supports vocabulary learning through multimodal content and provides learning experiences closely linked to students' lives (Nasution, 2023; Gonulal, 2019). Furthermore, vocabulary learning can occur through students' engagement with a variety of authentic digital resources and through the use of language in diverse contexts. Therefore, the use of social media in language learning should be viewed as a crucial step towards creating learning practices that are more contextual, participatory and tailored to the needs of today's students (Kalantzis & Cope, 2025; New London Group, 1996). For policy-makers, the findings clearly indicate that institutional support is needed

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to develop digital literacy and multiliteracies in language education. It is not enough simply to provide access to technology; educational institutions must also develop programmes that equip students and educators to use social media effectively and responsibly. In this way, the use of social media is not limited to serving as a source of information, but also functions as a tool for developing critical thinking skills, communication skills and active engagement in the digital environment (Fadila et al., 2021; Hong & Hua, 2020; Papadopoulos & Bisri, 2024).

In an educational context, teachers can utilise Instagram as a tool to enhance English vocabulary learning. Educators can design learning activities that encourage students to understand, use, and apply vocabulary in various communicative contexts. To make the learning process more effective, the use of Instagram should be integrated with guidance, discussion, reflection, and other activities that help students gain a deeper understanding of vocabulary (Liu, 2021). For students, Instagram can be used as a convenient learning tool to support the development of their English vocabulary outside the classroom. By being exposed to a variety of English-language content, students have the opportunity to expand their vocabulary and understand how to use it in different contexts (Lailiyah & Setiyaningsih, 2020; Ismail & Shafie, 2019). In addition, students can also use Instagram to develop more independent and sustainable learning habits in line with their needs and interests. However, to maximize the benefits, students need to improve their digital literacy and self-management skills when using social media, so that they can minimise distractions from non-educational content and focus more on their learning objectives (Lai et al., 2022; Almohesh & Altamimi, 2024).

This study has several limitations that should be noted. Firstly, the sample of participants was relatively small and drawn from a single degree programme, meaning that the findings cannot yet be generalised to a broader educational context. Secondly, the data collected were based solely on the students' perspectives via a questionnaire; consequently, this study cannot directly demonstrate the impact of Instagram use on vocabulary development. Furthermore, the use of quantitative methods also prevents a more in-depth exploration of students' experiences in utilising Instagram as a learning tool. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve a more diverse sample, combine quantitative and qualitative methods, and directly investigate the impact of Instagram use on vocabulary acquisition. Future research could also investigate which Instagram features contribute most to supporting context-based and adapted learning practices, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of Instagram's role in English language learning.

CONCLUSIONS

This study explores how EFL students perceive the use of Instagram in English vocabulary learning and how this platform supports situated and transformed practices. The findings indicate that the majority of students regard Instagram as a



useful tool because it offers a combination of text, images, and videos that is easily accessible and aligns with their everyday digital activities. However, the benefits are not limited to discovering new vocabulary, but also extend to opportunities to understand the meaning of words through contexts relevant to the students' daily lives. Furthermore, many students feel that the vocabulary they learn via Instagram is easier to remember and can be reused in conversations or academic activities, indicating a shift from passive knowledge to a more active tool of communication. Overall, this study confirms that Instagram can support multimodal, contextual, and meaningful vocabulary learning, whilst broadening students' understanding of the use of social media in language learning practices in line with the principles of multiliteracy. These findings also suggest that Instagram has the potential to serve as a supportive medium in English vocabulary learning, although it still requires appropriate pedagogical guidance to ensure its use provides maximum benefit to students' learning processes.

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