HOW EFL STUDENTS PERCEIVED THE USE OF FACEBOOK GROUP IN WRITING ACTIVITIES

Putri Pertiwi[1][*]
[1]Khampee Wittaya School, Thailand
[*]Corresponding Email: putripertiwipe@gmail.com

Abstract:
An online learning tool that can assist with writing is Facebook. In order to have better understand on how the students at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang's English Education Study Program perceive about using Facebook groups for writing during the 2019–2020 academic year, a study has been conducted. In this study, a qualitative research design was used. By using maximal variation sampling, six students from PBI B in the English Education Study Program participated in this study. The participant's documentation and an interview were used to gather data about their opinions of the Facebook group's writing-related activities. The interview sessions were captured on tape and written down. The findings of this research about the use of Facebook group in writing activities showed that there were some advantages; (1) improving students' vocabulary, (2) an active brainstorming activity to get better ideas in writing, while some disadvantages also took place in; (3) the limitation of the internet access, (4) distraction from Facebook entertainments, and (5) passive classroom environment in non-verbal communication.

INTRODUCTION

The worldwide spreading of Covid-19 in the late 2019 to the currents time brings obstacles to the education all over the world. So, Indonesia and all other countries apply PSBB (Large Scale Social Restriction) or it called Lock Down system to minimize the spread of Covid-19 due to this disease. PSBB refers to limiting a resident's activities in a location where Covid-19 infection is suspected. These restrictions include schools, workplaces, religious activities, activities in public places, and other activities specifically related to defense and security aspects. It means that all of the people must do their activities at home such as; working, learning process and shopping from home to stay safe.

Covid-19 pandemic has an influential impact on education, including university education. The presence of this coronavirus outbreak hinders teaching and learning activities, which are usually carried out in a face to face. On March 20, 2020, the Minister of Education and Culture released Policy Letter No. 4, which discusses the execution of a policy of learning from home and also the implementation of education during the situation of COVID-19. It means that students must continue their teaching and learning activities by virtually and the students don't need to go to school for a while.

Nowadays, there are various types of online media that we can used to continue the learning process at home certainly because the development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Direct method learning has been starting to change into Web-based learning because of the technology advancement. Alessi and Trollip (2001) state that web-based learning is learning that uses the internet in order to deliver the materials for learning. The use of social media applications has gathered great interest among educators in the teaching and learning process (Cain & Policastri, 2011). That platform is the greatest solution to use for all schools or institutions in a pandemic situation so that the students can continue to learn at home.

Furthermore, Facebook is one of the most popular platforms to use in the teaching and learning process. Facebook was launched in February 2004 and owned by Mark Zuckerberg. Facebook is found to be the most popular platform site used by students but does not just come from the students, the general public also can use Facebook for their personal purposes. Facebook have a great feature that supports EFL writing activities, such as file sharing, group, comment, group chat, and forum discussion.

As many experts say, Facebook is one of the platforms to use in writing skills. Shih (2013) claims that the use of Facebook as a technique to improve students' writing ability, all group members were required to do writing assignments and then post them on the Facebook site. Afterwards, group members had to review and comment on others' works within groups. Using

social media platforms, lecturers can interact with students through online and share knowledge with them in a variety of ways, including discussions and face-to-face meetings. One of the best features that teachers need in learning writing is Facebook Group, this statement is supported by Yunus and Salehi (2012) that Students who join in Facebook groups have the opportunity to develop their writing skills because Facebook enables group discussion and posting for specific purposes. It means that the students can share their written work to the group and provide feedback or other corrections to one another.

In the faculty of English Education Study Program of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang there were classes that integrated Facebook group with the classroom to help students in writing activities. Facebook group is best alternative to use, students' of writing skills were given feedback from the lecturer, material sharing, collecting an assignment and conducting a group discussion about their writing. In relation to this, an informal interview with one of the lecturers at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang served as the basis for a preliminary study. it was found that during this pandemic the lecturers implemented an online teaching and learning using Facebook Group in teaching writing. Facebook is considered effective to be used for the alternative or supporting media due to the lack of in-person interactions especially in pandemic situations and the students must learn from home. In a pandemic situation, Facebook Group can be used to implement the online interaction so that the students can examine and revise their writing by commenting and providing feedback to the work of their peers. Therefore, the second semester students of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang will conduct this research to know their perception on the use of Facebook Group in learning writing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Perception

Pickens (2005) argues that perception is a person that confronted with a situation or stimuli. The person interprets the stimuli into something important to him or her based on previous experiences. However, what a person interprets and perceives may be significantly diverse from reality. According to Lele (2019), needs and desires, experience and personality are the factors that impact perception.

The Concept Writing

Definition of Writing

Writing, speaking, reading, listening and other are the language skills that should be taught. Actually, we need to think and create our ideas in

learning writing so that's why writing became the most difficult language skills. According to Oshima and Hogue (2006), writing is a process of making, managing, composing, and fixing. First you think or create the ideas, and then you organize the ideas. Second process, you write the rough draft. Last process, you fix your draft by editing it and making the revision. Hyland (2003) claims that writing is a way to share the ideas or views on the topic to others, then the person's ideas can be different from others' ideas because it depends on their belief. writing is an individual skill and an activity of thinking in a communicative written language. In expressing the thought into a written language, the students can share their ideas and feelings in their mind and the person must learn if they want to have good writing.

The Aspects of Paragraph Writing

According to Weigle (2002), there are five aspects of writing, such as: (1) *Grammar, g*rammar is the system and structure English language. In learning grammar means to know how various grammatical elements they are nouns, pronouns, adjectives, tenses, adverbs and prepositions (2) *Organization*, the organization of the content means that we should clarify our ideas and make it clear. (3) *Vocabulary,* vocabulary is about choosing words. It can help the students to express their words or ideas in the paragraph. (4) *Mechanic, m*echanic refers to the use of conventional graphics of the language, i.e., the step of arranging letters, words, paragraphs, by using knowledge of structure and some others related to one another. (5) *Content,* the content of a text should be relevant or equivalent and describe the title in complete.

Concept of Facebook

Definition of Facebook

One social network that can be used in the classroom is Facebook, which enables online interactions and communication between lecturers and students. According to Dare and Gar (2016 Facebook is a social networking site where users can communicate with one another via online. Octavia (2018) stated that Facebook facilitates an effective learning media as online interactions between teachers and learners. Well, that means it can build the learning activities more active and support students in their social and academic interactions, use Facebook as your learning online media.

Learning Writing in Facebook Group

Facebook has many features to interact and communicate with others such as, Home or Timeline consist of Wall, Profile, Status updates, friends, Photos, Notification, Messenger, Notes, Upload Image and Video, and chats. The students are also able to create a group to give information and share some ideas to their friends. This features can be used in learning writing, the students

can write then share their writing to other friends. Teachers can create a group for one class then it allows students to share their writing and tasks in the group, so other students can read what other students write.

The Advantages of Using Facebook Group in Writing Activities

Yunus and Salehi (2012) showed that Facebook group is an effective tool in improving the students' writing skills, such as: (1) *Helped in brainstorming of ideas before actual writing,* Brainstorming process is an informal way of generating topics and points to write about the students' topic in writing. The students can see from the other friends' topic to get the point in their writing. (2) *Improve vocabulary,* writing in Facebook can help students learning new vocabulary from the comments and the students can remember the vocabulary better because they can refer to the word anytime they reread their writing. (3) *Reduce spelling errors,* the students can reduce spelling errors through spell-check feature. The tools in Microsoft word helps the students check the spelling when writing and the students learn from the smarter students about how they write in a good sentence.(3) *Getting a better idea and Easy to use,* facebook is fun and interesting social media and makes the students easier to use. The students can get a better idea because in one class will have different topics so they could share with others, giving/comments, and feedback from others.

The disadvantages of using Facebook group in writing activities

According to Rahayu (2017), the disadvantages on the use of Facebook in writing such as: (1) *Must have internet access and devices,* the students and teacher must have their own devices such as mobile phone or personal computer and the use of Facebook need internet access. It means that the students need internet connection and devices to access Facebook to support them in writing activities. (2) *Facebook Entertainments,* when accessing to Facebook you can find a lot of entertainment on Facebook, such as: online game, video animation, online chatting that can distract the students in teaching and learning process. It means that the lecturer must have a solution or manage the students with some rules to avoid this condition. (3) *Copy-paste,* in this technology era, students will be easier to copy-paste from others online resources than create their own thinking. (3) *Non-verbal Communication,* communication with Facebook (except for the webcam Facebook) does not include nonverbal cues such as gestures and other body language, facial expression, etc. it makes the students hard to clearly understand with the material from the lecturer.

Previous Related Studies

The previous related studies are also discussed in this study. The first previous study is Students' Perception on Teaching Writing Through Facebook Group in EFL Class, was published by Friatin (2018). The aim of this research was to determine whether Facebook groups might be used to teach EFL writing at the university level. The findings of this study indicated that Facebook groups encouraged students and had positive effects on them, which made writing instruction enjoyable for them. Second previous related study is Fachruzy (2017) with the tittle Students' Perception of Utilizing Facebook in Writing Classroom. This study focused on how Facebook works best for writing class. The result of this study found that students' views on their writing capabilities were improved with the use of Facebook group in their writing course.

Next, Utilizing Facebook Groups in Teaching Writing: Jordanian EFL Students' Perceptions and Attitudes created by Hani et al.,(2014). It focused on Facebook groups in increasing the writing performance level and brainstorm ideas at college students. Findings showed that Facebook group was effective in teaching writing.

Last previous study, Yunus and Salehi (2012) with the tittle The Effectiveness of Facebook Groups on Teaching and Improving Writing: Students' perception. It focused on investigate the students' perceptions on the effectiveness of Facebook (FB) groups for teaching and improving writing. The findings showed that 'Facebook groups' is an effective tool in improving the students' writing skills, especially in the brainstorming of ideas before the actual writing.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this research, the researcher used a qualitative research. According to Creswell (2012), Qualitative is Problematic research focuses on a comprehensive examination of a phenomenon, process, activity, and one or many individuals. Therefore, to investigate students' perception of using Facebook groups for writing activities, this research uses a qualitative case study methodology at the English Education Study Program of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang. In order to get better understand how students' perception about using Facebook groups to study online writing, qualitative research is a suitable method to do so.

Participants

The participants of this study were PBI B from English Language Class of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, Faculty of English Education Study Programs in the second semester of 2019 academic year. There were 30 students in total. According to the criteria based on their writing results, the researcher selected 6 participants (20% of this class) to represent the sample in this study by using purposeful sampling technique. In purposeful sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon created by Creswell (2012). One of the purposeful sampling technique maximal variation sampling was used. According to Creswell (2012), Maximal variation sampling is a technique in which the researcher selects samples that differ in certain characteristics and the sample varies to give the study a different idea. Based on the explanation, the researcher used a maximum variation sampling to select six students according to their results on Paragraph writing. Since the data was given by the lecturer there were students who got A, C, and D, which represent the high, medium and low achievers of the paragraph writing class.

Data Collection And Analysis

In the data collection there were two instruments which were used in this research namely interview and documentation. The data were collected by using an interview with the participant get an in depth data. According to Patton (2002), the purpose of an interview is to obtain a special kind of information. To make the data and the information of qualitative data valuable, the researcher added some documentation. The documents used in this study consisted of Facebook screenshot activity, students' writing assignments, and comment section between lecturer and students. According to Bowen (2009), document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic. In data analysis, thematic analysis was one of the data analysis approaches employed by the researcher. The results of interview transcripts and document reviews were used for the processing of data analysis techniques.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

FINDING

The researcher discovered that there were both positive and negative views towards the use of Facebook groups for writing-related activities based on the information gained from the interviews. The results were presented in the following table 1:

Table 1
**Themes and Codes for Students' Perceptions on the Use of Facebook Group
in Writing Activities**

Themes	Codes
Improve Vocabulary	A. The students stated that by reading other friends' writing on Facebook group it could add some new vocabulary
	B. By learning through Facebook, all the activities in the group used English and the students could enlarge their vocabulary
Brainstorm and get a better idea	A. The students mentioned that the lecturer ever gave some illustration on Facebook group to brainstorm their idea before start to write
	B. By learning at home the students could freely express their ideas without worried of the time had given.
Internet Access	A. Every student had different speed internet access at their home to access Facebook group.
Facebook Entertainments	A. Students said that the features on Facebook could distract them in teaching and learning process
	B. The students were lack of focus and did not fully concentrate due to features that provided by Facebook
Non-verbal Communication	A. The students did not get clear explanation and direction by the use of Facebook group in learning writing

DISCUSSION

The researcher found that there were some advantages and disadvantages of using Facebook Group in writing activities at English education study program of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang. Those consisted of (1) Improving Vocabulary, (2) Brainstorming and get a better idea, (3) Internet Access, (4) Facebook Entertainments, and (5) Non-verbal Communication.

First and second perceptions were Facebook group gave positive impacts for the students at EFL Class of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang when the students learnt writing by using Facebook they not only felt their vocabulary increased but also the students could brainstorm and get a better idea. Kabilan and Zahar (2016) found that Facebook environment is useful and functions for college students to learn new vocabulary and eventually enlarge their vocabulary knowledge, and use, practice and reinforce the new words correctly and authentically. The students also found the translation provided by Facebook very useful and they used it extensively. It is also supported by Shih (2011), English writing class on the use of Facebook provide some opportunities to do many things such as improving their own grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, content, and organization of writing. Study by Yunus and Salehi (2012) showed that Facebook Group helped in improving students' writing skills especially in improving their vocabulary by reading comments or post from other friends and in pre-writing stages which includes the process of brainstorm and get a better idea, in organizing their thoughts before the actual writing. Hani et al., (2014) stated that the students had enough time to brainstorm their idea and could get more idea while using Facebook group as writing platform because the time given was more flexible, Unlike the face-to-face class where the time is limited, not to mention the time taken by the teacher's interference and participation in class discussions, Facebook group facilitated more time. Gafni and Deri (2012) added in the educational context Facebook is significantly more accessible compared to other sources of information, it may save time in searching and can allow a student to use a remaining time for a work. Zaideh's (2012) agreed that the use of SNSs in education, Because they were given more time to respond to questions than they would have in a classroom or face-to-face lesson, the students felt more at ease and under less pressure.

The other perception provided by the students that Facebook group had negative impact from the EFL Class of UIN Raden fatah Palembang. The students have some obstacles in internet connection. This finding was supported by Rahayu (2017) who mentioned that Facebook group obliges availability of internet access and devices. Mishra et al., (2020) also mentioned that teaching and learning process through online was the unstable net- work

connection. The students had interrupted internet connection and intermittent signal issues.

The next problem faced by the students in teaching and learning writing through Facebook group was Facebook entertainments. The students stated that due to so many features in Facebook, they could use it for other purposes not only for teaching and learning writing. It is in line with Yunus and Salehi (2012) who claimed that by learning using Facebook could make the students spend their time by playing game, chatting with other friends and it could distract them in writing activities. They also added other features in Facebook that make the students not be able to concentrate on learning since students might prefer to look at some of the other activities or update their Facebook page instead. Hani et al., (2014) agrees that the students being distracted by other features of Facebook such as instant messaging, etc while Facebook provides so many different forms of entertainment that can divert students from the lesson. (Rahayu, 2017).

Last perception faced by students in teaching and learning writing using Facebook group was non-verbal communication. For the students, the communication online among the lecturer and their friends were passive because the communication in Facebook Group was not real. This finding was supported by Rahayu (2017) the communication through Facebook did not include non-verbal communication. Kamnoetsin (2014) stated that informal discourse is often the result of online contact, and that this might have a negative effect on academic writing by causing the usage of short phrases and unfinished sentences. Because writing on Facebook differed from writing in a classroom, students might not understand the relationship between the two types of writing (academic writing and informal writing). They did not think that writing on Facebook should be done for academic goals, but rather as a kind of informal communication. Mishra et al., (2020) agreed that among others, level of understanding, lack of scope for meaningful interaction, the range for innovative teaching, and mechanical conduct of classes were the significant challenges reported by teachers. It was found that teachers were unable to read the face and mood of students, and thus it was difficult to change the teaching pattern. Besides, a lack of motivation as immediate feedback was possible in this online teaching-learning transition phase perceived by both teachers and students. Coman et al., (2020) found on their study with close ended question on the use of E-learning in teaching and learning process, they found lack of interaction with peers/teacher.

CONCLUSION

The researcher discovered that there are two distinct perceptions expressed by the students regarding the use of Facebook groups in writing

activities which are advantages and disadvantages. According to the students, there are the following advantages: (a) The students agreed that reading their friends' work in a Facebook group could help them learn new vocabulary, (b) the students agreed that Facebook could help them in brainstorming their idea in learning writing because on Facebook group the lecturer provided some illustration, (c) the students also argued that by learning online at home the students could freely express their ideas without feeling worried about the time that given. The disadvantages from the students' perceptions, as follows: (a) the students stated that in order to learn online via Facebook, they must have access to the internet. However, because each student's internet access speed varies from place to place, this poses certain difficulties. (b) the students believed that the features on Facebook could distract them in teaching and learning process, resulting students lack of focus and did not fully concentrate, (c) the students also felt that they did not get explanation and direction on the use of Facebook group in teaching and learning writing process.

The researcher suggests for English or lecturer to use online platform to teach their students. This study indicated that the use of Facebook group can be an alternative way to know the students' progress. Based on the results in this study, the other teacher or lecturer can see the positive and negative side and they can providing some new strategies or prepare some technique to avoid some problems with the use of Facebook group in writing activities. For example, one of the disadvantages on the use of Facebook group in writing activities is non-verbal communication, the teacher or lecturer can add or upload some video to explain the material and the make the students explain something by using videos and then upload it on Facebook group.

For future research, the researcher expects that others will carry out a comparable study in greater detail and generate new findings based on the students' perceptions of Facebook group activity. In addition, the researcher hopes that future research will expand on this research to include speaking, reading, and listening as well as writing. Last, it is also hoped that future researchers will be able to learn how teachers perceive the use of Facebook groups for writing assignments.

REFERENCES

Alessi, S. A. M., & Trollip, S. R. (2001). *Multimedia for learning: Methods and development. (*3rd.ed). Pearson Education

Bowen, G. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal, 9(2). http://dx.doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027.*

Cain, J., & Policastri, A. (2011). Using Facebook as an informal learning environment. *American journal of pharmaceutical education, 75*(2), 1-9.

Coman, C., Tiru, L. G., Schmitz, L. M., Stanciu, C., & Bularca, M. C. (2020). Online teaching and learning in higher education during the coronavirus pandemic: students' perspective. *Journal Sustainibility*, 12, 2-24. DOI: 10.3390/su122410367.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research. (*4th.ed). Pearson.

Dare, L., & Gar, C. R. (2016). *Facebook: svea training modules.* Public Innovation Agency for ICT and Media.

Fachruzy, A. R. (2017). Students' perceptions of utilizing Facebook in writing classroom. Unpublished Undergraduate Thesis, Universitas Kristen Satya Wancana. Jogjakarta, DIY, Indonesia.

Friatin, L. Y. (2018). Students' perception on teaching writing through facebook group in EFL class. *Journal for Language and Foreign Language Learning,* 7(1), 57-66.

Gafni, R., & Deri, M. (2012). Costs and benefits of Facebook for undergraduate student. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Information, Knowledge, and Management,* 7, 45-61. DOI: 10.28945/1577

Hani, N. B., Al-Subh, M. A., Rahman, H., & Jordan, A. M. (2014). Utilizing Facebook groups in teaching writing; Jordanian EFL students' perceptions and attitudes. *International Journal of English Linguistics, 4*(5), 27-34. DOI: 10.5539/ijel.v4n5p27

Hyland, K. (2003). *Second Language Writing.* Cambridge University Press.

Kabilan, M. K., & Zahar, T. Z. M. E. (2016). Enhancing students' vocabulary knowledge using the Facebook environment. *Indonesian Journal Applied Linguistics, 5*(2), 217-230. DOI: https://10.17509/ijal.v5i2.1346.

Kamnoetsin, T. (2014). S*ocial media use: A critical analysis of Facebook's impact on collegiate EFL students' English writing in Thailand.* Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ, USA.

Lele, M. A. (2019). The students' perception of the media used by teacher in teaching English; *Descriptive research at eighth grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah 12 Makassar.* Unpublished Undergraduate Thesis University Muhammadiyah Makassar, Makassar, Sulawesi Selatan, Indonesia.

Mishra, L., Gupta, T., & Shree, A. (2020). Online teaching-learning in Higher Education during lockdown period of Covid-19 Pandemic. *International Journal of Educational Research Open. doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2020.100012*

Octavia, A. (2018). *The influence of using Facebook profile towards students' writing ability in descriptive text at the first semester of the eighth grade at SMP Negeri 8 Pesawaran in the academic year of 2018/2019.* Unpublished Undergraduate Thesis IAIN Lampung, Bandar Lampung, Lampung, Indonesia.

Oshima, A., & Hogue, A. (2006). *Writing academic English.* Longman.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods (3ʳᵈ ed).* Sage Publications.

Pickens, J. (2005). *Attitudes and perceptions.* Jones and Barlets Publisher.

Rahayu, L. S. (2017). *The effectiveness of using Facebook group on students' descriptive writing achievement of the second grade students of SMP Aswaja Kunir.* Unpublished Bachelor's Thesis IAIN Tulung Agung, Tulung Agung, Jawa Timur, Indonesia.

Shih, R-C. (2013). Effect of using Facebook to assist English for business communication course instruction. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology - Tojet, 12*(1), 52-59.

Weigle, S. C. (2002). *Assessing writing.* Cambridge University Press.

Yunus, M. M., & Salehi, H. (2012). The effectiveness of Facebook groups on teaching and improving writing; Students' perceptions. *International Journal of Education and Information, 6*(1), 87-96.

Zaidieh, A. J. Y. (2012). The use of social networking in education: Challenges and opportunities. *World of Computer Science and Information Technology Journal, 2*(1), 18-21.