

General Introduction Background of the study For many years, the English language has dominated as one of the most learned languages in the world. Its potential to cover the world's information, including research, literature, technology, ect., puts it at the top of the other languages. Therefore, achieving proficiency in English requires not only understanding grammar and syntax but also acquiring a good part of the vocabulary. According to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, vocabulary proficiency is an essential step to achieve fluency. It allows them to comprehend, communicate, and achieve overall language skills. The use of language is basically related to vocabulary. The more words someone knows, the better their abilities and skills will become. Within the development of technology, social media sites (SMSs) such as, Facebook, Tiktok, Instagram, and many others, have become the primary means of communication and sharing of knowledge. The spread of English in most of social media platform has become a trend which unconsciously contribute in the development of the learners' foreign language. Basically, learning new words is an ongoing process for EFL students, and depending solely on classroom instructions may not be sufficient. For this, students need to take charge of their own learning and find another strategy to expand their vocabulary. Social media, particularly Instagram, can be an interesting way to expose students to a variety of visual and written vocabulary content. While there has been research on the impact of social media on vocabulary, few studies, if any, in the Algerian context have investigated the potential of Instagram for acquiring vocabulary. 2. Statement of the problem One of the major challenges EFL students face is the lack of vocabulary skills. Insufficient vocabulary makes the learning process almost impossible. Many EFL students struggle to acquire a new word, due to lack of exposure to the language. Relying solely on traditional methods, such as classroom instructions, is not enough to enhance the learners' vocabulary acquisition. EFL students also need to engage themselves in the learning process and explore another strategy outside the classroom. One of the strategies that is suggested to learn vocabulary is following Instagram educational content. 3. Aim of the study The major aim of this study is to investigate the impact of using Instagram on improving EFL students' vocabulary from the lens of teachers and students. This study, therefore, aims to identify the students' and teachers' attitudes toward using Instagram as a tool to acquire vocabulary. 4. Research questions and hypothesis Our research attempts to answer the following questions: Do EFL students use Instagram to acquire vocabulary? What are the students' and teachers' attitudes towards the use of Instagram to acquire vocabulary? To answer these questions, we hypothesize that: Instagram would be an effective tool for EFL students to develop their vocabulary store. 5. Population and sampling The sample of the research concerns Second year EFL students and teachers at the department of Letters English, Frères Mentouri Constantine 1 University, for the academic year 2023/ 2024. A sample of 60 students is chosen randomly from second year and ten (10) teachers who teach EFL. 6. Research Methodology The present study is mainly concerned with investigating EFL students' and teachers' attitudes towards using Instagram as a tool to acquire vocabulary. A descriptive method is adopted, as it is the most suitable to the topic. A questionnaire, as the main tool, is used to examine the hypothesis. Mainly, two questionnaires have been administered: one for EFL teachers to explore their attitudes on using Instagram as a tool to enhance students' vocabulary, The second one was administered to examine the students' perceptions of using Instagram in their vocabulary acquisition process. 7.

Structure of the dissertation This research provides two main chapters. First, the theoretical chapter consists of two sections that are relevant to both variables. The first section is related to vocabulary, starting with the definitions, importance, types, in addition to the essential steps for learning vocabulary, the challenges, the techniques used by teachers to teach, and the input hypothesis for vocabulary acquisition. The second section is about Instagram, which is the main concern of the study. It starts with an overview about technology, social media, additionally, Instagram, its history, features, content, educational applications, and impact on vocabulary acquisition. Second, the fieldwork chapter divided into two parts. The first part is about the administration, analysis, and description of the questionnaires. The second part is about the discussion, results, and pedagogical recommendations. Chapter one:

Theoretical overview of vocabulary and Instagram Section one: vocabulary acquisition in EFL

Introduction Since vocabulary is a key component of any language, it becomes challenging for EFL students to comprehend and communicate effectively in a foreign language without sufficient vocabulary.

Therefore, vocabulary acquisition is a crucial step for EFL students to develop their overall language skills, viz. listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Thus, this section is devoted to provide a clear understanding of vocabulary acquisition in EFL, starting with defining the term, to highlighting its importance as well as its types. In addition, we identify the essential steps for learning vocabulary and the challenges students face in learning new words, vocabulary teaching techniques is also worth mentioning.

Definition of Vocabulary Vocabulary is a basic part of any target language. Despite the various definitions provided to the concept, identifying its exact meaning remains a challenge. According to Oxford Learners Dictionary (2024), vocabulary is “all the words that a person knows or uses.” Linse views it as the total number of words someone is familiar with (2005). In addition, it is noted that vocabulary involves both words we use to express ourselves (expressive vocabulary) and those we only understand (receptive vocabulary) (Neuman & Dwyer, 2009; Hiebert & Kamil, 2005). Furthermore, Hatch and Brown (1995) aver that vocabulary refers to the words that exist in a language or the words utilized by someone who speaks a language (as cited in Indriarti, 2014). Therefore, vocabulary encompasses the complete set of words that exist in a particular language, or those words understood and/or used effectively by someone. One more definition is provided by Coxhead & Coxhead (2013) who state that vocabulary is “the words of a language, including single items and phrases or chunks of several words that convey a particular meaning the way individual words do” (cited in Institute of Quranic Arabic, 2023).

In a nutshell, vocabulary is not only a set of individual words but also a collection of words, such as phrases and compound words, that have specific meanings similar to single ones. So understanding these collection is paramount for EFL learners to be capable to achieve fluent communication.

The Importance of vocabulary in EFL There is no doubt that vocabulary knowledge plays a critical role in improving EFL students’ language learning outcomes. Cameron (2001) points out that “building up a useful vocabulary is central to the learning of a foreign language at primary level” (p. 72). Likewise, Gower et al. (1995) assert that vocabulary is the foundation for learning a language. Students should acquire vocabulary at the beginning of their journey due to its importance over grammatical rules in developing their speaking skills (p. 142). Many scholars emphasize the importance of mastering vocabulary in language learning, such as Richards (1980); Krashen & Terrell (1983); and Krashen

(1989). The latter states that there are several reasons for prioritizing vocabulary: Initially, vocabulary expansion is necessary for language proficiency. Besides, it is common knowledge among second language learners: they typically bring along dictionaries, not grammar books, and often state that insufficient vocabulary is a key issue (as cited in Rodriguez & Sadoski, 2000). In addition, Wilkins (1972) notes that little can be communicated without grammar, and nothing at all can be communicated without vocabulary (as cited in Thornbury, 2000). Based on the researcher's own experience as an EFL student, it does not matter how well someone has studied grammar rules; rather, what really matters is how extensive their vocabulary repertoire is while using the language. Moreover, Sewan and Walter (1984, as in Thornbury 2000, p. 14), in the introduction to their Cambridge English course, said that "vocabulary acquisition is the largest and most important task facing the learner". That is, vocabulary acquisition is the learner's most significant and challenging task. Nation (2001, as cited in Alquahitani, 2015) as well as explains the compatible connection between vocabulary knowledge and language practice. He asserts that understanding vocabulary facilitates the use of language while using language results in an expansion of vocabulary stock. Thus, vocabulary is a vital language resource and is an ongoing process that includes all the words and phrases students need to master; these latter enable students to comprehend and use language effectively in different contexts. Types of vocabulary A word is mainly divided into two forms: oral and printed. To understand the meaning of a word and use it effectively, it is important to be familiar at least with its two forms: receptive and productive (Hiebert & Kamil, 2005). Therefore, a clarification of these two key concepts is required.

1.3.1. Receptive vocabulary This is also known as passive vocabulary. It refers to the ability to recognize the meaning of a word when reading or listening and is typically known as receptive knowledge of a word (Schmitt, 2000). Nation (2001) claims that it is through reading and listening that people get information from others and attempt to understand it. In other words, receptive vocabulary is the words a person can understand when he or she is exposed to the language but cannot use in his or her spoken or written language.

1.3.2. Productive vocabulary Schmitt (2000), referring to it also as active vocabulary, defines it as someone's ability to use words spontaneously in their verbal communication or written expression. Similarly, Raraj (2005) states that "productive knowledge means the knowledge to produce a word when the learner can use it in their writing or speech" (p. 12). In comparing between the two concepts, we deduce that receptive vocabulary incorporates words that we understand but cannot use, while productive vocabulary contains the words that we both understand and use regularly. In light of the previous literature, one would notice that knowing a word is only restricted to receptive and productive knowledge; however, the complexity of word knowledge can be even more vast. Nation (2001) outlines the different facets of knowledge necessary to know a word, as listed below: Table 1: what is involved in knowing a word In column 3, R = receptive knowledge, P = productive knowledge. (Nation, 2001, p. 40) Nation's table illustrates that knowing a word encompasses knowing the following components: To recognize the word's sound and pronounce it correctly. To recognize the written form of the word and be able to spell it correctly. To recognize the word's parts and be able to use them with the appropriate word. To understand the meaning of the word and be able to use it to express a concept. To associate the word with the appropriate concept and be able to produce it in multiple contexts. To know the word's connection with

the other words and be able to produce synonyms and antonyms. To notice the word's grammatical function and how to use it appropriately. To be aware the word's collocation and be able to produce words that collocate with the target word. To recognize the frequency of the word and when to use it.

Essential steps to learn vocabulary Since vocabulary is a crucial part of learning a foreign language, teachers constantly intend to assist their students in developing their vocabulary skills by helping them discover the strategies that might suit them. Students, on the other hand, need to be aware of what steps they can take to acquire that knowledge. Based on data analysis conducted by Brown and Payne (1994, as cited in Hatch and Brown, 1995), they conclude that there are five essential steps that every student should follow so that they can get an adequate knowledge of words. The five steps are ordered as follows.

Encountering new words First, it is important for students to have a place where they can learn new words. Students must have a source where they can be exposed to new vocabulary, such as by reading and listening to various resources like books, articles, videos, ect. Basically, this can be referred to as unintentional learning which is very important to help second language students acquire vocabulary as natives. However, there are variations among learners of how much words they can acquire due to some reasons such as:

- Motivation: A student can acquire more words when they fit his or her interest than other words.
- Need: students tend to acquire words more quickly when they feel the need for them.
- Audio visual materials: when students are encountered with an unknown object or action visually, later on, it will be easy for them to acquire it when it is heard.

Brown and Payne (1994, in Hatch and Brown, 1995) emphasize the importance of the context where new words can be encountered naturally.

Getting the word form Second, at this step, students should create a clear representation of both the pronunciation and spelling form of the new word. The crucial part of this stage is highlighted when students try to recall, identify, and produce the vocabulary item. Given that, the major issue in learning a new word is associating it with a familiar word that is similar in either sound or spelling. Thus, EFL students need to be aware of both the spoken and written forms of the new words they are learning (Brown and Payne, 1994, in Hatch and Brown, 1995).

Getting the word meaning Third, understanding the meaning of a word is also an important step in learning vocabulary. Students can acquire the meaning of a new word by asking a bilingual who speaks a native language or a native speaker to define the word, using dictionaries, creating mental images that depict the meaning of a word and asking somebody what it means, or learning it according to the situation in which it occurs (Brown and Payne, 1994, in Hatch and Brown, 1995).

Consolidating words form and meaning in the memory Next, students should combine both word form and meaning in their minds. This step is crucial to reinforce the connection between the two aspects of the word. The process can be achieved using various techniques, such as using the word in a meaningful sentence, using flashcards and games, connecting images and sounds to the word in the mind, guessing from context, and using lists to store new words (Brown and Payne, 1994, in Hatch and Brown, 1995).

Using the word The final essential step in acquiring vocabulary is to incorporate the word into your speaking and writing in order to reinforce understanding and retention. Thus, using the word means that students have successfully followed the previous steps. (Brown and Payne, 1994, in Hatch and Brown, 1995).

Vocabulary learning difficulties Mastering the vocabulary of a foreign language (FL) is a challenging process, particularly for EFL

students. Laufer (1997) sets out seven factors that make the learnability of a word more difficult, such as: Pronunciation FL learners usually encounter difficulties in pronouncing words correctly due to the influence of their first language system. This includes the difficulty in distinguishing between some words in a language, like live from leave, bed from bad, unfamiliarity with the rules that arrange sounds together, such as, and the inappropriate placement of stress on the correct syllable. All of these prevent the acquisition of the word (Laufer, 1997). Orthography Understanding both pronunciation and spelling is important when learning new words. The spelling of English words does not always correspond to their pronunciation; for instance, words like love, woman, and odd have different pronunciations of the letter "O" (Laufer, 1997). Length Longer words, those with more than two syllables, are often perceived to be more difficult to learn than short words. Nonetheless, additional elements such as the student's familiarity with the word parts (morphological transparency) and how often he or she encounters the word (frequency) also affect their ability to learn both short and long words. Therefore, word length can be a main factor if it is isolated from other factors (Laufer, 1997). Morphology Inflexional complexity: Learning a word with complex inflections, such as irregular plurals, grammatical gender, and various noun cases, is more challenging (Laufer, 1997). Derivational complexity: Students find it difficult to learn a word if they cannot distinguish between an attached word and a free word. For instance, the word "outline" is free word that does not mean "out of" (Laufer, 1997). Synformy (Similarity of lexical forms) FL students often struggle to remember new words that look or sound similar to words they already know. For instance, Myint Su (1971, as cited in Schmitt and McCarthy, 1997) points out that his EFL students have problems distinguishing between such words as watching and washing, join and joy, etc (Laufer, 1997). Grammar _parts of speech Concerning the parts of speech in English grammar, nouns usually tend to be the easiest to acquire, while adverbs are more challenging. Verbs and adjectives are in between. However, the difficulty does not necessarily stem from the parts of speech themselves but from the complexity within each category. For instance, a verb has multiple forms, such as imperative, infinitive, or past tense form, which can confuse students. Moreover, students might also mix up and replace different parts of speech (Laufer, 1997). Semantic Features of the word Laufer (1997) there are certain semantic properties influence the acquisition of vocabulary. These properties include: Abstractness: students face difficulties learning abstract words more than concrete ones due to their complex nature. However, second language (L2) learners can also face challenges with concrete, especially when these words involve additional complexities, such as the distinction between similar concepts in the first and the target language (Laufer, 1997). Specificity and register restriction: Foreign language (FL) students often overuse hypernyms (general terms) in their speech, which leads to overgeneralization instead of using specific vocabulary. This is because they are usually not aware that certain words are appropriate in one context or with certain individuals but not in another. This can hinder FL students from acquiring new words (Laufer, 1997). Idiomaticity: Students and teachers often perceive idiomatic expressions as more challenging to learn than single words because of their non-literal meaning. The complexity can make the learning process more difficult for EFL students (Laufer, 1997). Multiple meanings: Language learners usually encounter difficulties in acquiring and using words with multiple meanings, either polyseme or homonym. The latter might confuse them by using the wrong

meaning in a sentence; for example, they might use “since” to mean “from the time when” instead of “because”, or they might avoid using tricky words together (Laufer, 1997).

Vocabulary Teaching Techniques

Since languages are word-based, teaching vocabulary is a required part of learning a FL (Alqahtani, 2015). It seems impossible for students to acquire a language without words. For this reason, teachers tend to use various techniques to assist their students’ vocabulary knowledge.

Gairns and Redman (1996)

point out that there are three common techniques that every teacher should be able to use when presenting new vocabulary, which are:

Visual Techniques

They can be divided into visual, mime and gestures. First, visual techniques usually involve blackboard pictures, posters, realia, etc. They are used to send and depict meaning and make a very effective interaction between students. Second, mime and gestures are another way that teachers use to represent the meaning of words by creating a meaningful context along with gestures that can be very helpful for getting the point.

Verbal Techniques

There are various verbal techniques that teachers can use to make the learning process easier for students, such as using examples to explain difficult terms, providing similar synonyms and definitions to ensure understanding, comparing words to define differences, introducing new words by connecting them to already-known ones, and giving examples to clarify broader categories.

Translation

Teaching vocabulary to EFL students can be easily accomplished by conveying the meaning of new items using their native language. This can help save time and avoid a lot of explanations and misunderstandings. However, it is not advisable to overuse it. The input hypothesis for vocabulary acquisition

One of the most important questions that a lot of EFL students ask is how to acquire the overall language skills of a second or foreign language. studies in this respect have been conducted, and one of them is Krashen hypothesis. According to Krashen (1982), to move from one stage to another while acquiring a language there are four main steps to follow. First, learners should comprehend the meaning behind the message and not its structure. Second, the acquisition process happens when we understand the meaning of the input that is slightly above our existing abilities and through the help of other factors, such as contextual clues and previous knowledge of the world. Third, Krashen adds that the acquisition of new information can directly be accessed by providing enough communication that can be recognized by the learners. Lastly, the acquisition occurs naturally without explicit instruction. In 1989, Krashen confirmed that acquiring vocabulary and spelling is fundamental for language comprehension. These aspects can be acquired the same way as the other elements of the language. Krashen’s study (1989) asserts that exposure to comprehensible texts through reading will automatically enhance proficiency in word knowledge and spelling accuracy. Additionally, he mentions that other studies have reported that children acquire knowledge of words through listening to comprehensible stories. Thus, the input hypothesis is believed to play an essential role in developing the students’ vocabulary proficiency, focusing mostly on comprehensible exposure to language materials.

Conclusion

Vocabulary plays a vital role in the process of learning a FL. It paves the road for EFL students to comprehend and produce the target language successfully. EFL students must be aware of the essential steps for acquiring new words. Despite the challenges they may encounter in the process, teachers also need to assist them through their teaching techniques. Finally, this section has given a considerable attention to the effect of the input hypothesis on vocabulary acquisition. Section two:

Instagram and EFL vocabulary acquisition Introduction In today's world of technology, Instagram is one of the most popular platforms, especially among the young generation. Therefore, it is no longer perceived as a photo-sharing application but can also serve as an excellent educational resource for EFL students during the learning process. Hence, this section mainly focuses on how Instagram can be used by EFL students to improve their vocabulary repertoire. First, it provides a brief overview on technology and social media. Then, Instagram is introduced with tackling its history, features, and content. Next, the section examines how Instagram can be used as an educational tool in general and as a tool to acquire vocabulary in particular.

2.1. Technology in language learning

With the significant advancement of technology, many opportunities have emerged for learning a second or foreign language. According to Kern and Warshauer (2008, as cited in Haswani, 2014), computer technology can create a variety of tasks for second or foreign language students to practice the target language. The enhancement of computer networks allows students to communicate and understand each other better, which is important for learning a language; it provides students with real-life interaction opportunities and allows teachers to offer personalized lessons and structured programs, such as tutorials, educational games, exercises, and much more. Thus, technological advancement can support language learning by facilitating meaningful communication and interaction, which are essential for mastering a new language. It boosts student engagement and offers real-world practice opportunities, as well as helps teachers create their own virtual classroom and explain their lessons there.

2.2. Social Media

Social media is part of the technological advancement, it is a popular data-based form that connects people from all over the world. Defining social media (SM) is quite difficult due to its continuous evolution and large range of websites. Boyd and Ellison (2007) state that the first release of social networking sites (SNSs) was in 1997. These sites are data-based services that permit users to create an account visible to others in a particular system and make a list of people with whom they connect, see, and navigate within the system. According to Chou (2014, as cited in Arif, 2019), social media can offer its users features like interaction, a high-quality environment, and information sharing, which enable students to engage in various activities, such as making worldwide friendships, accessing information and getting them easily, and learning the English language (Arif, 2019). He also states that through social media, students can improve their English skills due to its widespread use as an international language on these platforms. That is, we can say that social media platforms can be an interesting medium for EFL students to improve their English skills.

2.3. Instagram

Instagram is one of the social media spaces. It is "a free online photo-sharing application (App) and social network platform that was acquired by Facebook in 2012" (Halok & McLaughlin, n.d.), Instagram is a digital tool that is available for everyone to use. It allows users to share photos, videos, and messages with others online with a mobile phone and enables them to interact by liking, commenting, and sharing content. In addition, Instagram has evolved into a multifaceted platform, including both personal and professional ones. It permits users to quickly take, share, and edit content. This ease of accessibility has contributed to Instagram's popularity, allowing users to engage with the platform easily via a web browser on either a computer or a mobile device (Ellison, 2017). Furthermore, Carpenter et al. (2020) view Instagram as a multi-media platform that can be used through an app or a website that includes different effects. They

state that this platform provides users with engaging features, such as private instant messages, creating posts with multiple visual media, sharing stories, and so on and so forth; allowing individuals to connect differently. Moreover, Ali (2014) claims that through a mobile phone, Instagram offers multiple services for its users, such as registering a profile, sharing data (pictures or 15-second videos), using filters, adding captions, tagging followers, including hashtags, adding comments and/or likes, navigating, adding new followers, and so on and so forth. Hence, Instagram serves as a multi-faceted platform that allows users to discover, share, and connect through various features, both in formal and informal ways.

2.4. History of Instagram In October 2010, Instagram emerged as Burbn, an early version of a web app by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger. After it received funding from different sources like Baseline Ventures and Andreessen Horowitz, it developed into Instagram (Landsverk, 2014). At that time, the Burbn app offered features to its users, like the ability to own an account, post their activities, and upload images. The image sharing feature was the most significant one (Blystone, 2024). Landsverk (2014) states that within only two months of launching, Instagram achieved one million users, and people had already posted 150 million photos. Until 2011, the platform had expanded to cover 10 million users, and Apple crowned Instagram as the iPhone app of the year. In addition, in 2012, the company was purchased by Facebook for \$1 in cash and stock. From that time forward, Instagram witnessed significant development, particularly among businesses (Landsverk, 2014). Kaur (2023) admits that on June 13th, 2023, Instagram introduced another feature, which is a 15-second video with 13 added filters. He added that in December 2023, the company launched another significant feature that allowed people to make personal chatrooms known as instant messages, as a challenge against other messaging services. Over the years, Instagram has continued to introduce new features like stories, live videos, and Instagram shopping that put it in the 4th position of all social media (Kaur, 2023). In conclusion, the platform has gained a special popularity, with about 2 billion active users monthly.

2.5. Instagram features Instagram has witnessed development from its beginning until now. As more services were added, it became a unique platform. Handayani (2016) states that Instagram introduces various features to its users, such as: Instagram profile interface: it is the user's profile in which information including biography, profile picture, total posts, number of followers, and following accounts is provided. The feature "+Follow" permits users to discover many accounts with their current content. Profile content: the followers can view the whole profile content of the user and can see the details of each single one with only one click. Navigation tool: at the bottom part of the Instagram interface, there are five icons, each of which serves as a navigational tool. These icons represent the home, explore, post, notification, and user page (in Tarigan et al., 2001). Hence, all these features can make it easy for users to move around the app easily. Additionally, Eldridge (n.d.), declares that Instagram provides users with clear services. It introduces posts including both audio and/or visual aids, which can be displayed to either public or private followers. These latter can be shared permanently in the user's profile as a post or only for 24 hours as a story. The user has the ability to "livestream" video immediately from a camera to the app. He adds that Instagram users can communicate privately, share pictures and videos through instant messages, keep up to date with each other, navigate by topic or hashtag, and encounter a variety of random popular content. Also, he mentions that it is possible for the users to capture photos or videos

and to filter (16 filters) old or new ones using captions, animations, symbols, or effects that add different views. Furthermore, Eldridge states that Instagram posts encompass text, location, or tags, which makes the post more accessible. It is possible for users to interact by leaving a comment or liking feed posts. For stories, they can react through an emoji or direct message. Thus, Instagram can be described as a multimedia platform where it gives its users great potential to share and interact with a variety of media types, including photos, videos, stories, reels, live streams, direct messages, and many more features that contribute significantly to its popularity and versatility among social media platforms.

2.6. Instagram content

Social media, especially Instagram, has developed to become more than just a medium to post and communicate with friends; it has also become a powerful tool to share information and various meaningful content. Luo and Hancock (2020, in Eryc, 2022) state that there are four essential parts of content on social media; they are listed below:

- Entertaining content: it is the most widespread on social media, where a sense of humor is predominant. That is, this type can help maintain audience attention and engagement and bring people together.
- Educational content: it focuses on facts and knowledge, appealing to their logical thinking. This type of content shares information and science with its audience.
- Conversion content: this one emphasizes persuading the audience to take a particular action, such as buying a product, signing up for a service, etc. In other words, to convince the viewer about a particular service.

In short, Instagram as a social media platform can be an effective medium that provides each user with a plethora of content tailored to his or her interests.

2.7. Instagram as a learning tool

Nowadays, social media is more than merely a means of communication. Many people use these platforms for different purposes, including education. Li (2017) states that the use of social media in teaching has increased by 21% from 2012 to 2013. Instagram is a popular social media outlet that was developed from a photo-sharing app to a multi-visual platform that allows users to explore, create, and engage within diverse themes. It was developed to include not only individual use but also educational content. Tutors have recognized the potential abilities of social media since they are themselves part of it (Hsieh, 2017). Instagram can provide educators with a plethora of activities that cater to students' visual needs. According to Ali (2014), Instagram can supply language classrooms with multiple visuals that fit the context and students' needs, building a space where students could interact and communicate with each other in and outside the classroom boundaries through liking and commenting on each other's posts. Additionally, Listiani (2016) states that Instagram could be used as an effective medium for learning due to its great features, such as:

- Photo sharing: Instagram users can upload a picture from the app itself or from their phone and write a caption that grabs the individuals' attention.
- Social: Instagram users can follow and view the details of each other, and they can like, give feedback, and ask for clarification that helps users engage with each other's content and boost connection.
- Community: Instagram brings people together from all around the world. This can be very beneficial to engage students to describe their emotions and write them in a form of a text. An education based on our shared humanity: Instagram shares diverse experiences and perspectives of different people and provides students with a space to share their own. Thus, Instagram features support learning, as in this case it helps students improve their writing skills through photo sharing and social interaction. Moreover, Instagram offers many educational accounts related to the English language that can be beneficial for

students to exploit and improve their EFL skills, especially vocabulary. According to Torn (2022), people nowadays pass hours using social media platforms, which were first seen to be used only for fun; however, these platforms can offer opportunities for people to learn English, and they can be very beneficial if they know how to take advantage of them. Torn (2022) suggests a set of educational Instagram accounts to follow for learning English, which are: First, @bbclearningenglish: Figure 1: @bbclearningenglish This platform is one of the best English learning accounts for learning British English, with 3.6 million users following it, and it is the first Instagram account to publish English lessons. It presents different topics, including formal and informal English, grammar, and vocabulary. This account provides both visual and auditory content, like entertaining videos, posts with captions clarifying the meaning of similar vocabulary, posts about proverbs, synonyms, motivational sayings, and activities like “fill the gap”. The team of the account responds regularly to any questions from its subscribers in the comments and publishes the right answers after giving its followers time to think about them. Second, CambridgeEnglish, it is an English–language learning account that helps people learn British English. The account description states that “they help people learn English and prove their skills to the world”. Torn adds that the account shares posts to help its subscribers learn about different parts of the language and prepares them for exam assignments, such as those provided by Cambridge, which are widely recognized tests and evaluate different levels of English skills. Also, this account shares simple and engaging content to explain grammar, fix errors, evaluate English, improve vocabulary, offer language learning advice, and present different things in English. Third, @Idiomsland, it is an Instagram account that publishes posts about idioms for daily conversations. Before the popularity of reels, this account used humorous ways to explain, provide definitions, and provide interesting information. In 2022, the account has changed the way it covers the idioms from posts to short videos with clips from famous movies and series, such as “Breaking Bad,” “The Office,” “The Big Bang”, etc. Moreover, @englishwithnab, An Instagram account of Nab Darell, an experienced English instructor with years of practice. He aims to teach his followers English on social platforms to enhance their overall language skills. Although Nab is not an English–language speaker, he has learned the American accent very well. Only first language (L1) speakers and advanced learners can detect his little foreign pronunciation. He prefers to share videos to correct errors and give alternative words to commonly used phrases. Nab teaches in a positive manner, making the learning process easy and enjoyable. Only intermediate and advanced learners can take advantage of his content. This account is a treasure for anyone who wants to improve and correct their English skills. That is, all these educational accounts that are proposed by Torn can offer multiple authentic language learning environments for EFL students to improve their language proficiency. In conclusion, Instagram’s features and educational accounts provide a proof that Instagram can be a useful and enjoyable language learning tool. The reason is that this platform permits its users to practice the language in real time communication and allow for a cultural exchange. 2.8. The impact of using Instagram in vocabulary acquisition Since the increasing popularity of social media sites like Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, etc., a new generation of students has emerged as “Digital Natives” (Prensky, 2001, in Nguyen, 2023) who tend to use the internet extensively to gain knowledge and interact with others (Benson & Avery, 2009, in Nguyen, 2023). Recent studies confirm the growing

significance of social media, especially Instagram, for acquiring vocabulary. Putri (2022) has explored the impact of using Instagram and its features that influence vocabulary acquisition. The study adopted a quantitative method using a questionnaire with 28 students in the English education PI17A writing class. The findings indicate that Instagram can be an effective app to increase their vocabulary, both through video and especially caption features. Rosdiani et al. (2022) have conducted another study to evaluate the efficacy of “Instagram captions in developing the vocabulary of grade eight students at SMPN4 Tanantovea Donggala, Central Sulawesi”. The sample was taken from 44 students, who were divided into two experimental and control groups, and each group learned differently. The control group learned using conventional methods, while the other group learned using Instagram captions. The results confirm that Instagram captions help students enhance their vocabulary and have positive effects on their performance. Moreover, Mirkovic (2022) investigated the effect of using Instagram on improving “English vocabulary at “C” levels”. A questionnaire was used to collect data that was posted on the Instagram story “@English, exams. With. djutica”, and the sample was taken from its followers. The results proved that Instagram has improved English vocabulary at C levels. Another study by Ortiz et al. (2023) about “Instagram as a learning tool to improve technical vocabulary for sport science students” among 75 undergraduate sport science students, which were divided into 16 groups. The findings showed positive results toward using Instagram to learn new terms in their field. All the aforementioned previous studies showed the positive impact of the use of Instagram for students in acquiring FL vocabulary, which indicates that the former can be an effective technique for EFL students to increase their vocabulary knowledge.

2.9. Advantages and Disadvantages

On the other hand, SNSs like Instagram can be a double-edge sword, where it can cater the students’ needs if they use it appropriately or affect them negatively if they overuse it only as a social media. First, according to Bell (2013), Instagram can be used to share pictures, videos, or texts; schools can publish content utilizing a common school hashtag (in Al Garawi, 2009). That is, Instagram supplies students with a variety of contextualized visual content that can help them memorize and retain new words, either unconsciously through unintended content or consciously through professional content. Second, Code (2015) states that students constantly use visual platforms, which are distinct from the traditional environment of the classroom, to record and publish their stories. He adds that since students are fully immersed in using this visual platform, typically between 50 and 100 times per day, they can be exposed to endless texts and express their ideas there. This means that Instagram can be an additional learning tool for EFL students to encounter new vocabulary. While Instagram can consume a significant amount of internet data, it can lead to lack of real social connection between individuals; relying solely on Instagram to learn hinders the development of independent learning habits; Besides, direct sharing of information between people is essential (Wulandari, 2019).

Conclusion

To sum up, Instagram is a social media platform that has evolved from an entertaining tool into an educational platform. It offers students multiple chances to develop their vocabulary mastery. Thus, this section aims to explore the different dimensions of Instagram and how it can impact the vocabulary learning of EFL students