



A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF INSTAGRAM AS A TOOL FOR ELT

TINJAUAN SISTEMATIS INSTAGRAM SEBAGAI ALAT UNTUK ELT

Rafi Ahmad Fauzi¹, Muhammad Ali Isa Pena², Nafan Tarihoran³

UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten

Email : 221230042.rafi@uinbanten.ac.id¹, 221230060.muhamadali@uinbanten.ac.id²,
nafan.tarihoran@uinbanten.ac.id³

Article Info

Article history :

Received : 19-05-2025

Revised : 21-05-2025

Accepted : 23-05-2025

Pulished : 25-05-2025

Abstract

Melalui analisis 18 artikel yang diterbitkan antara 2015 dan 2023, tinjauan sistematis ini menyelidiki penggunaan Instagram dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris (ELT). Ini menekankan bagaimana Instagram meningkatkan keterampilan menulis, membantu pembentukan identitas, merangsang minat siswa, dan mempromosikan pengajaran yang sadar sosial. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa Instagram menyediakan forum untuk pembelajaran reflektif, meningkatkan motivasi, dan memungkinkan percakapan yang tulus. Meskipun mendorong ekspresi individu dan kelompok, itu juga menghadirkan kesulitan untuk literasi digital dan desain instruksional. Menurut ulasan, ketika digunakan secara pedagogis, Instagram dapat menjadi alat yang berguna dalam kursus ELT kontemporer.

Kata Kunci : Instagram, ELT, media sosial dalam Pendidikan.

Abstract

Through an analysis of 18 articles published between 2015 and 2023, this systematic review investigates Instagram's use in English language teaching (ELT). It emphasizes how Instagram improves writing skills, aids identity formation, stimulates student interest, and promotes socially conscious teaching. Results indicate that Instagram provides a forum for reflective learning, boosts motivation, and enables genuine conversation. While it encourages individual and group expression, it also presents difficulties for digital literacy and instructional design. According to the review, when used pedagogically, Instagram can be a useful tool in contemporary ELT courses.

Keywords : Instagram, ELT, social media in education.

INTRODUCTION

Instagram has become a popular English Language Teaching (ELT) platform in today's digital learning environment, especially because of its interactive, visual format and compatibility with students' daily routines. Several studies have shown that Instagram integrates multimodal features and real-time communication to facilitate learner-centered, contextualized English learning (Thomas, 2020). Learners improve their language and digital abilities by interacting with real content and writing reflections (Thomas, 2020).

In addition to these advantages, Instagram creates opportunities for students to explore their creativity and personal voice. By engaging in authentic communication and producing content that reflects their experiences, learners see English as a tool for self-expression rather than just an academic subject. This shift is significant in fostering learner autonomy and long-term motivation.



Furthermore, Instagram's interactive nature promotes collaborative learning, allowing peer feedback, discussion, and engagement beyond the classroom.

Moreover, integrating Instagram into ELT aligns well with current pedagogical trends emphasizing learner agency, multimodal literacy, and digital citizenship. As educators seek to make learning more relevant and meaningful, social media platforms offer a familiar environment where students feel confident participating. However, this also necessitates careful instructional planning to ensure that the use of Instagram remains goal-oriented and educational.

This paper aims to systematically review Instagram's use in ELT, focusing on its impact on writing skills, learner motivation, identity formation, and pedagogical considerations. By analyzing 18 empirical studies published between 2015 and 2023, this review provides insights into the potential and challenges of leveraging Instagram for language education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing Skill Development

Through peer interaction, narrative, and captioning, Instagram fosters thoughtful and descriptive writing, which aids in developing writing skills. Studies have shown that Instagram's communicative environment inspires pupils to write more deeply. (Thomas, 2020). Highlighted how Instagram's interactive interface encourages individuality and originality in writing assignments (Thomas, 2020). Discovered that Instagram helped pupils write more coherent and clear descriptive texts (Thomas, 2020).

Engagement and Motivation

Instagram boosts motivation by making language study enjoyable and relevant to students' everyday lives. (Thomas, 2020). Learners feel empowered to engage in activities that need peer interaction and feedback. Found that using Instagram-based tasks increased students' motivation to communicate with classmates and via text (J, 2022)

Identity and Digital Literacy

Language activity in digital contexts is intimately linked to linguistic identity construction. According to them, students use digital spaces for reflection and interaction to develop and reshape their identities in both their first and second languages (Nematzadeh & Haddad Narafshan, 2020). Instagram makes this possible by enabling students to express themselves freely, which strengthens their command of the language.

Teacher Roles and Pedagogical Concerns

Educators must carefully plan Instagram-based assignments to prevent digital distractions and guarantee pedagogical efficacy. Promoted organized integration, using Instagram for supervised writing and reading exercises (Thomas, 2020). Similarly, I propose using students' "funds of knowledge" by assigning context-driven assignments that link their social lives and classroom experiences. (Thomas, 2020).



METHODS

Using a qualitative content analysis methodology, this review draws from 18 empirical research that examine Instagram's function in ELT between 2015 and 2023. Among the search terms were "digital identity in EFL," "social media in language learning," and "Instagram in ELT." Using the framework, Instagram usage was divided into four categories: student involvement, identity formation, writing assignments, and pedagogical adaptation (Thomas, 2020). The concepts covered in the assessment of Instagram-based educational resources served as the foundation for the content analysis techniques (Thomas, 2020).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

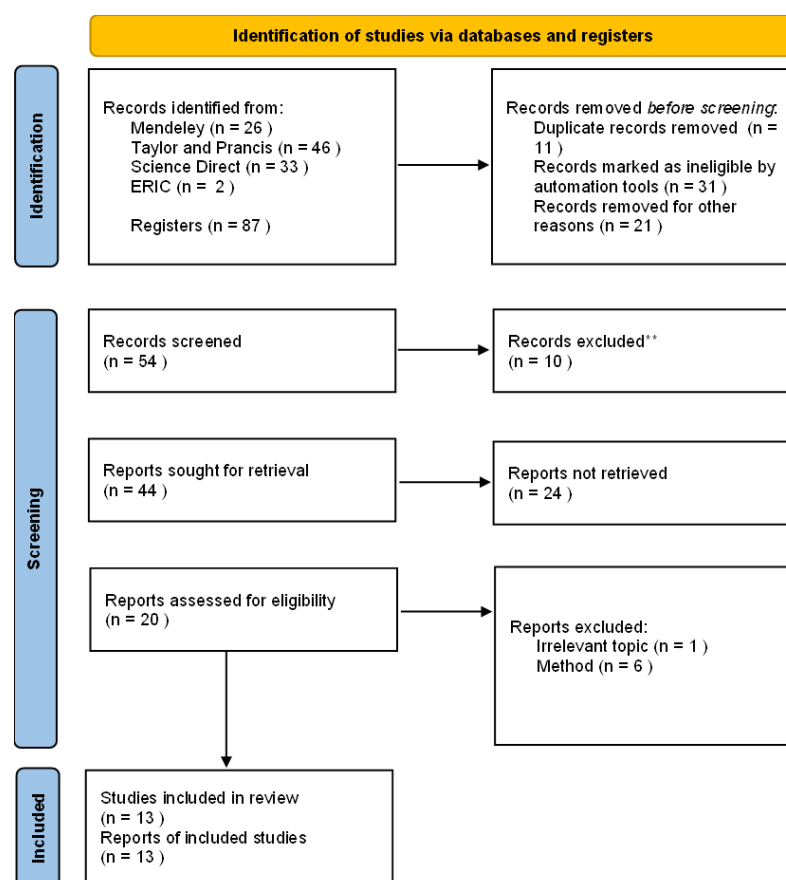


Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart of the selection process.

Writing Activities on Instagram

Writing assignments on Instagram encourages the use of descriptive language and critical thinking. Students can use English to relate personal experiences through exercises like storytelling and captioning. Found that students were encouraged to write more deeply and with greater quality thanks to Instagram's open communication platform (Thomas, 2020). Highlighted how using Instagram regularly in the classroom greatly enhanced students' proficiency in descriptive writing. (Thomas, 2020).



Enhancing Learner Engagement

Students are actively involved in content production on Instagram, which engages them. Posts, hashtags, and stories' visual elements draw in and hold learners' interest. Stated that using Instagram in the classroom increased student engagement with reading and writing exercises (Thomas, 2020). Stated that students were more inclined to contribute and reply to one another on Instagram because of its familiarity and relaxed atmosphere (J, 2022).

Constructing Language Identity

Instagram language learning encourages individual branding and self-expression. Elucidate how language learners' identities change as they create and distribute English-language content. Instagram enables learners to continuously negotiate language use and meaning in situations relevant to their everyday lives. (Nematzadeh & Haddad Narafshan, 2020).

Considerations for Effective Use

Despite Instagram's many benefits, educators need to supervise and give guidance. Emphasize that to prevent superficial involvement, its integration needs to be planned and goal-driven (Thomas, 2020). While keeping academic emphasis, teachers can create scaffolded activities that draw from students' personal experiences. (Thomas, 2020).

Discussion

The findings across the reviewed studies indicate Instagram's significant role in enhancing students' writing performance, motivation, and language identity development. It supports informal, contextualized learning through tasks like storytelling and descriptive caption writing. Due to Instagram's relatable and interactive format, students are more engaged and motivated. However, effective integration requires structured pedagogical strategies to avoid distraction and ensure learning depth. Teachers' roles remain central in scaffolding digital tasks to maintain academic relevance while fostering learner autonomy.

NO	AUTHORS (Country, Year)	DESIGN/ VARIABLE / STUDY/ MEASURE	FINDINGS
1	Yogi Widiawati (Indonesia, 2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Descriptive qualitative research - Focused on students' difficulties in translating English idiomatic expressions into Indonesian - Conducted on the sixth-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Kotabumi - Data was collected using translation tests and interviews; idioms were 	<p>Many students struggled with idiomatic expressions due to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of vocabulary mastery 2. Literal translation strategy 3. Limited cultural understanding of idioms <p>Students mostly failed to understand idioms' figurative meanings</p> <p>The study suggests integrating idiomatic</p>



		categorized based on McCarthy and O'Dell's classification	expression learning into the curriculum to improve translation competence
2	Parmaxi, Antigoni; Zaphiris, Panayiotis (Cyprus, 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative study using an ethnographic approach with interviews and participant observation. - Although not experimental (no independent/dependent variables), the study focuses on themes such as: Learners' perceptions of AI Language learning motivation Integration of AI-powered tools in education - The research investigates how Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies shape language learners' motivations and practices. Conducted in a language learning setting using AI tools such as voice assistants and chatbots. Data were gathered through interviews, observations, and analysis of learner interaction with AI tools. - Thematic analysis of qualitative data obtained through: Semi-structured interviews Field notes from participant observation Learner reflections and behavior in the AI-mediated environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AI tools enhance learner autonomy and engagement. - Learners felt more motivated when using AI tools that offered personalized feedback. - AI increased opportunities for practice and immediate correction, positively affecting confidence and language use. - Some learners expressed concerns about over-reliance on AI and reduced human interaction, but overall perceptions were positive. - The study concludes that when integrated thoughtfully, AI can support and enhance language learning motivation.
3	Widya Puspitasari (Indonesia, 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quantitative research using a quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent control group design - Independent Variable: Use of Google Classroom Dependent Variable: Students' writing skills 	The results showed a significant improvement in the writing skills of students who used Google Classroom compared to those in the control group. It was concluded that Google Classroom



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The study involved 60 eleventh-grade students from a vocational high school in Indonesia. The students were divided into an experimental group (using Google Classroom) and a control group (conventional learning). - Writing tests were administered to measure students' writing skills before and after the treatment. Data were analyzed using the t-test. 	positively affected students' writing ability.
4	Gerald S. Nelson (Japan, 2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mixed-methods research (quantitative and qualitative) - Independent variable: Use of performance in speaking tasks Dependent variable: L2 English speaking proficiency and classroom anxiety - Investigates how students in a Japanese university perceive performance-based speaking tasks and how these tasks affect their anxiety and speaking development. - Quantitative: Pre- and post-questionnaires on speaking anxiety and confidence Qualitative: Reflections and teacher observations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students generally found performance-based tasks challenging but beneficial for their speaking confidence. - Anxiety decreased slightly over time, and students reported improved motivation and perceived speaking ability. - Repeated performance and feedback were crucial in fostering improvement and reducing anxiety.
5	Kelleen Toohey (Canada, 2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative ethnographic case study - Independent Variable: Classroom social practices and power relations 	The study found that learners' identities are not fixed but are shaped through classroom interactions and power dynamics. Teachers' positioning and peer



		<p>Dependent Variable: Learners' personal and second language (L2) identities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The study explored how young ESL (English as a Second Language) learners' identities are constructed and re-constructed within classroom settings. It focused on six children from minority language backgrounds in a Canadian school over two years. - Data were collected through participant observation, audio recordings of classroom interactions, field notes, and interviews with teachers and students. The analysis used critical discourse analysis and sociocultural theory to understand identity formation processes. 	<p>relationships played significant roles in how learners perceived themselves and were perceived by others. The research emphasized the importance of inclusive pedagogies that allow students to construct empowered identities in the second language classroom.</p>
6	<p>David J. Coyle, Jaron M. Rabinovici, Hunter McCarty, Dana J. Schultz, Daniel G. Federman, et al. (United States, 2023)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prospective Study - Independent Variable: Source of clinical vignettes (ChatGPT-generated vs. human-generated). Dependent Variables: Accuracy, clarity, and appropriateness of vignettes for medical licensing exam preparation. - The study evaluated ChatGPT's ability to generate clinical case vignettes suitable for medical licensing exam preparation, comparing them to vignettes written by physicians. - A panel of board-certified physicians rated each vignette on a 5-point Likert scale. <p>Key criteria: clinical accuracy, clarity, relevance, and usefulness for exam preparation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 88% of ChatGPT-generated vignettes were rated as appropriate for medical exam preparation. - ChatGPT's performance was comparable to human-generated content regarding accuracy and clarity. - The study suggests ChatGPT can be a helpful supplementary tool in medical education.



7	Anushree Arun (India, 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative Research using Case Study Approach - Independent Variable: Use of Google Translate (GT) - Dependent Variable: Enhancement of English Language Learning (Writing, Vocabulary, Grammar) - The study investigates how Indian undergraduates use Google Translate in their English language learning processes, especially in writing tasks. It explores students' experiences, perceptions, and the pedagogical implications. - Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis of students' written texts before and after using Google Translate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Google Translate was a valuable tool for vocabulary enhancement, grammar correction, and idea generation. - Students reported increased confidence in writing. - However, overdependence on GT may limit deeper language learning. - The tool works best when integrated with teacher guidance and metacognitive strategies.
8	Elnaz Shafiee Rad and Parisa Farrokh (Iran, 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative content analysis - Independent Variable: Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications - Dependent Variable: Trends and themes in Applied Linguistics research - The study analyzed 62 peer-reviewed journal articles from Scopus-indexed journals between 2018 and 2022 that focused on the application of AI in Applied Linguistics. - Articles were coded and categorized based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AI applications used (e.g., chatbots, intelligent tutoring systems) Language skills addressed (e.g., speaking, writing, listening) Research focus areas (e.g., assessment, feedback, learner engagement) Future research directions suggested 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Writing, speaking, and listening were the most frequently targeted language skills. - AI applications in applied linguistics research are increasing in number and diversity. - Common AI tools included intelligent tutoring systems, machine translation, and automated writing evaluation tools. - There is a growing trend toward using AI for personalized learning, assessment, and feedback. - The authors recommend more empirical studies and interdisciplinary collaboration to enhance AI's potential in language education.



9	Marzieh Zaheri and Maryam Azarnoosh (Iran, 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative research design, employing ethnographic case study methods. - Independent Variable: Culture-based approach to English teaching Dependent Variable: Student engagement and English language learning outcomes - The study investigated how integrating Kurdish culture into English language teaching impacted students' learning and engagement in Iranian Kurdistan. - Classroom observations Interviews with students and teachers Analysis of teaching materials and lesson plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incorporating local culture into English lessons increased students' motivation and engagement. - Teachers observed improvements in students' communicative competence and cultural awareness. - The approach helped bridge the gap between global English content and the learners' cultural identity.
10	Wahyu Widi Nugroho (Indonesia, 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mixed-methods design (Quantitative and Qualitative) - Independent Variable: Use of Grammarly Dependent Variable: Students' writing performance (in terms of grammar, mechanics, and clarity) - The study investigated the effect of Grammarly on improving writing among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students at a university in Indonesia. - The study investigated the effect of Grammarly on improving writing among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students at a university in Indonesia. - Pre-test and post-test writing tasks to evaluate improvements Questionnaires and interviews to gather qualitative feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grammarly significantly helped students improve their writing, particularly in grammar and mechanics. - Students reported positive perceptions of Grammarly, noting increased confidence and awareness of writing errors.
11	Pongsatorn Pojanapunya and David W. S. Wong (Thailand, 2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quantitative, correlational research design using surveys - Independent Variable: Informal Digital Learning of English (IDLE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The study found that students who engaged more in IDLE had more positive perceptions of EIL materials and were more



		<p>Dependent Variables: Perceptions of English as an International Language (EIL) materials, Attitudes toward English varieties</p> <p>This study investigated the relationship between university students' IDLE experiences, their attitudes toward different varieties of English, and their perceptions of EIL-oriented materials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online questionnaire consisting of Likert-scale items measuring IDLE activities, exposure to English varieties, and attitudes toward EIL materials 	<p>open to various English varieties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exposure through IDLE significantly influenced students' attitudes and acceptance of English in different global contexts.
12	Not explicitly stated in the snippets provided (Iran, 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative research with an interpretive content analysis approach. - The study focuses on persuasive strategies used in English Language Teaching (ELT) ads, including reciprocity, scarcity, and social proof. - The study analyzes persuasive strategies in ELT-related ads on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok, specifically ads related to online English learning programs. - Analyzing commercial videos and pictures, seeking specific persuasive techniques to attract learners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scarcity: Ads use scarcity to make the products seem more valuable by implying limited availability (e.g., "limited time offer"). - Reciprocity: Ads offer incentives like free consultations or discounts in exchange for user actions. - Social Proof: Ads feature testimonials or claims that others have succeeded or can benefit from the course (e.g., "Like this learner, you can also speak English"). - The study examines how these strategies align with Robert Cialdini's six principles of persuasion.
13	Ruth Arber, Mehari Fisseha, and Andrew Skourdoumbis (Australia, 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative case study - Teachers' and student teachers' conceptualizations of social justice Enactment of social justice in English language education - The study investigates how teachers and student teachers understand and practice social justice in English language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participants had diverse understandings of social justice, often influenced by their personal, cultural, and institutional experiences. - Social justice's enactments were shaped by structural constraints (curriculum, assessment,



		classrooms across two universities in Victoria, Australia. - Data collected through interviews, written narratives, and lesson plans. Thematic analysis was used to analyze participants' understanding and classroom enactments.	policy) and personal agency. - There was often a gap between their conceptual ideals and classroom practices. - Professional learning and reflective practices were important in bridging this gap.
--	--	---	---

The studies reviewed illustrate a clear trend in integrating digital tools particularly Instagram as effective platforms for enhancing English language learning. Several key themes emerge. First, Instagram supports students' writing skills development by providing an authentic space for expression and encouraging creativity through captions, storytelling, and visual-text integration. Second, it fosters learner engagement and motivation, offering a familiar and enjoyable environment that promotes interaction and peer feedback.

Additionally, Instagram contributes to constructing and reconstructing learners' L2 identities. As Nematzadeh and Haddad Narafshan (2020) point out, digital contexts allow students to experiment with self-expression and identity development, which are essential in second language acquisition. This aligns with the findings that social media platforms provide learners the agency to represent themselves linguistically and socially.

Moreover, while Instagram's benefits are substantial, pedagogical considerations remain critical. Educators must implement structured activities and set clear objectives to prevent distractions and ensure meaningful learning. As highlighted in several studies, teachers' role is not just to facilitate the use of technology but to guide learners in critically engaging with content and contexts (Thomas, 2020; Alaqlobi et al., 2024).

Ultimately, integrating social media tools like Instagram, when aligned with sound pedagogical design, enhances language outcomes and learner autonomy, digital literacy, and cultural awareness.

CONCLUSION

This systematic review has shown that Instagram is a versatile and impactful tool in English Language Teaching (ELT). It enhances writing proficiency, promotes student motivation, supports identity formation, and encourages meaningful engagement with language in authentic contexts. The platform's visual and interactive nature aligns well with modern pedagogical practices that emphasize learner-centeredness, collaboration, and relevance.

However, educators must be mindful of instructional design and digital literacy challenges to maximize its potential. Thoughtful integration, clear objectives, and scaffolding are necessary to transform Instagram from a casual social platform into a productive learning environment.

As digital tools become increasingly central to education, this review's findings underscore the importance of leveraging students' everyday digital practices for academic gain. Future research



should explore long-term effects, cross-cultural applications, and strategies for overcoming implementation barriers in diverse educational contexts.

REFERENCES

- Droz-dit-Busset, O. (2022). “So-called influencers”: Stancetaking and (de)legitimation in mediated discourse about social media influencers. *Discourse, Context & Media*, 49, 100629. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2022.100629>
- Alaqlobi, O., Alduais, A., Qasem, F., & Alasmari, M. (2024). Artificial intelligence in applied (linguistics): A content analysis and future prospects. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 11(1), 2382422. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2024.2382422>
- Barkhoda, J., Azizi, A., & Abdulrahman, B. S. (2025). Bridging worlds: Enhancing English teaching through a culture-based approach in Iranian Kurdistan. *Cogent Education*, 12(1), 2464308. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2464308>
- Dirzyte, A., Perminas, A., Kaminskis, L., Žebrauskas, G., Sederevičiūtė-Pačiauskienė, Ž., Šliogerienė, J., Suchanova, J., Rimašiūtė-Knabikienė, R., Patapas, A., & Gajdosikienė, I. (2023). Factors contributing to dropping out of adults’ programming e-learning. *Heliyon*, 9, e22113. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e22113>
- Kusuma, I. P. I. (2022). “Why this and not that social media?” Reasons for using technology during online practice teaching. *The JALT CALL Journal*, 18(2), 264–285. <https://doi.org/10.29140/jaltcall.v18n2.593>
- Lee, J. S., Chen, J., & Drajati, N. A. (2024). Informal digital learning of English and perceptions of using EIL materials: Attitude toward varieties of English as a mediator. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 45(5), 1762–1777. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2021.2021213>
- Maretha, C., & Alrajafi, G. (2022). Fluent in English with social media platforms during the Covid-19 pandemic. *ELT-Lectura: Studies and Perspectives in English Language Teaching*, 9(1), 97–106.
- Nematzadeh, A., & Narafshan, M. H. (2020). Construction and re-construction of identities: A study of learners’ personal and L2 identity. *Cogent Psychology*, 7(1), 1823635. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311908.2020.1823635>
- Raja, P., Setiyadi, A. B., & Riyantika, F. (2021). The correlation between perceptions on the use of online digital interactive media and reading comprehension ability. *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 10(4), 292–319. <https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.23.2021.104.292.319>
- Thomas, K. (2020). Reading and writing activities on Instagram. In P. Clements, A. Krause, & R. Gentry (Eds.), *Teacher efficacy, learner agency* (pp. 472–479). JALT. <https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTPCP2019-54>
- Wahyuningsih, S. (2021). Reviewing hate speech in Indonesian social media content: Gender and discourse perspectives. *ELT-Lectura: Studies and Perspectives in English Language Teaching*, 8(1), 49–56.
- Banegas, D. L., Sacchi, F., San Martín, M. G., & Porto, M. (2024). Teachers’ and student teachers’ conceptualisations and enactment of social justice in English language teaching: A case in Argentinian secondary schools. *Teachers and Teaching*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2024.2411957>



Morady Moghaddam, M., & Esmaeilpour, F. (2023). Persuasive language in ELT-related ads on social media. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 52(5), 1263–1288. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-023-09942-7>