CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A.   Research Background

Mobile devices and internet technology are now widely used in the educational field. These technologies have influenced the ways languages are learned and taught. When it comes to learning via mobile devices, it is termed as Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). MALL has a great potential to provide learning opportunities without the constraints of place and time. Çakmak (2019) claims that mobile learning can provide students learning opportunities at all times with no limits. Along with the presence of MALL, several language learning apps (e.g., Duolingo and Memrise) are developed and accessible for those who want to learn languages in an informal learning settings.

Besides the language learning apps, social media has also been used for the purpose of language learning, specifically in the area of writing. Writing on social media can be advantageous because social media gives students opportunities to practice their writing in a motivating way. As stated by Zheng, Yim, and Warschauer (2018), social media enables students to exchange and share ideas, enhance their authorship awareness, increase their motivation to write, and eventually develop their writing skill. Indeed, writing on social media allows the students to freely express their thought and reflect on their own writings. Laire, Casteleyn, and Mottart (2012) further state that social media can be a user-centred writing practice platform for students. This way students are able to produce

writings and monitor their own writing process. It can be said that social media can be a beneficial platform to learn writing.

Among social media platforms provided, Instagram has the potential to be used for learning English writing. Instagram is a platform of social media to share the activities of people's life through a series of photos and videos (Lomicka and Lord, 2016). There were previous studies which provided the evidence that Instagram can provide opportunities for students to learn English writing. For instance, Kurniawan and Katsuhandani (2018) found out that integrating Instagram in creative writing activities enabled the students to develop their ideas in an active and learner-centred way. Shazali, Shamsudin and Yunus (2019) in their research also found out that Instagram is an effective platform to improve students' vocabulary range and grammatical accuracy as the aspects of writing skill. Hence, it can be said that Instagram can be an effective platform for learning writing.

Having a good writing skill is demanded for students in the English Language Education Study Program, Teacher Training and Education Faculty, Universitas Tanjungpura. Such demand is seen from the fact that the students should pass the compulsory writing subjects offered by the study program in pursuing the bachelor degree. The fact that the students are English pre-service teachers also makes writing an important skill to them, for they will be the role model for their future students. In sync with these reasons, the students should always improve their writing skill.

Instagram is believed to be a popular social media among the students of English Language Education Study Program. After doing a pre-observation, it was

found out that they used Instagram for social purposes such as sharing their activities by posting photos on Instagram and communicating with people. When they posted photos on Instagram, they used English to write the caption describing the photos. They also used English to communicate on Instagram such as writing comments and chatting with friends. Therefore, the researcher was interested to find out the students' perceptions toward the use of Instagram for learning English writing. This research involved the students of English Language Education Study Program, Teacher Training and Educational Faculty, Universitas Tanjungpura.

Several previous studies had been conducted as an attempt to utilize Instagram in the teaching learning process. Purwandari (2017) examined the use of photographs in Instagram to teach students writing descriptive text. It was found out students who were taught using Instagram produced better descriptive text compared to those who were taught in conventional way. Moreover, Shazali, Shamsudin and Yunus (2019) conducted an action research to explore the use of Instagram for developing students' writing ability and their attitudes towards it. They found out that Instagram developed students' writing ability, and students had a positive attitude toward the use of Instagram in learning writing. Similarly, Akhiar, Mydin, and Kasuma (2017) investigated 101 undergraduate students' perceptions and attitude toward the use of Instagram in English language writing. The students were firstly given a descriptive English essay writing activity on Instagram, and their perceptions and attitude were then collected. The findings showed that students had a positive but moderate attitude towards using Instagram in improving their writing ability.

Looking at the aforementioned previous studies, it could be said that their focus was to use Instagram in teaching students writing. Simply put, the teachers asked the students to engage in the teaching writing process using Instagram. It seemed that few if any study had been conducted to find out the students' perceptions toward the use of Instagram for learning English writing in a fully self-directed learning way. Therefore, this research sought to fill this gap. The researcher was interested to find out the students' perceptions toward the use of Instagram for learning English writing. The researcher used descriptive research design and chose the participants from students of English Language Education Study Program, Teacher Training and Education Faculty, Universitas Tanjungpura.

B.   Research Questions

In relation with the background of the research, the researcher formulates two research questions.

1.   What is the perception of the students of English Language Education Study Program toward Instagram caption and photo feature for English writing?

2.   What is the perception of the students of English Language Education Study Program toward Instagram social networking activities for English writing?

C.   Research Purposes

Referring to the research question, this research has two research purposes.

1. To find out the perception of the students of English Language Education Study Program toward caption for English writing.

2. To find out the perception of the students of English Language Education Study Program toward social networking activities for English writing.

D.   Research Significance

The results of this research are expected to be beneficial for:

1.   The students

This research revealed the English Language Education Study Program students' perception toward the use of Instagram for learning English writing. After knowing their perception, the students are expected to use Instagram at their best to learn English writing.

2.   The English lecturers and teachers

After knowing the English Language Education Study Program students' perception toward the use of Instagram for learning English writing, the English lecturers and teachers can take into consideration to use Instagram in teaching writing courses or subjects.

3.   The other researchers

The researcher hoped that this research inspires future researchers who will conduct studies with similar topic, specifically with the focus in Instagram social networking activities. Future studies could create a balance environment for self-directed and teacher-led language learning through Instagram social networking activities. Future studies

are expected to seek further information from the perspectives of the English teachers or lecturers to gain a more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon.

E.   Terminology

The terms which exist concerning the topic of this research should be defined in order to get the same understanding and to avoid misunderstanding among the readers. The explanations of the terms are as follows.

1.   Perception, in this research, is the English Language Education Study Program students' point of view or opinion about the use of Instagram for learning English writing.

2.   Instagram is a platform of social media to share the activities of people's lives through a series of photos and videos.

3.   Writing on Instagram refers to the written communication which has the characteristics of spoken language. One distinctive feature of this kind of writing is the use of emoticons to show facial expressions as online writing lacks the non-verbal cues such as body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions.

4.   Learning English writing is defined as the activities of writing captions, commenting, and chatting using English language done by the participants. They did not use Instagram intended for learning, however, the researcher considers these as activities to acquire English writing skills.

5. Caption refers to the written description about the Instagram photos shared by the users.

6. Social networking activities involve the communication on Instagram through chatting and commenting.