

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Theoretical Framework

1. Idiomatic Expressions in English

a) Definition of Idioms

Idioms are expressions whose meanings cannot be directly interpreted from the literal meanings of their individual words. They are considered fixed phrases that function as a single lexical unit in communication. Idioms are frequently found in spoken and written English, but they often present challenges for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners due to their non-literal nature (Abdelwahab & Rahmtallah, 2024).

In addition to their linguistic complexity, idioms carry strong cultural elements that require learners to understand the social background of the target language. Learners cannot simply translate idioms word by word but must interpret them holistically (Nguyen Phan Thao Tran, 2020). This figurative meaning often depends on the context in which the idiom is used, making it harder to learn without sufficient exposure.

Recent studies have shown that idioms are better understood when they are presented in meaningful and realistic contexts. Digital media such as videos with visual, audio, and real-life elements can help learners grasp idioms more effectively. Teaching idioms as whole expressions through contextual input can support both comprehension and retention (Ghooriyan & Salehi, 2022).

From these expert opinions, it can be concluded that idioms are fixed figurative expressions and play a key role in natural communication. They often appear in informal speech, films, music, and social media, which makes them essential for EFL learners aiming for fluency and cultural awareness. In the case of Ma'had Al-Jami'ah, where English learning is mostly based on memorization and lacks authentic input, idioms are rarely included in instruction. Therefore, using digital platforms such as Instagram—especially through short and engaging videos—can provide *mahasantri* with real examples that help them understand and use idiomatic expressions more confidently.

b) Idiom as Part of Vocabulary Mastery

Idioms are considered an essential part of vocabulary because they are processed in the brain as fixed lexical units. Learners tend to retrieve idioms as complete expressions, similar to how they recall individual words. This supports the idea that idioms are best treated as vocabulary items, rather than purely as grammar or pragmatic forms (Nation, 2013).

Recent research confirms that idioms are more effectively learned when they are taught through context-rich and engaging approaches. One study found that using mobile-assisted learning tools such as WhatsApp to teach idioms within short conversational contexts led to better retention and understanding among EFL learners compared to traditional memorization methods (Soleimani & Aghazadeh, 2024).

Another study explored the impact of video-based learning on idiom mastery. The researchers concluded that learners who watched short videos containing idiomatic expressions used in everyday dialogue became more familiar with their meaning and usage. These videos helped learners associate idioms with realistic situations, making the

expressions easier to remember and apply (Vongpumivitch et al., 2023).

In addition, a study involving multimodal flashcards that combined images, sound, and written examples revealed that students were better able to recall and use idioms when visual and auditory input supported the learning process. Learners benefited from both recognition and active use of idioms during language tasks (Spring & Takeda, 2024).

Based on these findings, idioms should be integrated into vocabulary learning because they appear frequently in natural English communication. Learners who understand and use idioms correctly sound more fluent and culturally aware. In Ma'had Al-Jami'ah, English instruction often relies on word lists and memorization. For that reason, introducing idioms through short video content on Instagram can provide learners with practical, context-based input that helps them use idioms more confidently in real-life communication.

c) Challenges in Learning Idioms

Idioms often present significant challenges for English language learners because their meanings are figurative and cannot be understood from the

individual words that compose them. Learners who try to interpret idioms literally tend to misunderstand them, especially when the idioms involve cultural or metaphorical references that are unfamiliar (Burrows, 2023)

Research shows that without exposure to the cultural context of a language, students are more likely to misinterpret idiomatic expressions. One study conducted among EFL learners in Europe found that many students struggled to grasp idioms because they attempted to translate each word literally, resulting in incorrect or confusing interpretations (Nguyen Phan Thao Tran, 2020).

Another common difficulty is related to the limited inclusion of idioms in the classroom. Studies reveal that idioms are often neglected in EFL curricula, particularly in traditional learning settings that prioritize grammar and vocabulary memorization (Ghooriyan & Salehi, 2022). As a result, many learners lack opportunities to encounter idioms in natural and practical usage.

These challenges are especially relevant in the Ma'had Al-Jami'ah environment, where English is taught through formal materials and structured memorization. Without authentic input such as

conversations, videos, or stories, idiomatic language remains distant and difficult to grasp. To help overcome these obstacles, teaching idioms through digital content such as Instagram videos can provide *mahasantri* with real examples in context, making idioms more understandable and applicable in daily communication.

2. Instagram Video Content as Learning Media

a) Definition and Features of Instagram

Instagram is a social media platform that focuses on visual content such as images and short videos. It allows users to communicate through a combination of pictures, captions, and audio. This makes Instagram not only a tool for entertainment but also a potential platform for delivering educational content in a creative and accessible way (Alfu et al., 2021).

The features offered by Instagram are highly compatible with mobile-assisted language learning. One study found that learners are more motivated when engaging with Instagram because it offers short and visually appealing content that can be accessed anytime. The platform supports the use of Reels and Stories, which provide exposure to language in

natural settings including real-life pronunciation, intonation, and usage (Teng et al., 2022).

Another study emphasized the value of Instagram Reels for improving vocabulary learning. The short format encourages repetition and retention through visual and auditory input. By watching content that includes conversational expressions and everyday situations, learners can naturally absorb new words and phrases (Hasani & Hamdani, 2025).

Instagram also supports interactive learning. Features such as comments, likes, and sharing allow learners to engage with content creators and peers. This interaction can lead to deeper reflection and collaborative learning. In language education, it creates an opportunity for learners to receive feedback and stay connected to the target language in a casual but meaningful way (Lestari & German, 2021).

Based on these findings, Instagram can be viewed as a student-friendly and flexible tool for language learning. It combines visual content, brief explanations, and interactive elements that promote independent learning. In Ma'had Al-Jami'ah, where students face time limitations and rigid learning schedules, Instagram can serve as a useful medium

for delivering English idioms through engaging and contextualized video content.

b) The Use of Instagram in English Language Learning

Instagram has become an increasingly popular tool in English language learning, especially among students in non-formal learning environments. Its interactive and visual nature supports a learning experience that feels more relaxed, personalized, and enjoyable. The platform provides flexible access to language exposure through short posts, captions, comments, and videos that can be explored based on learners' interests (Nurkhamidah Putri Wulandari, 2022).

One study found that Instagram feed-based tasks helped learners improve their vocabulary and grammar skills. By integrating short educational materials into students' daily social media activity, learning became part of their routine and resulted in better motivation and performance (Teng et al., 2022). Learners were able to observe real language use and apply it in meaningful contexts.

Another study revealed that students who followed English-learning accounts on Instagram

developed vocabulary knowledge through engaging captions and image-based learning. Instagram also encouraged them to reflect, interact with others, and apply new words in different situations (Ahmad Saputra et al., 2023). These opportunities contributed to learner autonomy and more natural language development outside the classroom.

In addition, Instagram was found to be a motivating tool in TEFL classrooms. Students reported that using Instagram made English learning more fun and relatable. They also felt more confident using English expressions in writing and speaking, especially when exposed to conversational language through videos and comments (Hasani & Hamdani, 2025).

Based on these findings, Instagram can be seen as a relevant and effective learning platform. It supports microlearning, encourages repeated exposure to authentic language, and helps learners stay motivated. For *mahasantri* at Ma'had Al-Jami'ah, where formal English instruction is limited, Instagram offers a flexible solution to enhance their vocabulary and idiom mastery through engaging video content that fits naturally into their daily routines.

c) Instagram-Based Video Content for Teaching Idioms

Instagram offers visually rich, short video formats such as Reels and Stories, which are well-suited for teaching idioms requiring context and repeated exposure. Idioms are not easily understood through rote memorization; learners benefit more from seeing them in natural, everyday contexts. A study in 2023 involving Indonesian EFL learners found that using Instagram for speaking practice helped increase motivation and improved vocabulary retention, demonstrating the platform's usefulness for introducing idiomatic expressions in engaging ways (Subekti & Damaryanan, 2023).

Ghooriyan and Salehi (2022) conducted research with Iranian upper-intermediate learners using Instagram posts to teach idioms. These posts combined images, example sentences, and contextual explanations, leading to significant improvements in idiom comprehension and learner confidence compared to traditional textbook methods (Ghooriyan & Salehi, 2022)

Additionally, another international study confirmed that Instagram feed-based activities

enhance vocabulary learning and learner engagement. While the study focused on general vocabulary, its results apply to idioms as fixed lexical items that are reinforced through meaningful and repeated exposure (Teng et al., 2022).

One of the key cognitive theories that supports the use of Instagram video content in language learning is Dual Coding Theory, proposed by Allan Paivio (1986). According to this theory, the human brain processes information through two separate but interconnected systems: a verbal system (language-based input) and a non-verbal system (visual-based input). When learners receive both verbal (spoken or written explanation of idioms) and visual (images, actions, or scenes in video) representations of information simultaneously, they are more likely to retain and recall the material (Clark & Paivio, 1991). This theory supports the effectiveness of short videos on Instagram, which combine audio narration, text, and visual cues, making idiomatic expressions easier to understand, remember, and apply in real-life communication. Therefore, Dual Coding Theory provides a strong theoretical foundation for integrating visual-based digital media like Instagram into idiom instruction.

In this study, idiom videos were produced and shared on the Instagram account “HANLY.” Each short video presented an idiom within a clear context, included example usage sentences and pronunciation guides, and featured subtitles and background music for better engagement. This approach provides *mahasantri* at Ma’had Al-Jami’ah with frequent, contextualized idiom input that matches their daily digital interactions and supports confident language use.

In conclusion, Instagram-based videos offer an effective and context-rich strategy for teaching idioms. They deliver idiomatic expressions in a memorable, engaging, and repeatable format that supports both comprehension and use. For learners at Ma’had Al-Jami’ah, who typically have limited exposure to authentic English, this method provides a practical and enjoyable route to idiom mastery.

B. Some Related Previous Study

Several previous studies have examined the effectiveness of using Instagram as a medium to improve students' vocabulary mastery. The first study by (Sipayung, 2021), entitled “Improving Students' Vocabulary Mastery Through BBC Videos on Instagram in Junior High School,”

it investigated the role of BBC videos on Instagram in improving the vocabulary mastery of seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Medan. This classroom action research was conducted in three cycles and showed that students' average vocabulary score increased from 60.1 in the first cycle to 85.1 in the last cycle. The findings suggest that using Instagram as a teaching medium can effectively improve students' vocabulary acquisition, making it a valuable resource for English teachers.

The second study by Muliana and Silvi Listia Dewi (*No Title*, 2023), entitled “The Effectiveness of Instagram Media on Students' Vocabulary Mastery,” used a quasi-experimental design to compare vocabulary mastery between students taught using Instagram and students taught with conventional methods at SMA Negeri 3 Bireuen. The results showed a significant difference, where the experimental group achieved an average score of 77.94 compared to the control group's average score of 47.65. This study concludes that the use of Instagram media effectively improves students' vocabulary mastery in writing recount texts, as evidenced by the Independent Sample T-test result of 0.000, smaller than 0.05.

Furthermore, Retno Widia Agustin and Mutiara Ayu (Agustin & Ayu, 2021) in their research entitled “The Impact of Using Instagram to Improve Vocabulary and Listening

Skills,” highlighted the importance of Instagram in improving students' English vocabulary and listening skills. Their results showed that a significant percentage of students agreed that Instagram positively affected their vocabulary acquisition and listening skills.

Another relevant study, “*Instagram to Learn English Vocabulary: A Study of Indonesian Non-English Major University Students*” by (Baruti & Subekti, 2023), investigated the attitudes of non-English major university students in Indonesia towards using Instagram for vocabulary learning. This study, involving 213 student participants through an online survey and six through online interviews, found that students generally held positive attitudes toward using Instagram for learning English vocabulary. Thematic analysis of interview data, however, revealed some ambivalence. Students consciously learned isolated vocabulary from English captions and unconsciously acquired vocabulary from photos and videos on Instagram. Nonetheless, the platform's limited content explanations hindered vocabulary acquisition in context. The findings suggest that while Instagram has strengths in vocabulary learning, it requires strategic use to optimize its potential as an educational tool.

Furthermore, (Afriyanti, 2016), in her study “*The Effectiveness of Using Reels on Instagram Toward Students*’

Vocabulary Mastery at Senior High School”, explored the use of Instagram's Reels feature to enhance vocabulary mastery among first-grade students of MAN 1 Madiun. This pre-experimental research, involving 35 students selected through purposive sampling, utilized a vocabulary test comprising short answer and true-or-false questions administered as both pre-tests and post-tests. The analysis, conducted using SPSS 16.0 and the paired sample t-test formula, revealed a significant improvement in students' vocabulary scores after being taught using Reels. The findings suggest that Instagram Reels, which often feature Indonesian content creators explaining English vocabulary in a clear and engaging manner, can effectively enrich students' vocabulary by providing accessible, language-focused content.

Lastly, a study by (Mamudi & Alamry, 2021), entitled *“Students’ Perception on the Use of Instagram to Learn English Vocabulary”*, aimed to examine students' perceptions of using Instagram for vocabulary learning. This qualitative research involved 20 students of varying ages who followed English learning accounts on Instagram. Using questionnaires, interviews, and documentation for triangulation, the study revealed that students found Instagram helpful in adding new vocabulary. By following accounts dedicated to English vocabulary learning,

participants perceived Instagram as a positive and effective medium for improving their language skills. The study concludes that Instagram can be a good choice for English learning media, particularly for vocabulary enhancement.

Overall, these studies collectively highlight Instagram's potential as an effective educational tool for improving vocabulary mastery. Features like posts, captions, videos, and Reels, along with students' positive perceptions, demonstrate the platform's versatility in engaging learners. However, these findings also underscore the importance of strategic integration of Instagram into instructional practices to maximize its benefits while addressing its limitations, such as contextual vocabulary learning.

C. Conceptual Framework

This study consists of two variables, namely the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y). The independent variable is English Video Content on Instagram, while the dependent variable is *Mahasantri's* Vocabulary Mastery. The purpose of this research is to find out whether the use of English Video Content on Instagram affects the vocabulary mastery of college students. The following graph illustrates the conceptual framework of this research as follows:

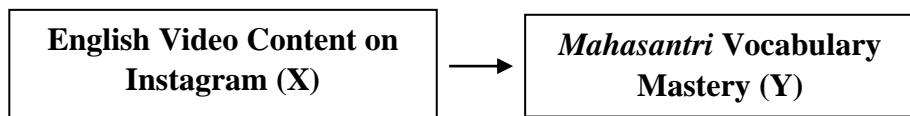


Figure 1. conceptual framework

D. Research Assumption

Assumptions or foundational beliefs in research are initial hypotheses that have not yet been proven but are believed to have an impact within the research context. These assumptions serve as a basis that directs the researcher to explore the phenomenon under study and helps to focus on the key aspects to be tested.

Based on the above definition of assumptions, this study assumes that the use of English video content on Instagram can significantly influence the vocabulary mastery of *mahasantri* at Ma'had Al-Jami'ah State Islamic University of Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu. Through interaction with video content, it is expected that students will find it easier to understand new vocabulary presented visually and contextually. This video usage is also predicted to enrich their vocabulary and improve their ability to use it in everyday sentences.

Additionally, the learning process that utilizes digital platforms like Instagram is believed to enhance student motivation, as this media is closely aligned with their daily

lives and provides a more engaging learning experience compared to traditional teaching methods.

E. Hypothesis

The formulation of this research hypothesis can be described below:

1. Alternative Hypothesis (H_a): There is a positive and significant effect of the use of English video content on Instagram (X) on the mastery of vocabulary of *Mahasantri* (Y) at Ma'had Al-Jami'ah State Islamic University of Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu.
2. Null Hypothesis (H_o): There is no positive and significant effect of the use of English video content on Instagram (X) on the mastery of vocabulary of *Mahasantri* (Y) at Ma'had Al-Jami'ah State Islamic University of Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu.