

## **SHARING PHOTOGRAPHS ON INSTAGRAM BOOSTS STUDENTS' SELF-CONFIDENCE IN SPEAKING ENGLISH**

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**Abstract:** This paper reports on the way in which sharing photographs in a social media, Instagram, was used as a strategy to boost confidence in speaking English among students majoring English education in IAIN Pekalongan. Confidence is seen to influence learners' achievement in communication skills. The qualitative outcomes deriving from students as participants revealed positive impacts of the Instagram usage on their confidence in speaking English. This research was conducted to investigate the students' perspectives when they shared the photographs on Instagram and to know the steps how the social media is integrated related to boosting their confidence for speaking English. Therefore, this study uses qualitative research in the form of a case study research design with the instruments of data collection using students' online Instagram posts and comments, semi-structured interviews in students, and the writer's field notes. The finding shows that sharing photographs on Instagram can contribute to the students' confidence to speak in a foreign language and Instagram, a social media platform, can integrate in language class through guided activities. The positive results offered some insightful suggestions and implications for teaching English as a foreign language especially for speaking skill.

**Keywords:** *Instagram, Social Media, Students' Confidence, Speaking Skill*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Visual media, especially photograph offers benefits and values in language learning. Using photographs, students can tell everything, can try saying something, and can reflect many things. Students nowadays have grown up in the world of technology that allows them easily to capture the moments and snap the photographs with their own smartphones. As teachers, this situation is challenging. Teachers can challenge students to explore their visual images in particular English activities. Therefore, incorporating photographs in language instruction will appeal to digital native learners, those students who grew up in a world where using Smartphone, laptop, and social media are part of everyday life (Prensky, 2001). So that

photographs can hold potential for eliciting language across all four domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Baker, 2015).

Sharing photographs in social media publicly is a common life style today. One of the most popular social media in the world with over 300 million active users is Instagram (Instagram Press, 2015). Instagram provides the users to post individual images or videos with a description on their profile which some 70 million images and videos are posted daily (Instagram Press, 2015). Primarily, Instagram provides learners with opportunities to read and write through photos' description, comments, and direct messages (Baker, 2015). Considering with the features, through Instagram, everyone can share and see the other's photographs.

According to Boyd and Ellison (2007) in Baker (2015), Instagram is defined as a Social Network Site (SNS) which allows users to create a public profile, to connect with other users' profiles, to watch short videos, and to post events in their everyday life in a real time. Thus, it seems properly to say that sharing photographs in Instagram is potentially effective for EFL educational tool.

Observing photographs that shared in Instagram for English learning activities provides a means for students. They can think and give opinions from what they see on photographs both the objects and the comments. This activity can be different perspectives on all language level students. MacWhinney (2005) in Baker (2015) contends that perspective taking, or seeing phenomena from a point of view other than one's own, is associated with language acquisition and development. Students typically often take a look photographs on their own Instagram feed and compare them to other friends. This activity would reflect to the reality of students' self-confidence and their speaking skill.

Self confidence plays important role in communication in learning English. McIntyre (2004) in Gurler (2015) suggested that self confidence significantly contributes to the learner's willingness to communicate in a foreign language. In English learning context, speaking English requires high level of self confidence. Students with high level of self-confidence tend not to be shy when speaking. They are quite sure what they are speaking. Conversely, students who have low level of confidence can be noticed that they often do not and feel hard to actively communicate and speak in foreign language even in their mother tongue. Thus, in order to be a native like speaker in a foreign language,

self confidence is one of keys that unlocks some important communication barriers (Gurler, 2015).

Therefore, regarding with the use of Instagram, this research was conducted to know the students' perspectives when they shared the photographs by students related to boosting their confidence for speaking English and to know the steps how the social media can be integrated in language class. So, this research has two questions: (1) What are students' perceptions toward sharing their photographs on Instagram? (2) How is social media integrated in English class for boosting their confidence in speaking English?

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Speaking Skill and Students' Self Confidence**

Most language teachers confront with how to improve their students to speak in EFL contexts.

Teachers have to facilitate, guide and give opportunities to speak more in English as Brown (2007) stated that teaching means guiding and facilitating learning, enabling the learners to learn, setting the conditions for learning. So, it is important to consider by the teachers that they should apply a constructed learning process choosing the right strategies, approaches, methods, and techniques which are proper to influence students' speaking skill.

As a practical output, speaking has so many barriers and a close relationship to psychological and attitudinal facts that constitute the inner world of a learner (Covington, 1984; Hanton, Mellalieu and Hall, 2003; Otacıoğlu, 2008 in Gurler 2015). Typically, students are found to hesitant to speak in English because they may have less confidence to the ability of carrying out the

target language in speaking skill. Lack of confidence makes students be silent due to their psychological and attitudinal barriers. As a result, they remain to create noisy talks using their first language. So, the language teachers probably only provide limited speaking activities or less various supporting strategies for boosting language learners' confidence to speak inside the classroom. In fact, one of the main concerns of language teachers to develop language proficiency is helping the language learners to speak. In other words, it cannot be avoided that the mastery of speaking skills in English is a priority for many second-language or foreign-language learners (Richards, 2008). Therefore, the language teachers should provide and use the right strategies once students' confidence grows in using English.

In line with mastery of speaking skill, Ur (1996) in Hosni (2014) pointed out some factors that cause why speaking is considered being difficult by students, as follows:

**Inhibition** that is students are worried about making mistake, fearful or criticism, or simply shy.

**Nothing to say** that is students have no motive to express themselves.

**Low or uneven participation** that is only one participant can talk at a time because of large classes and tendency of some learners to dominate, while others speak very little or not at all.

**Mother – tongue use** that is learners who share the same mother tongue tend to use it because it is easier and because learners feel less exposed if they are speaking their mother tongue.

Every student firstly is required to be confident enough when asking them to speak foreign language, and this should be overcome by the teachers with understanding

the definition of self-confidence. The term self-confidence is defined as an individual's recognition of his own abilities, loving himself and being aware of his own emotions (Gençtan, 1984; Özbey, 2004 in Gurler, 2015). Further, Akagündüz (2006) in Gurler (2015) divides self-confidence into sub-two categories, namely:

**Intrinsic self-confidence** is the thoughts and emotions about individuals being reconciled or pleased with themselves. The elements of intrinsic self-confidence are self-esteem, self-love, self-knowledge, stating concrete aims and positive thinking.

**Extrinsic self-confidence** is defined as the behaviour and attitude towards others. The constructing elements of extrinsic self-confidence are communication and controlling the emotions.

Additionally, other aspects cannot be ignored to support students' self-confidence in the situation of oral activities. There are many ways that are able to take into account by the teachers. One way that can potentially give students more chance to boost their confidence in speaking English is through sharing photographs on Instagram.

### **What is Instagram?**

Mobile applications offer a new paradigm in education. The rapid development of mobile applications facilitates educational learning experiences which are engaging and relevant to teaching goals. Various educational applications that focus on learning English have been popular in Smartphone users. Considering that most frequently Smartphone users are young people of school and university students, teachers can integrate popular applications to engage them in learning English. There are many studies have reported the experiences of using

popular mobile applications through integrating social media in class. One social media platform that potentially provides the educational activities for EFL is using Instagram which meets the demands of students.

Instagram primarily provides learners with the opportunities to read and write through photo descriptions, comments, and direct messages (Kelly, 2015). Furthermore, Instagram is a part of Social Network Sites (SNS) in the public setting where every user can see other's posts. Prichard (2013) states that SNSs can be used to develop the four key skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking, in addition to the development of vocabulary, grammar, and socio pragmatic awareness. So, Instagram is possible to be used as a strategy to support learning environment which should be considered from the learners' perspectives, effective teacher guidance and comprehensive by all those involved (Mc Bride, 2009; Kessler, 2013; Prichard, 2013 in Kelly, 2015).

Then, related to the use of Instagram in this study, the writer considered four key processes according to Boyd and Ellison (2007) in Kelly (2018, p.8) which Instagram leads to the formation of the students as the user's digital identity, as follows:

1. Impression management refers to the personal information provided on one's Instagram profile and the degree of public access to this information.
2. Friendship management is regarded as the connections made based on the perceived identity of other users, which in turn contribute to the identity of the original users.
3. Network structure is viewed as the level of participation of the user has within their social community on Instagram, i.e. some

users may post rarely while other will post frequently and with a greater degree of publicity.

4. Bridging of the online and offline concerns how users' online and offline identities are entwined and the resulting impact.

Indeed, Instagram is a great platform to directly see photos or videos by users. In accordance with sharing photos and posting publicly, Khalitova, L., Gimaletdinova, G. (2016) view that Instagram can serve as an effective means of learning EFL by the advanced level students. These two researchers also viewed that students are motivated by appealing Instagram and the potentials to learn English language with Instagram, as the social media platform anytime and any places

Therefore, Instagram was used as a tool to boost students' confidence in speaking English due to some reasons, as follows:

1. The popularity of Instagram in young people especially the university students is considered as the proper educational platform which might attract and support the potentially English learning.
2. After all students shared their photographs, they can see the photographs, descriptions and comments from their own or other friends' posts which allow them to boost their self confidence in their next speaking performance.
3. Students can evaluate and reflect themselves after seeing their photographs, reading the comments in their own posts or other friends' posts.

## **METHOD**

To examine the stated research questions, this study was carried out using a case study

research design within the qualitative research paradigm. According to Geertz (1973b as cited in Cohen et al., 2007) case studies strive to portray 'what it is like' to be in a particular situation, to catch the close up reality and 'thick description' of participants' lived experiences of, thoughts about and feelings for a situation. In addition, the definition of qualitative research is an emergent design in its negotiated outcomes. Meanings and interpretations are negotiated with human data sources because it is the subjects' realities that the researcher attempts to reconstruct (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988 in Cresswell, 2014).

The data collection tools employed in this research include students' online Instagram posts and comments, the interview, and the writer's field notes. The semi-structured interview was conducted to five students of Practical Classroom English class in the form of answering some open questions. The interview aims to know students' personal opinions, experiences, and views about English speaking performance relates to the use of Instagram as a strategy tool to boost their self-confidence. In addition, friends' comments toward speaking performance and the caption of self reflection and evaluation contained in the students' posts were also identified. The field notes were also considered to see the resulting impacts of students' self-confidence. Thus, based on the data collected from semi-structured interviews in five students as the representatives, students' posts of photographs on Instagram, and field notes, the writer concluded that the students' self confidence to speak English could be boosted.

The subjects of this study were 87 students of Practical Classroom English class.

Practical Classroom English class is one of speaking courses in English Education Program at IAIN Pekalongan. Practical Classroom English is a course that asks students to be non-native teachers of English. This course basically helps students to demonstrate their speaking skill in the form of running a lesson as the candidates of English teachers. The topics particularly are about a comprehensive list of classroom phrases, expressions, idioms, and instructions, such as; opening class, everyday greeting, getting the students to join in, and managing the exercise which should be used and simulated by the students in spoken uses as an English teacher.

The data collection procedures were conducted structurally. The writer collected the data during fourteen-week-learning meetings with students as the participants. During the teaching and learning process of Practical Classroom English, all students did speaking performance in the form of doing simulation. After that, every student was asked to sit in front of the whiteboard where there was a big blank circle. Then, another activity was that the other friends were coming forward to write down their suggestions and developed critiques inside the circle about their friends' performance. After all students have written down their comments, the simulator asked one friend to take a picture with the background of the big circle with comments behind them. Then, the students had to share one picture or photograph on their Instagram feed by giving caption about reflection and evaluation performance. Thus, everyone in their friends list is easily either to see their posts or read the captions. At last, the writer conducted semi interview to five students by asking open questions about personal opinions,

experiences, and views of their speaking performance associated with the use of Instagram.

The data analysis in qualitative research in this study emphasized two steps according to Creswell (2014, p.197), as follows:

1. Transcribing interviews, optically scanning material, typing up field notes, cataloguing all of the visual material, and sorting and arranging the data into different types depending on the sources of information.
2. Reading or looking at all the data.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Regarding with the aims of this study which were to investigate the students' perspectives when they shared the photographs on Instagram and to know the steps how the social media is integrated related to boosting their confidence for speaking English, this part displays the finding, as follows.

### **Students' Perspectives towards Sharing the Photographs on Instagram as a Strategy Learning Tool**

The main source of collecting the data used to investigate the students' perspectives towards sharing photographs on Instagram was conducting semi-structured interview. Another source used to collect the data was using the students' comments on Instagram and the writer's field notes. Based on investigation of students' perspectives through interview given to five students and identifying the students' captions and comments, mostly they agreed that sharing photographs on Instagram can successfully boost their confidence which provided three important keys:

1. Feeling traumatizing in speaking class

2. The positive effects of sharing photographs on Instagram for self-confidence
3. Friends' supportive feedback asking to more practice speaking

These three keys are presented in the following description.

### ***Feeling Traumatizing in Speaking Class***

Based on the interview analysis and caption identification, most students felt nervous and have not had enough courage to speak English in front of their friends as the imaginary students. At first before doing simulation, they were haunted by the feeling of fear, nervous, and mistaken. And obviously, they have less confidence due to their limitation of vocabulary. One quiet participant student said that there always comes a feeling of doubt when she started to speak in front of their friends. Feeling like the words that she chose could not be understood by all friends. But, she realized that after time went by, she enjoyed the moment when she was giving instructions to students using English. She tried to believe in herself that teaching to students should deliver good instructions meaning that they should be good at speaking English in case of being well understood by students. She added that the supporting of the lecturer in class would also affect students' speaking experience in the ways of giving suggestion, reinforcement, and feedback to their performance doing simulation.

### ***The positive effects of sharing photographs on Instagram for self-confidence***

Prior to the data collection was also showed positive effects regarding with boosting students' self confidence. One student said

that Instagram could boost their confidence since their friends gave supports and appreciation by developing comments. Reading developing comments from friends elicited positive vibes, such as, 'great job', 'your voice so clear', 'good opening expressions', 'what an excellent performance', 'your gesture is very nice', 'be confident', relate to other friends' speaking performance. Even one student made a lot of mistakes using expressions and sometimes forgot what to say next, their friends would be so glad to remind and were really supportive. Such a nice situation helps the students not to be discouraged and stressful due to doing simulation. One another student also said that seeing their own photograph on Instagram conveyed a direct message. A photograph contained of individual photo with the background of their friends' comments brought reflection and evaluation in which provoked them to boost their confidence in order to enhance their speaking skill.

### ***Friends' supportive feedback asking to more practice speaking***

All students as the participants posted their photograph that they shared on Instagram contained friends' supportive feedback in relation to appreciating another friend's speaking performance dealing with simulation. Most students wrote the captions that they have to more practice speaking English due to reading the supportive feedbacks found in their photo. Almost students gave ensured that their friends' simulations were well-performed and full of struggles so that they tend to give supportive feedbacks which mostly the students also wrote caption in their closing part by saying 'thank you', such as:

1. *'Thanks a lot to all my friends who give me a good feedback. It can be motivated me to be better and to do my best.'*
2. *'Thanks to my friends who have given me the feedback and suggestions, I hope I will be more confident for the next performance.'*
3. *'I felt little bit nervous but I'm happy. For the next, I will try to be confident and enjoy. I will practice, practice, and practice. And thanks for my friends who gave me comments and suggestions.'*
4. *'To be honest, I was so nervous that's why I couldn't speak clearly. But, thanks to my lecturer in my class who encouraged me to be more confident and also my friends who gave me feedbacks. I hope I will be more confident next time.'*
5. *'Thanks to my friends who gave me feedback. In the next time, I will try to enjoy and be more confident.'*

Identifying the students' captions raised a judgment to indicate that by looking at their own photograph and their own captions, the students are expected to improve and more practice speaking English. Further, it also could be said that their self-confidence could be boosted since they openly wrote in their captions which believed and carried out a hope for their speaking performance to be better.

### **The Steps How the Social Media is Integrated**

Prior to the practical use of Instagram that how it can be integrated into learning English education as a strategy tool to boost students'

self confidence is one of the values of social media. The steps are presented as follows.

**Step 1: Asking students to perform speaking performance by doing simulation**

During teaching activities in Practical Classroom English course, students should do simulation. Doing simulation was required to demonstrate some teaching instructions and expressions as English teacher in classroom. Furthermore, doing simulation in speaking English performance involves various personality aspects, such as attitude, anxiety, personality, emotion, motivation, and self-confidence. Since self-confidence is one of the most influential variables that affects the students' oral skill in their speaking English performance. The following figure showed the students' activities doing simulation.



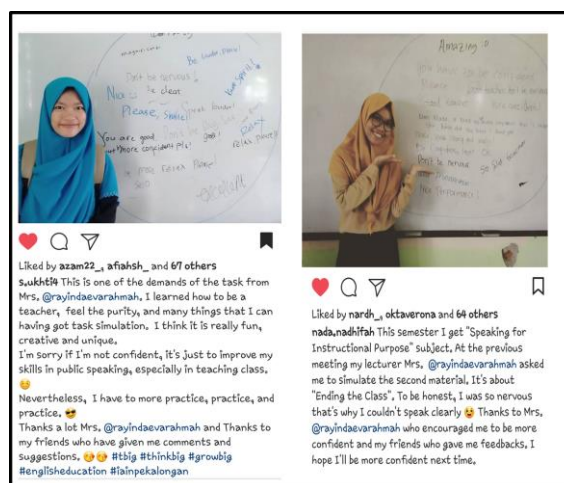
**Figure 1. The Students' Speaking Performance**

**Step 2: Giving Comments and Feedback to Other Friends' Performance**

After doing simulation, the performer will get comments and suggestions directly from her/his friends by writing down in a blank circle at the whiteboard. The students were enthusiastic in doing this activity because they could suggest and write everything about their friend's simulation performance. Then, the performer will do a photo session with the background of their friends' comments and suggestions.

**Step 3: Photo Sharing Task**

After that, the students were asked to do the task in which they should use the social media platform of Instagram. One thing they should do is they had to share their photographs and give caption about their reflection and evaluation. Besides, the students would get comments from their friends. Then, let students see and take a look at other friends' photographs in order to get the insight and read the feedback or comments. The example of the assigned task in each student's Instagram account was portrayed in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. The Students' tasks in Instagram**

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the use of Instagram, a social media as a strategy tool helps students to boost their confidence when they speak English. Due to the popularity of this mobile application in young people, Instagram could be brought as an educational platform. At first, when asking students to speak, they are found doubted because they might have less confidence to carry out the target language in front of class. But, after posting photographs on Instagram, their friends are easily to see and give comments towards their speaking



performance. The writer, however, decided that this result still needs enlightenment so, that is why the writer is open to other possibilities of the social media mainly Instagram that can be used in learning environment and be more explored in many ways to reach the next milestones.

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