

Developing Instagram Reels-Based Instructional Media for Teaching Simple Present Tense in Higher Education

Nur Mardiyani Fauziah Fuad^{1*}, Nursalim², Fitri Arniati³

¹Master's Program in Pedagogy, Universitas Pendidikan Muhammadiyah Sorong Teacher, Indonesia

²Professional Education Program, Universitas Pendidikan Muhammadiyah Sorong, Indonesia

³English Language Education Study Program, Universitas Pendidikan Muhammadiyah Sorong, Indonesia

*nrmff09@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigates the development of Instagram Reels-based learning media for teaching the simple present tense to non-English major students in higher education. Although social media integration in English Language Teaching (ELT) has increased significantly, limited studies have examined the pedagogical potential of short-form video microlearning for grammar instruction among non-English major students in Indonesian higher education contexts. This study addresses this gap by integrating Instagram Reels, microlearning principles, and digital pedagogy into grammar learning. The research employed a Research and Development (R&D) design using the 4D model consisting of Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate stages. The participants were students from the Physical Education and Civic Education study programs at Universitas Pendidikan Muhammadiyah Sorong. Data were collected through observations, interviews, questionnaires, expert validation, and pre-test and post-test assessments. The findings revealed that the Instagram Reels-based learning media improved students' grammar achievement, with Physical Education students increasing from 50% to 80% and Civic Education students from 55% to 83%. The media also enhanced students' motivation, participation, and learning engagement through concise, contextual, and visually interactive grammar instruction. This study contributes theoretically to digital ELT pedagogy by demonstrating the effectiveness of social media-based microlearning in supporting grammar learning among non-English major students in higher education.

Keywords: Instagram reels; Digital pedagogy; Grammar learning; Microlearning; English language teaching.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly transformed learning practices in higher education, particularly in English Language Teaching (ELT) (Hasibuan, Ritonga, Nainggolan, & Bulan, 2026). The integration of digital platforms encourages more flexible, interactive, and student-centered learning environments that align with the characteristics of Generation Z learners who are

highly familiar with social media and mobile technology (Rylance-Graham & Ismail, 2026). In the context of language learning, digital pedagogy supports multimodal instruction through visual, audio, and interactive learning resources that can improve students' engagement and learning motivation (Li, 2020). In addition, technology-enhanced learning environments have become increasingly important after the COVID-19 pandemic because higher education institutions are required to adapt instructional practices to contemporary digital learning needs (Downie, Gao, Bedford, Bell, & Kuit, 2021).

Grammar remains one of the most fundamental competencies in English learning because grammatical mastery supports students' communication skills in both academic and professional contexts. However, many non-English major students still perceive grammar learning as difficult, monotonous, and stressful due to conventional teacher-centered instructional approaches (Kassem, 2019). Previous studies have shown that students frequently experience difficulties in understanding sentence structure, subject-verb agreement, and the use of auxiliary verbs in simple present tense material (Putri, Sukesi, & Zahrida, 2023). These challenges often reduce students' participation, learning confidence, and motivation during grammar instruction.

Recent studies have emphasized that social media integration can create more engaging and communicative learning environments in ELT classrooms. Platforms such as Instagram provide opportunities for educators to deliver concise and visually attractive learning content through short-form videos and interactive features (Kathuria, 2024). Instagram Reels, as one of the most popular short-video platforms among university students, allows grammar materials to be presented contextually through subtitles, animation, narration, and real-life examples. Furthermore, microlearning theory explains that short-duration learning content can reduce cognitive overload and improve information retention by allowing students to focus on one concept at a time (Monib, Qazi, & Apong, 2025).

Despite the growing popularity of social media in education, previous studies have primarily focused on students' general engagement and communication skills rather than grammar instruction among non-English major students (Melati & Sidabalok, 2025). Several studies discussing Instagram-based learning also tend to emphasize speaking skills, vocabulary acquisition, or online interaction (Faruq & Fitriah, 2025). Empirical studies specifically investigating the pedagogical integration of Instagram Reels, microlearning strategies, and grammar learning in Indonesian higher education contexts remain limited (Hasani, Zainudin, & Hamdani, 2025). Therefore, there is still a significant research gap regarding how short-form social media videos can support grammar comprehension and learner engagement among non-English major students in higher education.

This study offers novelty by integrating Instagram Reels-based microlearning into grammar instruction through concise, contextual, and visually interactive learning videos designed specifically for non-English major students. Unlike previous studies that mainly focused on general social media usage in ELT, this research emphasizes the pedagogical implementation of short-form video learning for simple present tense instruction. The study also contributes theoretically to digital pedagogy and microlearning literature by demonstrating how social media platforms can support grammar learning, learner autonomy, and student-centered instruction in higher education contexts (Valdrighi, 2026). In addition, this research

expands digital ELT studies by involving students from Physical Education and Civic Education study programs who are rarely examined in grammar learning research (Muthmainnah, Riswanto, Santiana, Fadhillah, Apriani, & Syafryadin, 2022).

Based on these issues, this study aims to develop Instagram Reels-based learning media for teaching simple present tense material to non-English major students at Universitas Pendidikan Muhammadiyah Sorong using the 4D Research and Development model. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the development of innovative digital grammar instruction and provide practical implications for integrating social media platforms into English learning environments in higher education, as emphasized by Hockly (2022) that digital pedagogy should transform passive learning into more interactive and learner-centered experiences.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) approach using the 4D instructional development model proposed by Thiagarajan (1974), consisting of Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate stages. The R&D approach was selected because this study aimed not only to develop Instagram Reels-based learning media but also to evaluate its pedagogical feasibility and implementation in English grammar instruction for non-English major student. The research was conducted during the 2025/2026 academic year at Universitas Pendidikan Muhammadiyah Sorong involving students from the Physical Education and Civic Education study programs. These participants were selected purposively because preliminary observations indicated that many non-English major students experienced difficulties in understanding simple present tense material and demonstrated low engagement during grammar instruction.

At the Define stage, the researcher conducted classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and needs analysis to identify students' learning difficulties, instructional problems, and students' perceptions regarding grammar learning. The findings revealed that conventional grammar instruction remained teacher-centered and relied heavily on lectures and textbooks, resulting in low participation and low motivation among students. During the Design stage, the researcher developed Instagram Reels-based grammar learning videos focusing on simple present tense material, including affirmative, negative, and interrogative sentence forms, subject-verb agreement, and adverbs of frequency. The learning videos were designed based on microlearning principles by presenting concise, contextual, and visually interactive instructional content through subtitles, animations, narration, and real-life examples relevant to students' daily activities.

The Develop stage involved expert validation and product revision processes. The developed learning media were evaluated by English language experts and educational media experts to assess content appropriateness, visual design, language clarity, interactivity, and accessibility. Revisions were conducted based on validators' suggestions, particularly regarding subtitle readability, video transitions, and instructional clarity. Subsequently, the validated learning media were implemented during grammar learning activities involving students from both study programs. The Disseminate stage focused on the classroom implementation

and evaluation of Instagram Reels-based learning media to examine students' learning experiences and instructional responses during the learning process.

The instruments used in this study consisted of observation sheets, semi-structured interview guidelines, questionnaires, documentation, expert validation sheets, and grammar achievement tests. Observation sheets were used to examine students' classroom participation, motivation, and interaction patterns during grammar instruction. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with lecturers and students to obtain in-depth information regarding students' difficulties in grammar learning and their perceptions toward social media-based instruction. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale to measure students' responses regarding the attractiveness, practicality, accessibility, and effectiveness of Instagram Reels-based learning media. In addition, pre-test and post-test instruments were administered to measure students' grammar achievement before and after the implementation process. The test materials focused on simple present tense structures, including affirmative, negative, and interrogative forms. To ensure content validity and instructional appropriateness, all instruments were evaluated by English language experts and media experts prior to implementation.

Data analysis employed both quantitative and qualitative techniques to obtain comprehensive findings regarding the implementation of Instagram Reels-based learning media. Quantitative data obtained from expert validation sheets, questionnaires, pre-test, and post-test results were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis in the form of percentages and mean scores to identify students' learning improvement after using the developed learning media. Meanwhile, qualitative data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing techniques following the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The qualitative analysis focused on students' learning engagement, interaction patterns, motivation, and perceptions regarding the implementation of Instagram Reels-based grammar learning (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020). Through the integration of quantitative and qualitative findings, this study aimed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the pedagogical potential of Instagram Reels-based microlearning in English grammar instruction for non-English major students in higher education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study consisted of preliminary observation findings, expert validation results, students' grammar achievement, and students' responses toward the implementation of Instagram Reels-based learning media in simple present tense instruction for non-English major students.

Results

The preliminary observation conducted before the implementation stage revealed that many students experienced difficulties in understanding simple present tense material, particularly in subject-verb agreement, affirmative and negative sentence structures, and the use of auxiliary verbs. The learning process remained teacher-centered and relied heavily on lectures and textbooks, resulting in low classroom participation and low motivation during grammar instruction.

Most students perceived grammar learning as monotonous and difficult to understand because instructional explanations were often delivered abstractly without contextual examples or interactive learning media. In addition, students demonstrated limited engagement during classroom discussions and rarely participated actively in grammar exercises.

The results of the preliminary observation are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Preliminary Observation Results of Grammar Learning

Observation Aspect	Findings
Learning Method	Dominated by lectures and textbook-based instruction
Student Participation	Low classroom interaction and passive learning behavior
Learning Motivation	Students showed low interest in grammar learning
Learning Difficulties	Problems in subject-verb agreement and sentence structure
Learning Media	Limited use of interactive and digital learning media

Table 1 demonstrates that conventional grammar instruction had not yet provided interactive and engaging learning experiences for non-English major students. Therefore, innovative digital learning media were needed to improve students' motivation, participation, and grammar comprehension.

After the implementation of Instagram Reels-based learning media, students demonstrated improvement in grammar achievement and classroom engagement. The short-video microlearning approach enabled students to understand grammar concepts gradually through concise explanations, subtitles, animations, and contextual examples. Students also showed more active participation during learning activities because the instructional videos were visually attractive and easily accessible through social media platforms familiar to Generation Z learners. The comparison of students' pre-test and post-test scores is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Students' Grammar Achievement Before and After Implementation

Study Program	Pre-Test (%)	Post-Test (%)	Improvement
Physical Education	50%	80%	30%
Civic Education	55%	83%	28%

Table 2 indicates that Instagram Reels-based learning media significantly improved students' understanding of simple present tense material. Physical Education students demonstrated an increase from 50% to 80%, while Civic Education students improved from 55% to 83%. The findings suggest that microlearning through short-form instructional videos contributed positively to grammar comprehension among non-English major students.

The developed Instagram Reels-based learning media were evaluated by English language experts and educational media experts to assess content appropriateness, visual design, interactivity, accessibility, and language clarity. The validation process aimed to ensure the pedagogical feasibility and instructional quality of the developed learning media before classroom implementation. The expert validation results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Validation Results of Instagram Reels-Based Learning Media

Validation Aspect	Mean Score	Category
Content Quality	4.6	Very Good
Visual Design	4.5	Very Good
Language Accuracy	4.4	Very Good
Interactivity	4.7	Very Good
Accessibility	4.5	Very Good

The validation results demonstrate that the developed learning media met the criteria of validity and practicality. Nevertheless, validators suggested several revisions related to subtitle readability, video transition consistency, and instructional pacing to improve students' viewing comfort and comprehension during grammar learning activities.

Students' responses toward the implementation of Instagram Reels-based learning media showed positive perceptions regarding learning attractiveness, accessibility, flexibility, and engagement. Most students stated that the short-video format made grammar learning more enjoyable and easier to understand compared to conventional classroom instruction. Students also reported that they were able to review the instructional videos repeatedly outside classroom hours, which supported independent learning behavior. The questionnaire results regarding students' perceptions are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Students' Responses Toward Instagram Reels-Based Learning Media

Response Aspect	Mean Score	Category
Learning Attractiveness	4.7	Very Good
Ease of Understanding	4.5	Very Good
Accessibility	4.6	Very Good
Learning Motivation	4.6	Very Good
Learning Engagement	4.7	Very Good

The findings indicate that Instagram Reels-based learning media created more interactive and student-centered grammar learning experiences. Students became more confident in participating during grammar instruction because the learning materials were delivered contextually through familiar digital platforms. In addition, the integration of subtitles, animations, quizzes, and visual explanations helped students reduce grammar anxiety and improve learning motivation during the instructional process.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that Instagram Reels-based learning media effectively improved students' understanding of simple present tense material among non-English major students. The increase in students' post-test scores demonstrates that short-form digital learning content can support grammar comprehension more effectively than conventional lecture-based instruction. The visual explanations, contextual examples, subtitles, and animations presented in the

Instagram Reels videos helped students understand grammatical structures gradually and systematically.

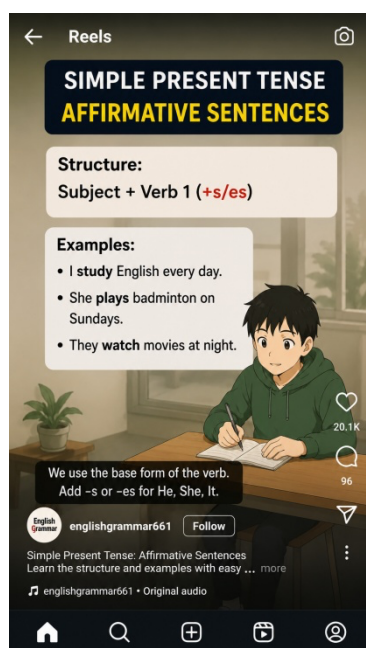


Figure 1. Screenshot of an Instagram Reels Video on Affirmative Sentences

Figure 1 demonstrates an Instagram Reels instructional video focusing on affirmative sentence structures in the simple present tense. The video integrates subtitles, text animations, pronunciation guidance, and contextual sentence examples related to students' daily activities. The visual and contextual presentation helped students understand sentence patterns more clearly because grammatical explanations were delivered gradually through concise and interactive learning content (Haq & Madany, 2025). In addition, the integration of visual elements and narration reduced students' cognitive burden during grammar learning and improved their comprehension of subject-verb agreement patterns. This finding supports Mayer (2021), who argued that multimedia learning enables students to process verbal and visual information simultaneously, thereby improving comprehension and information retention.

The improvement in students' grammar achievement was also influenced by the implementation of microlearning principles through short-duration instructional videos. Unlike traditional grammar instruction that often presents excessive information in a single session, Instagram Reels divided grammar materials into smaller and focused learning units (Datu, Allo, Shilfani, & Pratama, 2023). This instructional strategy reduced students' cognitive overload and enabled them to concentrate on one grammar concept at a time. The findings align with Hug (2021), who explained that microlearning facilitates more manageable and engaging learning experiences through concise and segmented instructional content.

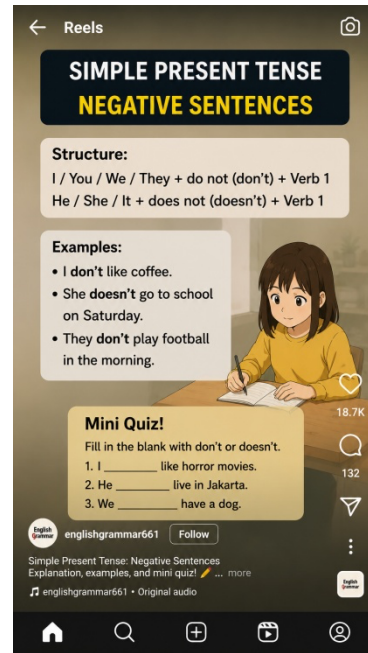


Figure 2. Screenshot of an Instagram Reels Video on Negative Sentences

Figure 2 presents a short instructional video explaining negative sentence forms in the simple present tense. The learning video focuses on the use of auxiliary verbs “do” and “does” through contextual examples and interactive mini-quizzes embedded within the video content. The microlearning format enabled students to focus on one grammar concept at a time, thereby supporting gradual comprehension and reducing learning overload. The interactive quiz section also encouraged students to participate actively during the learning process rather than passively watching instructional explanations.

Another important finding of this study is the increase in students’ motivation and classroom participation during grammar instruction. Before the implementation of Instagram Reels-based learning media, students tended to become passive because grammar learning was dominated by textbook explanations and teacher-centered instruction. However, after the implementation process, students actively participated through comments, quizzes, and classroom discussions integrated into the instructional videos. These interaction patterns indicate that social media-based learning environments can encourage more collaborative and communicative learning experiences (Liu, Zaigham, Rashid, & Bilal, 2022). This finding is consistent with Li and Hafner (2024), who stated that social media integration positively influences learner interaction and engagement in English language learning environments.

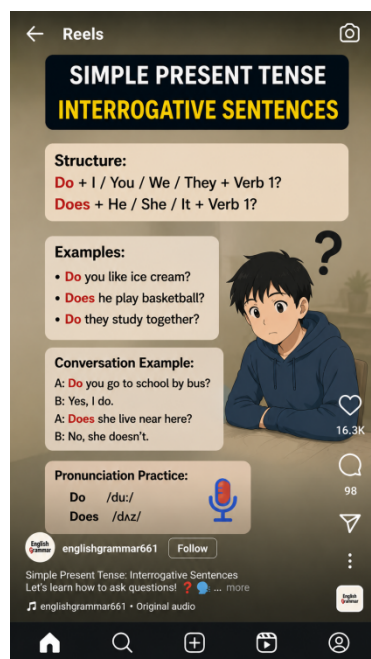


Figure 3. Screenshot of an Instagram Reels Video on Interrogative Sentences

Figure 3 presents a short instructional video explaining negative sentence forms in the simple present tense. The learning video focuses on the use of auxiliary verbs “do” and “does” through contextual examples and interactive mini-quizzes embedded within the video content. The microlearning format enabled students to focus on one grammar concept at a time, thereby supporting gradual comprehension and reducing learning overload. The interactive quiz section also encouraged students to participate actively during the learning process rather than passively watching instructional explanations.

The implementation of Instagram Reels-based learning media also contributed to students’ autonomous learning behavior. Most students reported that they repeatedly accessed grammar learning videos outside classroom hours because the platform was flexible and easily accessible through their smartphones. The accessibility of Instagram Reels enabled students to review learning materials independently according to their own learning pace and preferences. This finding demonstrates that digital pedagogy can support learner autonomy and flexible learning environments in higher education contexts. According to Hockly (2022), technology-enhanced learning environments encourage students to become more independent learners through accessible and personalized instructional experiences.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings demonstrate that Instagram Reels can function not only as entertainment media but also as an innovative instructional platform for grammar learning. Figure 1 in this study illustrates the Instagram Reels homepage used as a learning resource containing categorized grammar tutorial videos.



Figure 4. Screenshot of the Instagram Reels Homepage

Meanwhile, Figures 1, 2, and 3 demonstrate how grammar explanations were delivered visually through subtitles, animations, contextual examples, pronunciation exercises, and interactive mini-quizzes. These instructional features created more meaningful and engaging grammar learning experiences because students interacted actively with the learning content rather than passively receiving information. This finding supports Zhang and Zou (2022), who emphasized that microlearning-based digital instruction increases learner engagement through concise and interactive educational content.

The findings additionally reveal that Instagram Reels-based grammar instruction reduced students' boredom and grammar anxiety during the learning process. Most participants stated that learning grammar through social media platforms felt more enjoyable, familiar, and less stressful than conventional classroom instruction (Irawan, Suwarso, Janoko, & Khoiruman, 2025). The familiar digital environment increased students' confidence and willingness to participate during grammar activities. This condition is particularly important for non-English major students who often perceive grammar learning as difficult and intimidating. The findings align with Lee (2021), who stated that Generation Z learners tend to respond more positively to visual, interactive, and technology-based learning environments compared to conventional instructional approaches.

Another significant contribution of this study lies in its focus on non-English major students from Physical Education and Civic Education study programs, which are rarely examined in digital grammar learning research. Most previous studies primarily focused on English major students or general social media usage in language learning. In contrast, this study demonstrates that social media-based microlearning can also support grammar instruction for students from different academic disciplines. Therefore, this research expands the discussion of digital pedagogy and social media integration in ELT by demonstrating the pedagogical potential of Instagram Reels for broader higher education contexts. This finding is

consistent with Widodo and Slamet (2023), who emphasized that digital grammar instruction can create more contextual and student-centered learning experiences in EFL classrooms.

Despite its positive findings, this study still has several limitations. The implementation process focused only on simple present tense material and involved a relatively limited number of participants from one university. In addition, the duration of implementation was relatively short, limiting the possibility of examining long-term learning retention and sustained learner engagement. Therefore, future researchers are encouraged to investigate broader grammar topics, involve larger participant groups, and integrate other short-form digital platforms such as TikTok, YouTube Shorts, or AI-assisted learning applications in English grammar instruction. This recommendation is supported by Zhang and Lai (2025), who argued that the integration of emerging social media platforms in ELT provides promising opportunities for future digital language learning innovation.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of Instagram Reels-based learning media effectively improved non-English major students' understanding of simple present tense material in higher education contexts. The findings demonstrate that short-form video microlearning supported grammar learning through concise, contextual, and visually interactive instructional content that increased students' grammar achievement, learning motivation, classroom participation, and learner engagement. The integration of subtitles, animations, contextual examples, and interactive quizzes enabled students to understand grammatical structures more effectively while reducing boredom and grammar anxiety commonly experienced during conventional grammar instruction. The findings additionally indicate that Instagram Reels supported more flexible and autonomous learning experiences because students were able to access learning materials repeatedly outside classroom hours through familiar social media platforms.

This study also addresses a research gap in digital ELT studies because previous research has predominantly focused on general social media integration, vocabulary learning, or speaking skills, while limited studies have specifically investigated Instagram Reels-based microlearning for grammar instruction among non-English major students in Indonesian higher education contexts. Therefore, the novelty of this research lies in the pedagogical integration of Instagram Reels, microlearning principles, and grammar instruction through short-form instructional videos specifically designed for non-English major students. The study contributes theoretically to digital pedagogy and microlearning literature by demonstrating that social media platforms can function as effective educational environments that support learner autonomy, interactive learning, and student-centered grammar instruction in higher education.

Despite its positive findings, this study still has several limitations. The implementation process focused only on simple present tense material and involved participants from two study programs within one university. In addition, the duration of implementation was relatively short, limiting the possibility of examining long-term learning retention and sustained learner engagement. Therefore, future researchers are recommended to investigate broader grammar

topics, involve larger participant groups from different universities, and integrate other short-form digital platforms such as TikTok, YouTube Shorts, or AI-assisted learning applications to explore more innovative approaches in English grammar instruction. Overall, this study confirms that the integration of social media and microlearning strategies provides promising opportunities for developing more interactive, flexible, and meaningful English learning environments in the digital era.

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