THE USE OF INSTAGRAM REELS IN TEACHING BAHASA INDONESIA

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Abstract

This paper aims to reflect learnings and potential next steps from utilizing a social media platform and adopting its new feature to enhance a foreign language learning in a hybrid environment. With both technology advances and the occurrence of pandemic, learning is no longer limited to onsite classrooms. Seeing the lack of channel for learning Bahasa Indonesia as a foreign language, the first author started an Instagram account of @kelasindonesia_bufeli in October 2020. Instagram Reels, which has a similar function as TikTok's video, was launched in Singapore in end of 2021. Short Bahasa Indonesia teaching videos have then been created using Instagram Reels. The short durations have encouraged viewers to learn in stages and allowed them to repeat those videos at their own pace. In addition, cultural-related stories are easier to incorporate. The objective of this reflection is to capture insights on which part of a language learning journey to be delivered using which platform in the future.

1 Introduction

This paper aims to capture insights from the journey of the first author using Instagram Reels in teaching Bahasa Indonesia. In 2020, Covid-19 pandemic many schools to switch to Home-Based-Learning mode. Even after school returns to the new normal, hybrid and blended teaching have remained as the mode of teaching and learning.

Teenagers have been using social media as a form of leisure and connections. Mao (2014) has identified some use of social media for high school students, but not much research has been done on planned use of social media as the extension of language learning in the classroom.

Social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok have been the to go platform as informal tools to learn language. TikTok mainly uploads video, role-play or even dance moves which make learning seem fun and less daunting. While Instagram relies mainly on pictures, it also has launched Instagram Reels in Singapore since 27 October 2021 that has a similar function as TikTok with additional tool such as InstaStory.

Teenagers have been using the internet and social media extensively. The negative impacts of social media have been well documented in much research (Loh et al., 2021; Marino et al., 2020; Paakkari, Tynjälä, Lahti, Ojala, & Lyyra, 2021). However, there is no sign of slowing

down on the social media use where TikTok and Instagram continuously added in more features that made them more attractive to the teenagers.

Since it is not possible for teenagers to stop using social media, educators can look at learning opportunities that these social media can offer. First, social media allows educators to reach out to their students easily. It builds connections, allowing students to interact with educators in a less formal setting. Secondly, many features of social media allow educators to create content that supports learning in class, two of which will be discussed in this paper, Instagram Reels and InstaStory. Thirdly, social media allows accessibility and availability of the teaching resources that extend learning beyond the classroom setting (Lee, 2022). These features afford learners to learn in a less formal setting which increases enjoyment, reduces anxiety, and increases perceptiveness in learning the language (Ali, 2019; Gonulal, 2019; Lee & Lee, 2020).

2 The use of Instagram in teaching Bahasa Indonesia

On Instagram, the hashtag (#) foreign language garnered 253K posts while specific language such as #BahasaIndonesia garnered 216K posts and #belajarbahasaindonesia garnered #18.3K posts. However, #BahasaIndonesia and #BelajarBahasaIndonesia are not specific for language learning as it often includes photos of personal experiences with captions that are eponymous to Instagram.

The lack of a channel for learning Bahasa Indonesia motivated the first author started an unofficial account of @kelasindoensia_bufeli on 27 October 2020. Since early this year, short teaching videos are made using Instagram Reels. The videos are available all time unless it's taken down by the creator hence learners could access the video anytime and anywhere at their own discretion.

This section describes the use of Instagram Reels as well as the InstaStory Quiz and the regular Instagram posts. The objective is to share with fellow educators on some considerations in selecting which of the three options to use.

2.1   *Instagram Reels*

Instagram Reels are short videos with a maximum duration of 90 seconds. Users could create Reels from recorded video or compilations of pictures. Unlike videos, Instagram Reels allow green-screen function in which creators could use any picture as a background. For audio-visualisation purposes, the first author created background slides using a free design tool Canva, downloaded them as a picture and used them as background screens (Canva, 2022). The short duration helps learners to keep their focus on the content. The short duration also increases learners' motivation to rewatch the video. Background music added to the video increases enjoyment and reduced learner's anxiety (Ugwuanyi et al., 2020).

Instagram analytics allows users with a creator account to track how many times the video was being watched, shared, and saved. However, these numbers do not necessarily provide much insight into learners' understanding of the content.

By putting the learning resources on social media, learners have autonomy on when, where and what topic they want to revise. Learners' autonomy reduces over dependence on educators, allowing educators to focus their attention on creating better learning experiences and content for the learners.

2.2   *InstaStory Quiz*

InstaStory is another feature available on Instagram tool. InstaStory allows the creator to post notes, photos, music, link to website, questions, giving rating, pool, and multiple-choice quiz. These features could be harnessed as informal language teaching and learning tools.

Multiple choice quiz allows educators to create self-assessed quiz. The learners as Instagram followers would get immediate feedback after submitting their answer on multiple-choice questions, and each correct answer would receive positive reinforcement of confetti rains.

The educator as creator would be able to track how many learners attempt the quiz, how many learners get the correct answer and which distractors (if any) are the trickiest for learners. The ungraded quiz feature is effective as a form of informal formative assessment that eventually supports formal language learning.

Another attractive features of InstaStory are ratings, questions and answers, and poll features which allow educators to engage learners in online discussion, storytelling or sharing of cultural information related to Indonesia. The 'question and answers' tool allows interaction between the creator and followers. The creator could answer directly or repost the questions, allowing other learners to see the response. Teenagers as digital natives often feel more comfortable communicating through social media. Social media helps to improve communication between students and teachers. Better communication will lead to a better learning environment that will increase students' engagement and motivation to learn the language. Engaging learners with educators builds connection and increases students' motivation in learning (Chugh & Ruhi, 2017; (Lim, 2017; Stathopoulou, Siamagka, & Christodoulides, 2019)

Although InstaStory only appears available for 24 hours, creators could save the InstaStory as a highlight to make it available to learners later without interactions features.

2.3   *Instagram Posts*

Instagram Reels were only available in Singapore on 27 October 2021. Prior to Instagram Reels, the first author used Instagram Posts for sharing notes on vocabularies and grammars that were made using Canva. To maintain the Instagram page layout, posts were made in the same sequence weekly. For example, it can be an Indonesian proverb or poem followed by two notes on grammars or vocabularies. The same format was retained when the author converted to Instagram Reels. There is one Instagram post on an Indonesian proverb or poem, followed by two Instagram Reels videos. Instagram posts can also contain the first author's personal insights and reflections to help the followers relate to the proverb or poem.

3 Numerical Analysis of Instagram Reels' Number of Views

A primary advantage of using Instagram Reels is to allow viewers to repeat those short videos at their own pace. A key metric is then the number of views for each Instagram Reels. This section attempts to analyse the relationships between the number of views and some other quantitative data such as number of likes, number of days to the next video, and the week number of the posted time.

3.1   *Number of Likes*

A basic account can only track the number of likes as a proxy of the number of unique users. Each unique user can only click like once while having multiple number of views. Initially, we hypothesized that the number of views correlates with the number of likes. However, Fig.1 shows that the correlation is not as strong as expected. A significant number of views can be generated by passive users who watch for personal development or interest.

From this analysis, we also acknowledge the usefulness of the creator account provided by Instagram that allows creators to analyse their video, how many social media accounts they reached and how many views come from their followers and non-followers. This is essential as our objective is not to generate maximum number of likes but to reach out to as many viewers and to have them view the videos multiple times. The creator account also gives the right for Instagram to post the video to Facebook platform, which is another social media platform under the same company.
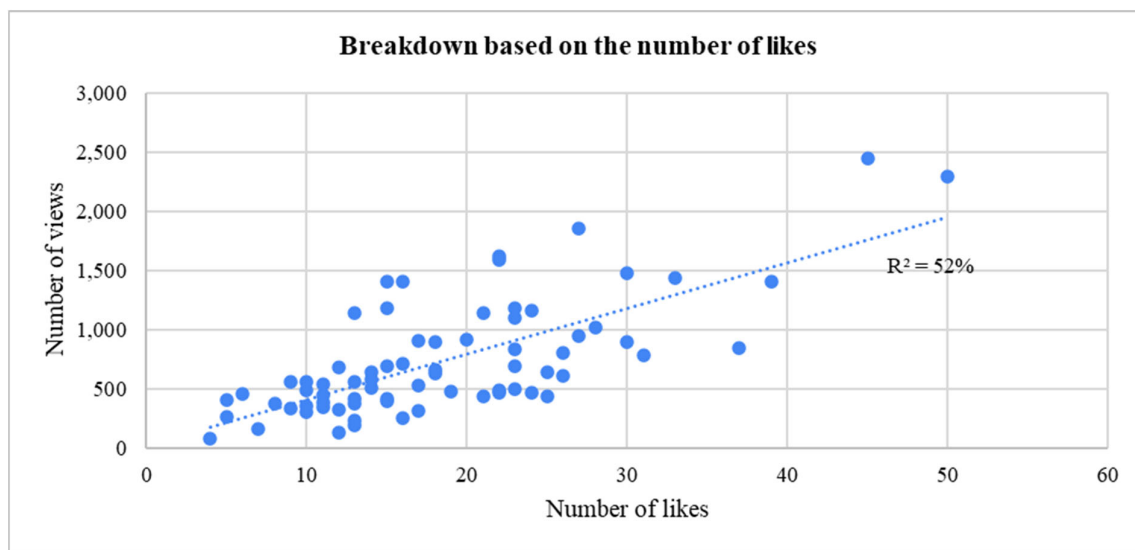

Fig. 1. Analysis of number of likes and number of views

3.2   *The Interval to the next video*

The video on 'Apa & Lagi' has the highest number of views (Adrianne, 2022a). It was the last video posted by the first author before she went on hiatus due to medical reasons. After the video 'Apa & Lagi', no video was posted for the next 50 days. We assume that the number of views will increase when there is a long interval until the next video. However, Fig. 2 shows

that the correlation is weak. For example, another video on 'Diftong' also received a high number of views although the interval to the next video was only 6 days (Adrianne, 2022b).
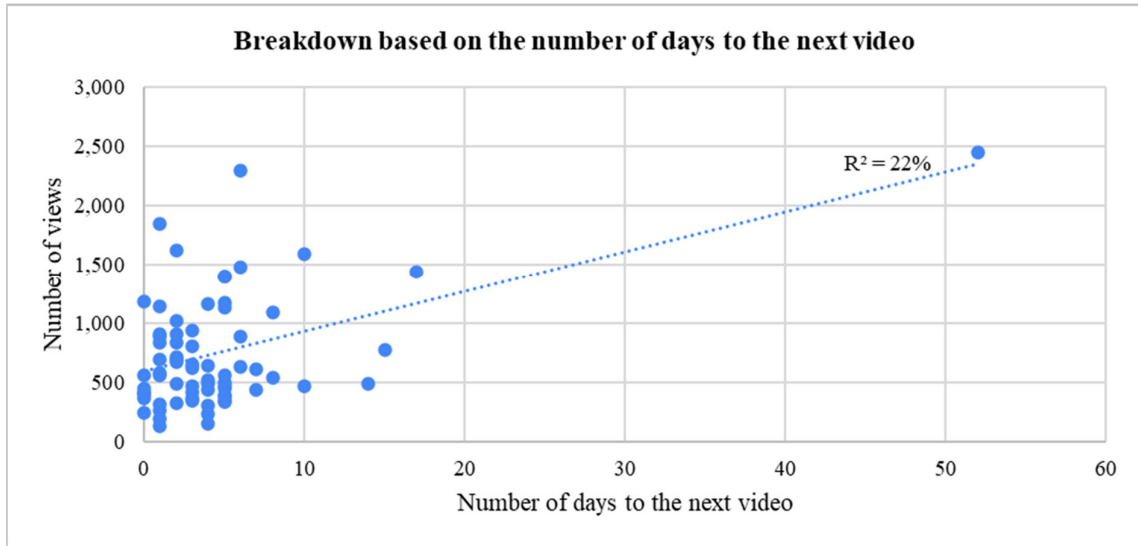

Fig. 2. Analysis of number of days to the next video and number of views

3.3   *Week Number and Schedule*

Fig. 3 shows the that as of Week 45, the number of days the video has been around has no correlation with the number of views. The number of views for older video remains unchanged while the number of views for recent video still increases. Instagram data analytics seems to promote the already popular video which explains why the number of views keep increasing even after a few weeks have passed. This is different from the natural intuition that the longer the video is around the higher the number of views is.
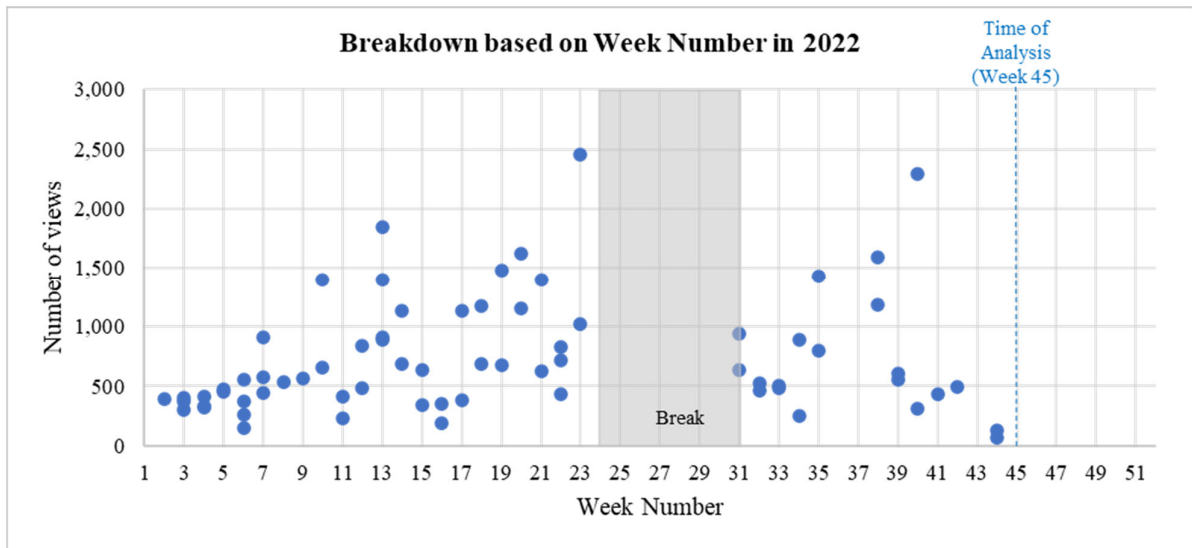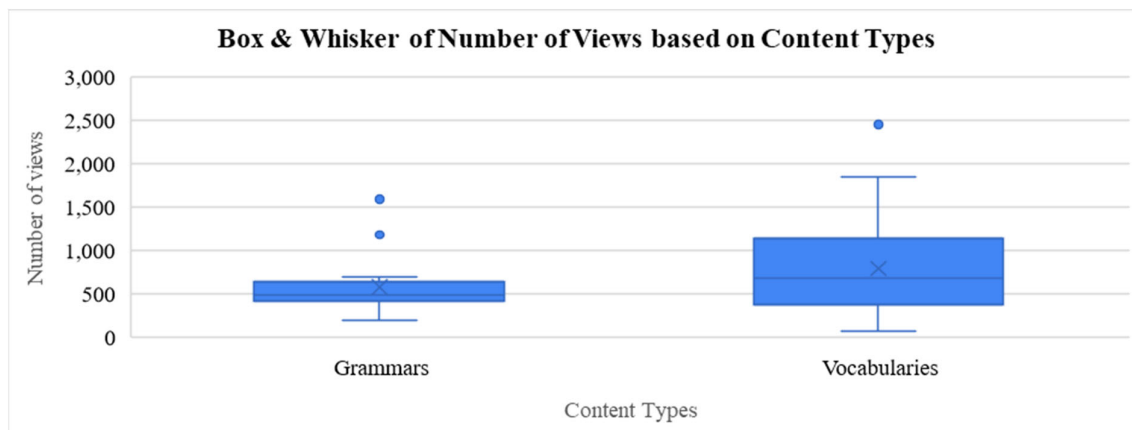

Fig. 3. Analysis of number of views based on week number

3.4   Content Type

Fig. 4 shows that vocabularies have wider variation when it comes to the number of views.

Fig. 4. Box & Whisker plot of number of views based on content types

Out of 72 videos, the main two types are grammar with 19 videos & vocabulary with 43 videos. This is intentional because of vocabularies require more repetitions than grammars that can sometimes be quickly understood. In terms of the number of views, the smaller variation in terms of grammars' number of views may also indicate that more serious group of learners may want to watch regardless of the type of grammar while the casual learners will watch the more interesting vocabularies.

4   Conclusions

4.1   Selecting which tool for which learning

We mainly used Instagram Reels as learning resources for language learning and InstaStory as informal language assessments. InstaStories can also be used to share general information, news, or Indonesian culture. To maintain the layout, we use a pattern where an Instagram post is followed by two Instagram Reels. The posts are posted on weekdays while InstaStories were posted on weekends as InstaStory usually involves interactions with followers such as through pool, quizzes, or questions. InstaStory requires both creators and users to spend more time.

4.2   Moving forward

The first author's experiences support the study done by Lee (2022) that Instagram has many affordances that supports learning of languages. Mao (2014) has previously noted that effective use of social media as learning tool requires complicated effort in designing the resources. However, technology keeps on developing and improving its interface that reduce the complexity of resource preparation. What once was a hindrance could become opportunity that support teaching and learning of language.

Short videos made using Instagram Reels feature have proven to be effective in helping learners to learn beyond classroom setting. It promotes learning autonomy where learners could decide

when, where, and what they want to learn. InstaStory allows informal language assessment and builds connections between learners and educators which increases learners' motivation.

We still believe in face-to-face interactions between learners. At the same time, the use of social media is effective to supplement the language learning beyond the classroom experience. With better understanding of the features of social media, it can be used to support learning, build connections, increase learners' autonomy, and eventually increase learners' motivations.

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