

Instagram Threads for education: Enhancing students' writing of recount texts in the EFL classroom

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Abstract

The researcher aims to enhance students' skills in writing recount texts through the Instagram Threads application. The researcher employed Classroom Action Research (CAR), as described by Kemmis, Taggart, and Nixon, which consists of two cycles. The number of research participants was 24 from class XI Merdeka 2 SMAN 4 Palopo; the students were chosen using a purposive sampling technique. The researcher used tests and observations as research instruments. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were used to evaluate students' learning outcomes. The results showed a significant improvement in students' recount text writing skills after using the Threads application, with average scores increasing from the implemented cycle (59.58%) to cycle I (71.34%) and cycle II (84.41%). The success of two cycles in classroom action research shows that the technology-based learning model is adaptive and can be further developed. This encourages teachers to continue innovating in teaching methods to suit today's student learning styles better. This research strengthens the Theory that social media can serve as an effective pedagogical tool. It provides a theoretical foundation for further research on the application of other digital tools in language learning contexts.

Keywords

Instagram Threads application, recount text, writing skills

Introduction

The rapid development of digital technology has transformed education, particularly language teaching methods. Among these innovations is the use of social media as a learning tool. In July 2023, Meta launched Threads, a new social media app designed for focused, text-based interaction (Zhang et al., 2024).

Over 100 million individuals opened thread accounts in a single weekend, made easier by the option to transfer their Instagram profiles to the new network (Feith, 2024). Threads enable users worldwide to share thoughts and stories more engagingly and sequentially. Unlike Instagram, which emphasizes images and videos, Threads focuses on text, making it an ideal platform for honing writing skills, such as recounting stories. Recount texts narrate past events and require students to organize ideas chronologically using appropriate language structures. Threads presents promising opportunities to enhance recount writing education due to its text-focused design. The application enables students to craft and share their narratives in a threaded, sequential format that mirrors the recount text structure. Its link with Instagram also makes it easier to engage with friends and teachers and receive comments, which improves quality and motivation. The simple, text-based interface helps students focus on content development. Simultaneously, the thread-building feature facilitates the logical and progressive development of ideas, which is a crucial ability for crafting cohesive essays and stories.

Instagram Threads is a useful instructional tool for LTL activities, especially in writing classes. For EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners in Indonesia, writing in English has been regarded as one of the hardest abilities to master. Ahsanu & Pertiwi (2013) stated that students may become confused by the challenge of the disparity in the ways that ideas and concepts are composed in the text between the source language (Indonesian) and the target language (English).

In correlation with this, composing a recount text in written form is one of the basic competencies of the English subject at the senior high school level. According to Anderson & Anderson (2003), a recount text is a text that retells past events and usually in the order that they happened. Specifically, by writing a recount text, the students were expected to be able to write a text based on their experiences without too much worry about what they wanted to write since it happened to them. In contrast, many students struggled to deliver the story effectively (Hutagalung, 2017) due to the different grammar structures in L2 (English) compared to L1 (Indonesian), which involve the use of verb tenses to indicate different times.

The use of Instagram as a teaching tool for students to write recount texts was investigated by some researchers. Solikhah et al. (2019) found that Instagram improved the quality of the recount text. Listiani (2016) found that Instagram was more effective than conventional teaching techniques in helping students write recount texts, particularly for those with varying levels of motivation. Similarly, by promoting photo selection and caption writing, Puspitaloka, Cahyana, and Sari (2022) demonstrated that using Instagram as a teaching tool raised students' involvement. Handayani et al. (2024), Ardiansyah (2017), and Basith and Syafi'i (2020) are among the other scholars who have

emphasized Instagram's potential as a teaching tool for recount writing. Gunantar & Transinata (2019) confirmed that students could comprehend the content well while utilizing Instagram photo-based media. Additionally, since students can see the photography right away, using direct examples of Instagram photos to teach writing can help them communicate their ideas more effectively.

Although extensive research on Instagram has been conducted, a significant gap remains. Previous research has utilized Instagram as a learning medium for writing recount texts, focusing on the use of photos, captions, and visuals to enhance students' motivation and engagement. Meanwhile, this current research used Threads, a new text-based social media (text-focused), as a learning medium. This is an innovation that has not been widely explored in teaching recount text. This research also emphasized sequential writing and logical development of ideas through the thread feature, which supports narrative structure and cohesion of writing.

Despite these advantages, research examining the effectiveness of Threads in educational contexts remains limited. This research explores how Threads can be optimally utilised for teaching recount texts and assesses their impact on students' writing skills.

Method

This research employed Classroom Action Research, adopting the design proposed by Stephen Kemmis, Robin McTaggart, and Rhonda Nixon (2014), which consisted of four phases within a single cycle: planning, acting, observing, and then reflecting in a spiral system. These interrelated stages make up the design: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The researcher applied Classroom Action Research because this method allows researchers to identify and address learning problems directly in the classroom. In this case, the low ability of students to write recount texts is overcome by implementing Instagram media as an absorbing and contextual writing medium. Researchers can systematically and reflectively evaluate the effectiveness of this strategy through the action cycle.

This research population consisted of 96 second-grade students of SMA Negeri 4 Palopo, ranging from Merdeka 1 to Merdeka 4. The researcher selected 24 students from Class XI Merdeka 2. There were 10 males and 14 females, and their age range was 13- 14. Data was collected using class observation and tests. The students were chosen using a purposive sampling technique. The observation was conducted during teaching and learning activities to assess students' general behavior and classroom situation. It was supposed to give a clearer view of students' learning behavior, classroom interaction, and performance. The test was conducted three times: once before the cycle application, after the first cycle, and after the second cycle. The researcher examined the learners for 90 minutes.

Procedure for Collecting Data

This action research is conducted through four key activities: Planning, Action, Observation, and Reflection. The researcher analyzed the curriculum at the planning stage, with a particular focus on the competencies required for the program. After analyzing the needs of Class XI Merdeka 2 students at SMAN 4 Palopo, the researcher created a learning lesson plan, prepared tests, and developed instruments used in the classroom action research cycle. During the action stage, the researcher provided students with material on recounting texts and then gave several examples of tenses. After that, the researcher will demonstrate the Threads application to the students. During the implementation stage of the action, the method used is to utilize the thread's application, which is expected to enhance student motivation in writing. Observation Stage: In this step, the researcher observed all events or activities during the research. During the learning process, the researcher observed the teaching and learning process, as well as student participation and evaluation. This classroom action research would be successful if the following requirements are met: (1) most students get good grades in the evaluation (writing test score minimum is 75), and (2) most students are active in the learning process (75%).

Technique of Data Collection

Research data were collected from observation and test results. The description is as follows:

1. Observation

The observation used in this research was to see the process through eye observation. Observation was conducted to gather information about human behavior as it occurs in real-life situations. The researcher used observation to understand students' activities during the teaching and learning process of writing a recount text using the Threads application. In the observation, the teacher will observe the student's activities and the researcher's actions during the teaching of writing a recount text using the Threads application.

2. Test

This was done to determine students' understanding of the recount text material. The test given is an essay. This test method is used as a research instrument to collect data on student achievement after they have followed the learning process. The test given is an independent practice test. The test results are processed to obtain student achievement results during the learning process.

Technique of Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using the formula:

$$\text{Score} = \frac{\text{Total of correct answers}}{\text{Total of questions}} \times 100$$

Moreover, the Score Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM) is considered by considering the acquisition of English subject scores of 75. The formula used was:

$$P = \frac{E}{N} \times 100\%$$

Criteria of Action Success

To evaluate an action research study, consider using the following criteria to assess its quality and effectiveness. These criteria apply to both practical action research and PAR. In high-quality action research, one must follow the criteria: (1) they focus on an issue in practice or the local community, (2) they collect multiple data sources (often quantitative and qualitative) to help address the problem, (3) they collaborate with others during the study to find the best solutions, (4) they respect all collaborators, making them equal partners in the action research process, (5) they advise a plan of action to solve the problem, and (6) they help to enhance the lives of participants by solving a problem,

Results

The Students' Scores Before Conducting Cycle I

This test was conducted prior to the implementation of a class action to assess students' initial abilities. The test results can be seen in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Students' Pre-test Result

Score	Category	Frequency	Percentage
90-100	Excellent	-	0.00%
80-89	Good	5	20.83%
70-79	Adequate	2	8.33%
60-69	Inadequate	7	29.17%
Below 60	Failing	10	41.70%
Total		24	100.00%

The table of the test before the Cycle I shows that the average test score is 59.58. Only five students, or 20.83%, scored above the Minimum Completion Criteria. Meanwhile, the other 19 students scored below the criteria. The lowest score obtained by students was 40.

The initial student ability test results showed that 19 scored below the KKM. Therefore, the researcher implemented Cycle 1 using the Threads application as a medium to enhance students' writing skills.

The Implementation of Cycle I

Cycle I consisted of three meetings, including two learning process meetings and a final meeting evaluation at the end of Cycle I. Based on Kurt Lewin's classroom action research model, several steps have been taken as follows:

Planning Phase

Planning was based on the diagnosed problem identified during the interview and test results, prior to the cycle results. Learning plans are created at this stage, and instruments, such as the Threads application writing assessment rubric, observation sheets, writing test questions, and recount text models, are prepared.

Action Phase

The action of Cycle I was conducted in three meetings, with the third meeting serving as a face-to-face learning session and the other two as evaluations at the end of the cycle. Learning activities were carried out according to the lesson plan that had been prepared in advance.

In the action stage, students began to operate the application threads as a medium for writing a recount text. The following are the operating instructions for the Threads application:

1. After downloading, they installed it and opened the Threads app.
2. The students logged in by automatically connecting to Instagram
3. After that, the students set privacy settings to choose whether Threads will be a public account or a private account, and click Next
4. The students selected the account that they would follow from Instagram
5. Next, they clicked on "Join Threads."
6. After the students download the Threads application, they try to write through it.

Observation Phase

The researcher knew the condition of the class based on the observation activities carried out by the researcher and the observer in cycle I. Students were enthusiastic when the researcher was in the classroom. The evaluation of students' writing skills showed that students' mastery of writing recount texts was mainly low, with an average score (see Table 2).

Table 2. Students' Scores in Cycle 1

Score	Category	Frequency	Percentage
90-100	Excellent	1	4.17%
80-89	Good	5	20.83%
70-79	Adequate	7	29.17%
60-69	Inadequate	8	33.33%
Below 60	Failing	3	12.50%
Total		24	100.00%

Based on the results of the test of the cycle, the average value of learning outcomes of class XI Merdeka was 71.34

$$Mx = \frac{1.709}{24} = 71,34$$

Next, to know the students who passed the KKM percentage class is 50%. The results are also depicted in the following diagram:

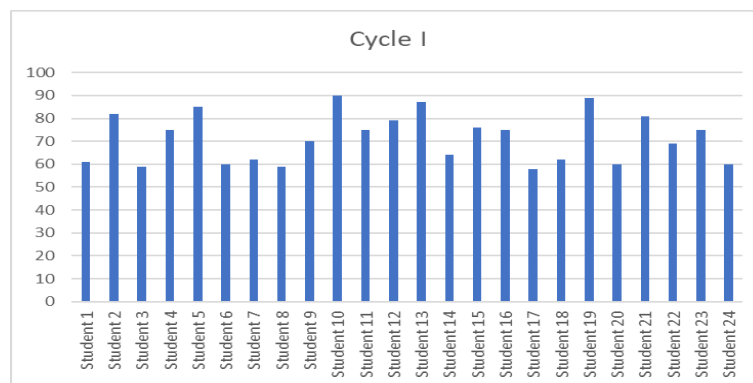


Figure 1. Students' Score

The result of observing students' activities during the teaching and learning process. It can be seen in the diagram below:

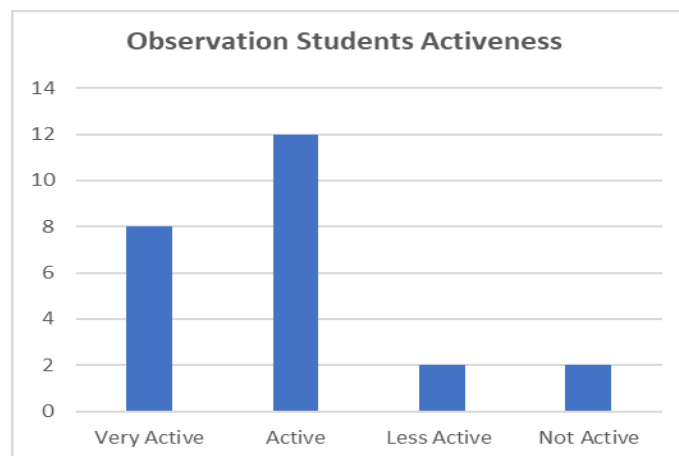


Figure 2. The Students' Activeness

Based on Fig. 2 above, we can see that twenty students were categorized as active: eight students are mentioned first as active. The other students are also included in the "active" category. This indicates that most students demonstrate active involvement in learning activities, such as answering questions accurately, following instructions, and participating in discussions regularly. Two students were categorized as less active. They showed little involvement, inconsistent participation, or seemed less enthusiastic in following the learning process. Two students were classified as passive. They were not involved in any class activities, did not respond, or appeared unfocused during the learning process.

Reflection Phase

Implementing learning using the Threads application in cycle I is good, but there are still some obstacles. The obstacles include the lack of prior vocabulary and the fact that some students remain less engaged in the learning process, or are only active in the classroom. So, the researcher continues on cycle II.

The Implementation of Cycle II

Cycle II consisted of three meetings, it was being held face-to-face. One of them was an evaluation at the end of the cycle.

Planning Phase

Preparing the device is more important before the implementation of Classroom Action Research, so in this section, the researcher did the following steps:

1. The researcher determined the material to be taught.
2. The researcher wrote lesson plans based on instructional materials.
3. The researcher held an evaluation test of the material taught.

Action Phase

Cycle II action was carried out in three meetings. Learning activities were conducted according to the previously prepared lesson plan.

The researcher explained the instructions for evaluating the material as follows:

1. First, the researcher divided the students into five groups.
2. Second, each group completed the tasks given on paper.
3. Third, after completing the task, each group took turns explaining the material based on their answers to the questions.
4. Fourth, each group uploaded their answers to the thread's account.

Observation Phase

Based on their observation activities in Cycle II, researchers and collaborators found outstanding student participation. To clarify the results of the cycle II test, researchers should provide points or scores for the students' answers.

Table 3. Students' Scores in Cycle 2

Score	Category	Frequency	Percentage
90-100	Excellent	5	20.83%
80-89	Good	11	45.83%
70-79	Adequate	8	33.33%
60-69	Inadequate	-	
Below 60	Failing	-	
Total		24	100.00%

Based on the results of Cycle II, the average formula obtained the average score of students was 84.41.

Moreover, the students who passed the KKM percentage class are 100%. The results are also depicted in the following diagram:

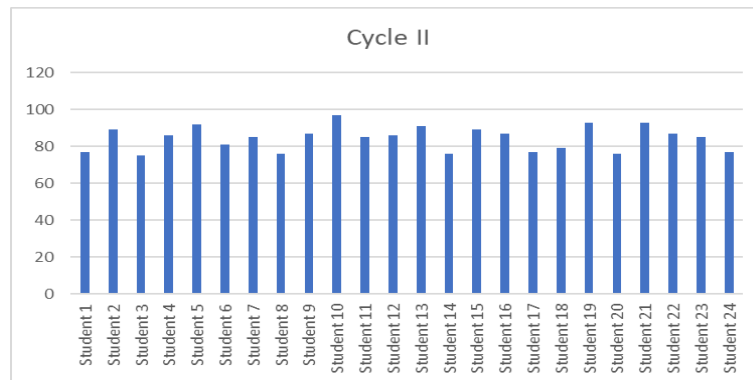


Figure 3. The Students' Scores in Cycle 2

The result of observing students' activities during the teaching and learning process. It can be seen in the diagram below:

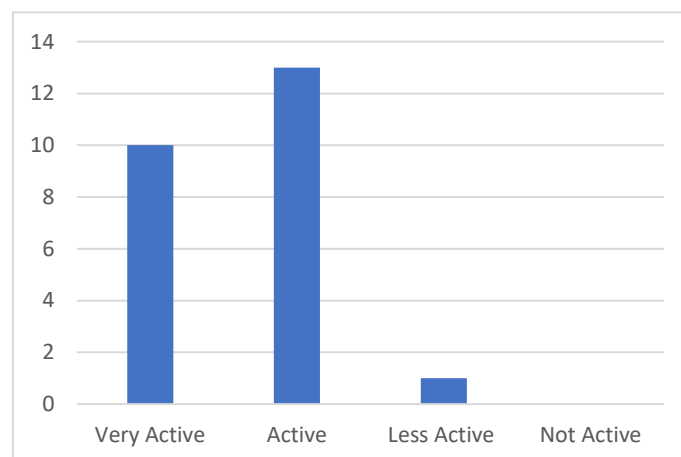


Figure 4. Students' Activeness

Based on Fig. 4 above, we can see that 10 learners were very active, 13 students were active, and one student was less active. We can see that 23 students were categorized as active, with ten students being mentioned first as very active. The other students are also included in the "active" category. This indicates that most students demonstrate active involvement in learning activities, such as answering questions accurately, following instructions, and participating in discussions regularly. One student was categorized as less active. He showed little involvement, inconsistent participation, or seemed less enthusiastic in following the learning process.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that using the Instagram Threads application can significantly improve the ability to write recount texts in class XI students of SMA Negeri 4 Palopo. This increase can be observed by comparing student test results at the pre-action stage (pre-cycle), Cycle I, and Cycle II.

In the pre-cycle, the average student score only reached 59.58, and only 20.83% of students achieved the KKM (Minimum Completion Criteria). This suggests that most students struggle to write effective recount texts. The causal factor is thought to be that the learning method used has not been able to motivate students to write and express their ideas effectively.

Following the implementation of Cycle 1, which utilized the Threads application as a learning medium, there was an increase in the average score to 71.34, with some students beginning to demonstrate an understanding of the structure and content of the recount text. However, there were still 12 students whose scores had not reached the KKM. During the implementation of Cycle 1, it was found that some students were still not actively participating in writing activities and were not utilizing the Threads application optimally as a writing medium.

Therefore, cycle II was carried out by improving learning strategies and increasing mentoring during writing activities using Threads. The results showed a significant increase, with the average score reaching 84.41, and all students successfully exceeded the KKM. In addition, students demonstrated enthusiasm and active participation in learning activities, suggesting that familiar social media can increase motivation and involvement in the learning process.

This finding is reinforced by Listiani's (2016) research, which suggests that using Instagram as a writing medium can enhance student learning outcomes, particularly in writing recount texts, as students feel more motivated to write on platforms they are familiar with and enjoy. In addition, Puspitaloka et al. (2022) also found that integrating Instagram into writing learning can help students develop more focused ideas and writing structures. Compared to traditional media, Instagram Threads has demonstrated efficacy in raising students' writing results (Rowiyah et al, 2025).

In addition to motivation, Threads also helps students organize ideas sequentially, because the thread format encourages them to write gradually and chronologically, which is very relevant to the characteristics of recount texts. This aligns with the Theory by Afolaranmi (2023) and Zhang et al. (2024), who stated that Threads supports text-based digital literacy practices and can be used as a productive learning medium in formal educational contexts. Rowiyah et al. (2025) found that using Instagram Threads boosts students' motivation through several features and activities, including collaborative writing on posts, real-time feedback, user comments, and new writing learning opportunities. By leveraging their existing social media habits, Instagram Threads enhances students' writing engagement in the paragraph writing classroom by providing a real writing environment and enabling multimedia self-expression.

Based on observations of inactive respondents, it is evident that they are unaware of the shortcomings in their past vocabulary and struggle to understand the past tense. Consequently, they rarely respond to teacher questions, open a dictionary, ask the teacher for clarification, or re-explain the material studied. Therefore, the researcher provided English vocabulary that needed to be memorized for the next meeting at each meeting. The research also instructed learners to bring a dictionary as a backup if their network is disrupted. Therefore, the researcher implemented Cycle II because students in Cycle I were less active and had not yet mastered writing a recount text.

Learning to write recount texts using the Threads application has proven effective in enhancing students' writing skills in terms of text structure, language use, and idea development. The gradual increase in scores from pre-cycle to cycle II suggests that this approach is worth considering in teaching English, particularly in developing writing skills.

The researcher claimed that social media platforms, specifically Instagram Threads for this research, allow students to create a cooperative, sharing, and collaborative atmosphere that complements the conventional classroom setting, in addition to sharing course materials (Eraslan, 2019). When it comes to enhancing instruction and learning, Instagram Threads has the potential to be revolutionary. Teachers can design learning experiences for their students that are visually appealing, interactive, and engaging by leveraging their capabilities (Rogers, 2023).

Specific findings from earlier investigations also supported the findings of this research. Sanusi et al. (2021) argue that Instagram is useful for teaching English, as it offers several features that facilitate a successful and efficient teaching and learning process. Additionally, it offers technical support, integrating Instagram's digital content with English-language resources. It is also anticipated that the information in this paper will help educators create a digital learning environment using Instagram's capabilities and materials. Pujiati et al.'s (2019) study indicates that Instagram has successfully motivated students to learn and improve their English competence. The preferred materials are those related to grammar, vocabulary, and writing.

Besides its benefits, Instagram Threads has weaknesses; it can cause students to become accustomed to informal sentence structures and grammar that do not conform to academic standards, such as the use of abbreviations and incomplete sentence structures (Luaran, Fazal, & Jein, 2025). This platform has limitations in providing in-depth interaction and comprehensive learning, especially in language teaching, which requires detailed explanations and constructive feedback (Baleghizadeh & Seedi, 2025).

Conclusion

Instagram Threads has enhanced students' writing skills in recount texts, as evidenced by significant student learning outcomes, as shown by the test results before the implementation of Cycle I, where students obtained an average score of 59.58%. In comparison, student learning outcomes at the final meeting in cycle I were 71.34%, and

test results in cycle II were 84.4%. This can be categorized as an increase in student learning outcomes. Using the Threads application as a medium for learning to write provides a practical and interesting alternative for English teachers. This application can increase student engagement and motivation in writing, mainly because Threads is a social media platform familiar to their daily lives. Therefore, teachers are expected to be able to utilize this digital platform to create contextual and relevant learning for the digital-native generation. The use of Instagram Threads in learning requires teacher supervision to ensure that the content accessed by students is appropriate and supports learning objectives. Additionally, teachers need to contextualize their use of platforms to suit students' learning needs and abilities. Besides, schools and education policymakers can consider integrating digital applications into learning programs as part of a strategy to improve the quality of education.

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