

**FACEBOOK AS A PLATFORM FOR NARRATIVE
PARAGRAPH WRITING AMONG MALAYSIAN
SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS**

YONG FUK FUI

**FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR**

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YONG FUK FUI

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**FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS
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**FACEBOOK AS A PLATFORM FOR NARRATIVE PARAGRAPH WRITING
AMONG MALAYSIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS**

ABSTRACT

Facebook, as a social media tool, provides a platform for enhancing interaction that can possibly be exploited for language learning (Godwin-Jones, 2008) and potentially for research (Bloch, 2008). The study aims to investigate how learners use Facebook and its features to develop English narrative paragraph writing. It has been said that many Malaysian students remain weak in the English writing (Rashidah, 2005) and writing is considered the least proficient skill out of all the language skills. This qualitative study explores how learners and their teacher perceive the use of Facebook (FB) as a platform for narrative paragraph writing. Data came from the learners' self-reports and their teacher's diaries recorded over seven weeks. The learners' FB pages and an end-of-the-study-open-ended-question were also gathered as additional data sources. From the thematic analysis of the qualitative data, it was revealed that Facebook can be and should be utilised as a platform for teaching and learning. This was because, according to the learners' self-reports, Facebook could help them develop the qualitative aspects of their writing skills (vocabulary, idioms, phrases and grammar) as well as the more global perspective of narrative paragraph writing (storylines and styles of narrating a story). From the teacher's perspective, the participants were more autonomous in their learning compared to the traditional face-to-face classroom settings. Another finding worth noting is the process of commenting (providing and receiving comments) as it was found that learners were able to be more reflective of their own work while the teacher found that it promoted self-regulation. All these findings revealed that it is highly recommended for educators to keep abreast with the

current technology in order to be able to choose the appropriate online platforms with suitable writing tasks to mediate language learning.

Keywords: Web-based language learning, social networking sites, Facebook, narrative paragraph writing, Malaysian secondary school learners

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**FACEBOOK UNTUK PEMBELAJARAN PENULISAN PERENGGAN
NARATIF BAGI PELAJAR-PELAJAR SEKOLAH MENENGAH MALAYSIA**

ABSTRAK

Sebagai sebuah alat media social, Facebook menyediakan peluang untuk melancarkan interaksi dalam pembelajaran Bahasa (Godwin-Jones, 2008) dan ujikaji (Bloch, 2008). Penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk menyiasat bagaimana pelajar menggunakan Facebook untuk memperbaiki penulisan perenggan naratif dalam Bahasa Inggeris. Ramai pelajar Malaysia masih lemah dalam penulisan Bahasa Inggeris (Rashidah, 2005) dan penulisan dikatakan adalah aspek paling lemah dalam kemahiran Bahasa. Penyelidikan kualitatif ini merungkai bagaimana pelajar-pelajar dan guru rasa tentang penggunaan Facebook dalam hal ini. Data adalah daripada laporan pelajar-pelajar dan diari guru yang dicatit selama tujuh minggu. Laman Facebook dan maklumat soal selidik juga dikumpul sebagai sumber tambahan. Berdasarkan analisa tema data kualitatif, Facebook boleh dan patut digunakan sebagai platform pengajaran dan pembelajaran. Inin kerana menurut laporan pelajar, Facebook dapat membantu pelajar dalam aspek kualitatif penulisan (perbendaharaan, peribahasa dan tatabahasa) di samping memberikan perspective lebih menyeluruh pada penulisan naratif. Dari sudut pandangan guru, pelajar mempunyai lebih autonomi dalam pembelajaran berbanding dengan cara pembelajaran tradisional bersemuka dalam bilik darjah. Pelajar juga dapat merenung kembali hasil kerja masing-masing. Hasil dapatan menunjukkan bahawa para pendidik haruslah mengikuti perkembangan semesa untuk memilih platform yang sesuai untuk pengajaran Bahasa.

Kata kunci: Pembelajaran Bahasa berasaskan Web, laman rangkaian social, Facebook, penulisan perenggan naratif, pelajar-pelajar Sekolah Menengah Malaysia.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SNS	:	Social Network Sites
FB	:	Facebook
EPW	:	English Paragraph Writing
WBLL	:	Web Based Language Learning
ICT	:	Information and Communication Technology
KBSM	:	Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah (Integrated Curriculum Secondary School)

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of study

“These tools that we use to mediate between ourselves and the world can be thought of as extensions of ourselves. ...the ways computers and the internet extend our capabilities goes far beyond things like memory and cognition.” (Jones & Hafner, 2012, p.2)

Technology is an inseparable part of daily life, especially among today’s current younger generation (Ganapathy et al, 2016). These young learners have been constantly exposed to computers, digital music players, video cameras and mobile phones and are deeply immersed in instant messaging, emails, web browsing, blogs, wiki tools, social networking and video sites using gadgets (Prensky, 2001; Sternberg et al, 2007; Lea & Jones, 2011). With the mere click of a few buttons, they are able to communicate instantly as well as access information virtually from anywhere and at any time (Autry & Berge, 2011).

Presently, technology and the internet have gradually been incorporated into teaching and learning (Stickler et al, 2010). This indicates that traditional teaching and learning approaches are being complemented by newer approaches. These approaches to teaching have to change according to the current style of learning as traditional face-to-face classroom learning alone is no longer sufficient in helping learners retain existing as well as newly acquired knowledge especially in English grammar (Ganapathy et al, 2016). Among the arguments proposed in favor of this shift is the notion that the teaching of language using traditional methods may only discourage learners who thrive on motivation, inspiration and guidance, and deter them from expressing themselves and their abilities creatively and innovatively using technology (Eaton, 2010).

Besides that, the shift to newer approaches using technology has been advocated and recently proposed by the Minister of Education by allowing learners to bring certain devices to schools to assist with the process of teaching and learning (Ministry to study if gadgets can be seen as learning aid, 2017). The Malaysian Education Minister also announced that learners would be allowed to bring certain electronic devices to class starting early this year and this suggests that in future these devices may be favored over books in the classroom (Tariq, Rajaendram & Lee, 2017). With this shift, more advanced technology would assist learners in accessing unlimited resources and become tools for language learning (Elliot, 2009; Hashim et al, 2016).

It has also been found that ESL learners have a negative perception towards learning English due to the use of the less interactive textbook-based teaching approaches (Hiew, 2012). In the same study, learners suggested that teachers should integrate more creative, fun and interactive teaching approaches into their lessons rather than merely depending on the “chalk and talk” method, PowerPoint presentations and textbooks. Hence, there is a call to incorporate ICT into the classroom and to alter educational practices in order to better equip 21st century learners (Annamalai, 2016).

However, Waycott et al (2010) argue that educators should integrate technologies into their teaching only if and when there is educational value in doing so. This would implicate a scenario which would require teachers who understand both the curriculum and effective instructional strategies to create engaging learning experiences based on clear teaching objective aimed at enhancing the students’ growth (Schwartz & Pollishuke, 2013). It also requires teachers to be able to use in using technology effectively in order to have meaningful lessons in the classroom (Sadik, 2008).

Therefore, a thorough study is timely in order to understand how to utilize technology in the classroom as well as to assess their suitability and feasibility for

teaching and learning before integrating them into existing educational approaches. In addition, it may also be useful to examine both the teachers' and learners' perspectives about the use of technology in learning English writing given the Education Ministry's plans to allow the use of electronic devices in schools this year.

1.2 Social Networks Sites (SNSs)

This section provides an overall view on the definitions of Social Network Sites (SNS) and how Facebook as a SNS tool is viewed as a language learning platform.

1.2.1 Definitions of SNS

Researchers have found it difficult to provide a comprehensive definition of Social Networking Sites due to the accelerated pace of change in information and technology (ICT) tools. According to Boyd and Ellison (2007), SNSs are "*web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system*" (p. 211). An alternative definition (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) posits SNSs as "*a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content*" (p. 61). Additionally, Kachniewska (2015) introduces a similar conceptualization of SNSs where SNSs are "*... a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and depend on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-*

generated content” (p. 18). Carr and Hayes (2015) expanded this definition and argued that SNSs are “...*internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and selectively self-present, either in real-time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others*” (p. 50). Drawing on previous definitions, Kamel (2016) proposes a definition of SNS in which it can be posited as “... *computer-mediated tools and applications that allow people to create, share or exchange information, ideas, pictures and videos in virtual communities and networks in real time irrespective of time or distance barriers*” (p.1229).

Additionally, Carr and Hayes (2015) differentiate between *Social Media* and *Social Network Sites*. They argue that “... even though SNS are typically social media tools, not all social media are inherently social network sites”. (p. 51). Boyd and Ellison (2007) also make a clear distinction between *Social Network Sites* and *Social Networking Sites*. They claim that “*networking emphasizes relationship initiation, often between strangers; while on many SNS, participants are not necessarily networking or looking to meet new people; instead, they are primarily communicating with people who are already a part of their extended social network*” (p. 211).

The challenges in conceptualizing a clear-cut definition of SNS can be attributed to two reasons. Firstly, the speed at which technology emerges and evolves; and secondly, the similarities between SNS and other forms of technologies in terms of collaborative and communicative functions (Obar & Wildman, 2015). A close analysis of the literature on this topic revealed that the terms *social network sites*, *social network services*, *social media networks*, *online social networks*, and *Web 2.0* have been used interchangeably.

1.2.2 Facebook as a SNS

SNS serves as a virtual platform which enables people to create, share or exchange “*information, ideas, pictures and videos*” regardless of the time and distance restrictions (Kamel, 2016). Due to the diversity and unceasing changes within SNS, there are a few common types of social network sites which serve as a platform for learners of various fields in terms of learning written discourse (e.g Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter), oral discourse (e.g PodOMatic, VoiceThread and video messaging sites) and sharing images (e.g Instagram, Pinterest and Snapchat) (Lomicka & Lord, 2016).

In general, the literature suggested that SNSs are used in education solely as tools to support existing social relationships and to enable the maintenance of social capital (Ellison et al., 2011), but their values as a learning environment are still questioned. With the increasing popularity of SNS, education practitioners and researchers have become keen in the integration of SNS into language learning with a particular focus on writing (Godwin-Jones, 2008; Mahadi & Ubaidullah, 2010; Lomicka & Lord, 2016). They emphasized the potentials of social networking sites for learning as these can support “*the process of building networks of information, contacts and resources that are applied to real problems*” (Anderson & Dron, 2011, p. 87). Through them, teachers and learners are able to interact, collaborate and work at their own pace beyond classroom hours with the convenient access to these online platforms making learning writing less difficult (McCarthy, 2013). Furthermore, it allows learners to avoid face-to-face interaction which may lead to a lower level of anxiety (Murphy, 2009).

One of the SNSs that has been used in education is Facebook. The social networking platform Facebook (hereafter referred to as FB) has revolutionized current web applications towards social interaction and information sharing (Godwin-Jones, 2008), thus offering a conducive environment for practicing writing skills and overcoming the

difficulties faced in writing (Carlos et al, 2015). It has also been reported that FB has potential in motivating and encouraging learners to learn vocabulary and grammar due to its convenient features and enjoyable environment (Omar, Embi & Yunus, 2012). Besides showing promise as an authentic language learning platform, the unique features FB offers make language learning easier with satisfactory learning outcomes (Chen, 2016). In addition, Facebook can be accessed at anytime and anywhere using mobile phones that enable them to be convenient as gadgets for language learning (Rambe & Ng'ambi, 20011; Muyinda & Mayende, 2013).

On the other hand, some researchers have cautioned against using FB for educational purposes (Selwyn, 2009) since students seemed to show minimal interest in using it for academic purposes. They argue that the focus on its educational uses should be reduced and are in favour of allowing students to reclaim FB as a place for socialization once more (Madge et al., 2009; Hamat et al, 2012). Regardless of scholars' views on the topic, the popularity of Facebook is undeniable (Socialbakers, 2017).

With these concerns in the literature, more research should be conducted before either researchers or educators can reach a comprehensive understanding on how FB is used for language learning. Godwin-Jones (2008, p. 8) makes a sound argument stating that it is *“logical to leverage the current student generation’s heavy reliance”* on social networking platforms like FB to aid language learning. With FB currently considered as the most popular social networking site boasting approximately 1280 million daily users (Socialbakers, 2017), Godwin-Jones’s argument appears to have merit. Hence, it is possible to incorporate Facebook as a learning platform. To date, many studies have examined SNS and FB in particular as a language learning platform, 19 of which were conducted in the context of higher education (Manca & Ranierit, 2013).

1.3 The Importance of Learning Narrative Writing

Narrative writing plays a part in the development of young learners as it allows them to capture their everyday lives on page (Elliot, 1995). By expressing feelings and experiences through writing, one may reap benefits from psychological and physiological aspects (Graham & Perin, 2007). Additionally, narrative writers have been trained at some level to become critical thinkers, as much thought and imagination goes into narrative writing (Burke, 2012). Furthermore, Elliot (1995) spelt out three important aspects of narrative writing:

- a) Narrative writing can provide legitimacy: *“...Just as the use of narrative provides legitimacy in the profession of basic writing...so too narrative provides a sense of authenticity for basic writers’ lives.”*
- b) Narrative writing can enhance metacognition: *“...to write a narrative, a basic writer must select and edit events, must think about the process of thinking.”*
- c) Narrative writing can provide access to the numinous of human consciousness: *“...the nonrational tradition emphasizes the awakening of spirit, the feeling of awe, the idea of mystery, the sensation of fascination, the association of feelings, and the contemplation of the holy.”*

(p. 26-27)

This mode of discourse (narrative writing) can be considered as appropriate for learners to improve their low ESL writing as it is easy and relies on learners’ prior knowledge (Rashid & Chan, 2017).

1.4 Challenges Faced by Malaysian Secondary School ESL Writers

The position of English as a second or third language in the Malaysian language use context would implicate challenges in the acquisition of the language by Malaysian language learners (Ganapathy et al, 2016). Of the four skills, writing seems to pose the biggest challenge among Malaysian secondary school learners of English (Rashid & Chan, 2017; Hiew, 2012). Many of these ESL learners are still unable to master English writing in spite of having gone through eleven years of English learning in schools (Rashidah, 2005; Naginder, 2006; Nor Hashimah Jalaludin, Norsimah Mat Awal & Kesumawati Abu Bakar, 2008, as cited in Che Musa, Lie & Azman, 2012).

Moreover, many Malaysian learners consider English writing as the skill they are least proficient in as they often fail to comprehend how to complete the written tasks (Chitravelu, Sithamparam & Teh, 2005). It is also noted that first language interference as an impediment to learning the English language among the secondary school learners (Maros, Tan and Khazriyati, 2007, as cited in Che Musa, Lie & Azman, 2012). In addition, lack of time in writing essays and unfamiliarity with essay topics are also obstacles faced by learners. Learners need more time in the process of writing especially in content ideas search, sentence constructions, vocabulary search and coherence (Hiew, 2012). Kho and Chuah (2012) further support that ESL learners do not have a platform to practice writing.

Besides that, ESL learners have difficulty obtaining ideas initially and this is followed by the struggle to phrase the language to convey their ideas that may lead to poor writing skills (Ong, 2013). This indicates that ESL learners are able to write but may not be of acceptable standards (Maarof, Yamat & Li, 2011). Furthermore, learners are found to submit their first drafts as the final ones without doing multiple drafts due to time and space constraints while lacking in motivation as well (Hiew, 2012; Maarof,

Yamat & Li, 2011). Thus, learners are unable to obtain the necessary writing benchmark level as required.

1.5 Statement of the Problem

Online writing programmes are “*compositions created with and often times for reading or viewing on a computer or other device that is connected to the internet.*” (National Writing Project & Devoss et al, 2010, p.7). These programmes assist in arousing interest for writing within the learners themselves by offering a platform for them to write virtually, beyond the four walls of a classroom, without time and space restrictions (Jones, 2012). Online writing programmes are essential to millennial learners, also known as “Digital Natives”, because they have been exposed to digital tools all their lives consequently altering their thinking patterns. Due to this, these learners require a different style of teaching and learning (Prensky, 2001). It has been found that there is a lack of specific online writing programmes that can be used to improve writing skills (Ismail, Hussin & Darus, 2012) as ESL learners often do not have good writing skills (Ghabool, Mariadass & Kashef, 2012; Thulasi, Ismail & Salam, 2015).

These ESL learners are also hesitant to give comments and feedback to their peers (Woo, Chu, Ho & Li, 2011) in the traditional face-to-face classroom. Another factor in support of online writing programs is the lack of time to complete essays in class (Hiew, 2012) and limited opportunities for learners to practice writing (Kho & Chuah, 2012). Furthermore, Malaysian secondary school learners are growing up in a media saturated environment, however the creation and facilitation of an environment in which the learners can fully utilize all the resources that technology offers in an appropriate and safe manner remain a concern to teachers and parents (Schwartz & Pollishuke, 2013).

Various perception studies on online writing environments have been conducted and these are mostly centered on university and college level learners (Yunus & Salehi, 2012; Zakaria, Yunus, Nazri & Shah, 2016). Many of the studies on the English language writing skills among ESL learners focused on the use of grammar, syntax and vocabulary in writing (Yeh, Lo & Chu, 2010; Majid, Stapa & Keong, 2012).

While the literature has framed a need for the implementation of these programmes, it is also important to consider both learners' and teachers' perceptions on integrating technology into the classrooms as it will inevitably impact the teaching and learning process (Li, 2007).

1.6 Aims of Research and Research Questions

The aim of this research is to examine ESL learners' and their teacher's perceptions of Facebook for paragraph writing to determine the feasibility of this social media platform as a tool for language learning. To achieve this aim, the following research questions have been formulated:

- a) How do secondary school learners perceive the use of Facebook in English paragraph writing over a period of time?
- b) How does the secondary school teacher perceive the use of Facebook in English paragraph writing over a period of time?
- c) How do learners use the Facebook features in English paragraph writing?

This study sheds light on the perceptions of learners and teachers regarding the use of Facebook as a language learning tool for paragraph writing over a predetermined period of time. As Li (2007) states, learners' and teachers' "*beliefs and views*" need to be understood in order to better integrate technology such as Facebook into schools.

This qualitative research study will help to reveal the process of change from the perspectives of both the learners and their teacher.

1.7 Scope and Limitations

This study is limited in scope as it involves only on a small sample of respondents comprising eight ESL secondary school learners from a language institute. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to the whole population of ESL secondary school learners in Malaysia.

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CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 ESL Learning in Malaysia

In Malaysia, English is a compulsory subject taught to secondary school learners (Hiew, 2012; MOE English Language Syllabus, 2013). In this regard, one of the major criteria that is evaluated and assessed in almost all examinations in Malaysia is the ability to have good writing skills in the English language (Che Musa, Lie & Azman, 2012).

Though English is widely used as a second language, there are still many secondary school learners who face difficulties in writing (Che Musa, Lie & Azman, 2012). A study in the United Kingdom elaborated that learners tend to use learning strategies formed by teaching systems in the secondary schools in higher institutions (Lowe & Cook, 2003). Yet, these learning strategies are inappropriate for learners in higher institutions which emphasize autonomous learning (Lowe & Cook, 2003). Hence, this causes learners in universities to struggle while coping with their studies (Lowe & Cook, 2003).

The initiation by the government to increase the use of ICT in secondary schools like Smart Schools have revealed that 80 % of the educators merely used less than one hour of ICT weekly that was mostly restricted to word-processing (UNESCO, 2013). Furthermore, the use of computers in schools are limited and in certain cases almost non-existent (Hew & Kadir, 2016). These observations do underscore the importance of an alternative approach vis-a-vis online environment for secondary schools learners. The Malaysian National Education Blueprint (2013-2025) emphasizes the creation of an online environment in assisting young Malaysian learners to develop the necessary skills to face the impact of globalization.

2.2 Narrative Paragraph Writing

From a literary perspective, narrative paragraph writing is viewed as the structural framework underlying the direction and manner in which a narrative is presented to the audience (readers, listeners or viewers). In general, the literary narrative usually consists of three components which are beginning, middle and end (Yu, 2005). The beginning involves setting, characters and then the issues related to the character. The middle of the narrative revolves around a plot that is “*distinct from story*” (Tomashevski, 1965; p.67). Moreover, the plot or structure consist of the start of an event, a series of consecutive events integrated with obstacles and rising climax which eventually ends with a resolution (Sun & Yang, 2011).

Narrative structure consists of two narrative discourse elements which are foreground and background based on learners’ narratives from the pedagogy perspective (Bardovi-Harliq, 1992). The foreground refers to events in relation to the “*skeletal structure of the discourse*” (Hopper, 1979). On the other hand, the background refers to providing supportive materials to elaborate the events in the foreground and not in narrating the main events (Hopper, 1979).

An understanding on the notions of narrative structure from the literary and pedagogical perspectives will assist in shedding some light onto certain basic concepts of narrative structure. However, it is inadequate to comprehend the narrative structure solely as there are various perspectives that have to be taken into account based on the previous studies in relation to this current research (Sun & Yang, 2011).

An aspect of writing which needs to be taken into account is the function of writing (Halliday, 1989). Function of writing consists of two core functions which are firstly the storage function whereby allowing conversation over time and space. This is followed by the shift of language from the oral to the visual domain for the examinations on

words and sentences, out of their original contexts to a highly different and “*abstract*” contexts (Goody, 1977 as cited in Brown and Yule, 1983:13). Hence, it is possible to suggest that written language is used for deciphering and transferring information mainly for “*transactional use*” (Sun & Yang, 2011).

Narrative can be viewed as narrating experiences and memories of individuals (Bruner, 1991) and labelled as fiction, fantasy, lie or pretence (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989). It is also elaborated as “*a kind of discourse concerned with action, with life in motion*” such as fiction, short stories, anecdotes or novels (Brooks & Warren, 1952, p. 237). In addition, narrative does not consist of complex discussion of factual ideas as it merely narrates “*an account of an event*” (Rashid & Chan, 2017) or “*a single story or several related ones*” (Langan, 2008, p.203).

On the other hand, Price and Takala (1988, p 136) posit that narrative is also personal “*with an expressive and reflective cast unlike the familiar essay*” that possess stereotype features of storytelling or recalling an event. Interestingly, Schmidt (1981) perceives it as “*a sub category of description and used mainly for the communicative purpose of experienced focused transmission of information.*” Certain features that categorize this type of narrative are based on the description of “*perceptions, process activities, completed or past events, real or fictional sources, individual and concrete phenomena and experiential approaches*” whereby it indirectly conveys an emotional impact towards readers (Schmidt, 1981, p. 136).

Narrative is also considered to be the least difficult task to complete among the different genres (e.g. description, argumentation, persuasion and exposition) for most learners (Manchon, Larios & Murphy, 2000; Rashid & Chan, 2017; Zakaria, Yunus, Nazri & Shah, 2016). The reason is because most learners are more familiar with narrative as they have been exposed to it since young through storytelling (Kellogg,

2001). Thus, learners can recall the narrative schemas or structures from their memories more conveniently that enables narrative to be the most prevalent choice of essay genre (Zakaria, Yunus, Nazri, & Shah, 2016). Moreover, it is essential to take into consideration the perceptions of learners' and teachers' on the practices used as these will give insights into the classroom realities of teaching writing (Mustapa, Rahman & Yunus, 2010; Yunus, Nordin, Salehi, Embi & Salehi, 2013).

2.3 Web Based Language Learning

Web based learning (WBL) consists of any intervention through the use of the internet for education (Cook, 2007). Besides that, a web based learning environment such as online tutorials and discussion groups help to cater to the needs of learners in terms of flexible learning, easily accessible resources, individualized learning and documentation of work (Cook, 2007).

On the other hand, web based language learning (WBLL) is language learning through the use of the Web and its applications, tools, materials or resources (Son, 2007). From a pedagogical perspective, WBLL supports a learner-centred environment which increases independent learning (Quesada, 2005). It can also motivate as well as engage learners in authentic culture and interactive language (Miller & Benton, 2001; Mosquera, 2001; Kung & Chuo, 2002). Hence, learners become more autonomous in learning while teachers merely coach, facilitate or guide them (Quesada, 2005).

Furthermore, unlike the traditional face-to-face medium of teaching which has some space and time restrictions, "... [in] *electronic media, the world becomes the classroom, available 24/7, and not confined to Mondays to Fridays*" (Dzvapatsva, Mitrovic, & Dietrich, 2014). The notion of 24/7 in this context simply suggests that embracing social

network sites enables students and lecturers to interact outside the formal learning time with more flexibility. It does not imply that learning has to take place during the weekend or at night (Chawinga, 2017).

2.4 Selected Studies

2.4.1 Learner's motivation, confidence or attitude towards Facebook as a language learning platform

Only pertinent research on learners' motivation, confidence or attitude towards SNS and Facebook as a language learning platform are discussed below.

Akbari, Eghtesad and Simons (2012) aim to explore learners' attitudes and expectations in using SNS for language learning before and after a language learning course. Before the course, it was revealed that a majority of the learners generally viewed Facebook as useful in communicating and sharing information. After the course, learners stated that Facebook has prospective in providing effective formal education. Additionally, the study revealed that there was an increase in the positive attitudes towards the usefulness of SNS among learners.

Similarly, Eren (2012) aims to explore learners' attitudes in using Facebook for language learning among undergraduates. The study has revealed that learners have positive attitudes towards Facebook activities in supporting classroom instruction though traditional classroom of chalk and talk still remained as the pillar of language education.

Kabilan et al (2010) on the other hand, aim to explore university learners' practices, uses and perspectives in using Facebook as an online platform for language learning. The study reveals that learners are more confident, motivated and have a more positive

attitude in practicing and improving their writing in English as Facebook can make learning English more fun. The researchers find that the majority of the learners are more confident with writing in English, practice using English on Facebook, use English for practical purposes and express their feelings in English with friends. Besides that, learners are more motivated to communicate, read and write in English. Learners also have a more positive attitude in learning new vocabulary and writing in English to share their feelings and ideas on friends' comments while using Facebook as a platform for language learning.

2.4.2 Online writing

Relevant and recent studies regarding the use of ICT and Facebook for online writing will be reported here.

A study by Yunus et al (2009) aims to explore how learners use ICT in English language learning and the challenges they face while using it. The research reveals that the majority of the learners did not use much ICT for language learning. However, it shows that learners do make use of the ICT tool for surfing the internet in searching for information, learning new words, grammar and writing while enabling them to take charge of their own learning. In addition, the researchers reveal that learners are conscious about the importance and value of ICT in improving their English language.

A qualitative study by Yunus, Nordin, Salehi, Embi and Salehi (2013) aims to explore the advantages and disadvantages of using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in teaching ESL writing skills among Malaysian secondary school based on teachers' perceptions. According to the teachers in the study, ICT help learners to build independence and "self-discovery skills" (online search for education materials)

while meeting the teaching objectives. Additionally, ICT also helps in arousing learners' interest for writing, facilitate writing process, increase vocabulary, and support active, meaningful learning.

A qualitative study by Yunus, Salehi and Chenzi (2012) aims to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of the Social Network Sites (SNS) integration in a Malaysia university writing class. According to the researchers, SNS can assist in widening learners' knowledge, nurture thinking skills, increase motivation and build confidence in the process of learning English writing. These sites have engaged learners with resources or materials that are presented in a "comfortable and familiar" manner. It also essentially supports in the teaching and learning process beyond the classroom such as discussions as well as sharing of interests, classroom events and relevant links. It is also worth noting that learners will take responsibilities of their own studies as they may be influenced with the thought of having "*a larger audience*" viewing them, indirectly leading to self-directed learning.

It has been found that online information searching could indirectly help learners to learn many useful skills like analyzing resources critically as well as filtering and then deciphering the vast resources (Northcote & Kendle, 2001). All these findings reveal the advantages and disadvantages of ICT and SNS in relation to online writing in English. Yet, not many in depth researches have been done to explore the changes of perceptions from the perspectives of both the learners and educators while using Facebook as a platform for narrative paragraph writing.

2.4.3 The use of Facebook and its features as an online language learning tool

Relevant and recent studies regarding the use of Facebook and its features as an online language learning tool will be reported here.

A mixed method study by Shih (2011) aims to investigate the effect of a blended learning approach with the integration of Facebook and peer assessment in an English writing class among ESL college learners. According to the learners in the study, this blended learning approach helped in improving writing skills as well as increasing interest and motivation.

On the other hand, Kamnoetsin's (2014) qualitative study aims to examine the EFL college learners' perceptions on whether FB helps to support or hinder the English writing skills. It also explores whether FB influences the type of (formal and informal) English FL use for in-class writing. A majority of the learners in the study stated that FB improved their writing skills. FB is also beneficial as a writing platform as it increases learner's confidence.

A study by Kho and Chuah (2012) aims to explore how Facebook can encourage discourse exchanges among ESL learners. The study shows that the integration of social network sites like Facebook as a teaching and learning platform can provide fun and engaging lessons for learners. Furthermore, the study reveals that learners are more willing to exchange opinions through the Facebook platform instead of the traditional face-to-face classroom environment. In addition, the learners have stated the improvement of vocabulary through reading their friends' comments in the Facebook writing group.

Mahmud and Ching (2012) examined how Facebook can be integrated as an educational ESL platform from the learners' perceptions. The research reveals that

Facebook can improve learners' language learning skills especially reading, writing, improve communication skills, broaden their social circles, reduce fear while learning as well as use the language among their friends.

A mixed method study carried out by Yunus and Salehi (2012) was aimed to investigate the effectiveness of Facebook groups in improving learners' summary writing skills among Malaysian university learners. A majority of the learners in the study have stated that FB is helpful in terms of brainstorming ideas before actual writing, learning new vocabulary from reading friends' comments and reducing spelling errors with a spell check feature.

A few studies have shown the specific aspects and types of Facebook features in helping language learning. Manan, Alias and Pandian (2012) believe that the features available on Facebook group can be viewed "*as a powerful pedagogical tool*" through careful utilization (ibid, p.1). Maarof, Yamat and Li (2011) have also stated another feature of the Facebook group which is the "multimodal communication channels" where learners can interact both synchronously (instant pictures and videos upload) and asynchronously (comments and posts). Furthermore, the wall feature will automatically post the created discussion topic or picture in the group enabling it to be easy in keeping track of the activities happening in the group. Lastly, the "block" feature assists Facebook users to adjust the settings to suit their preferences through restricting certain information from specific viewers. Thus, Facebook group is a feasible learning platform as it eliminates issues inherent in the traditional classrooms such as "*time constraints, the large number of students in a classroom... students' lack of motivation*" (Maarof, Yamat & Li, 2011) and these in turn, enable learners to improve their writing skills as it makes them aware of their errors (White, 2009).

Blattner and Fiori (2009, p.18) further state that it is essential that second language classes incorporate social network sites while making learners handle these sites in order to take advantage of the social and educational opportunities offered by technology. Additionally, Blattner and Lomicka (2012) state that communicative competence can be achieved when learners participate in “*authentic and meaningful*” interactions instead of merely emphasizing on grammar and vocabulary knowledge.

To sum up, Facebook provides a platform for enhancing confidence that can possibly aid in language learning, making it a prospective platform for research (Bloch, 2008). Moreover, there are not many researches on Facebook for improving writing (Bloch, 2008). Hence, Facebook can be viewed as a feasible learning platform by harnessing the time Malaysian teenagers spend on social networks outside of their classes (Manan, Alias & Pandian, 2012).

2.5 Theoretical framework: Sociocultural Theory and Learning

2.5.1 Basic concepts of sociocultural and mediation

Lantolf (2000) states that the human mind is mediated. According to him, Vygotsky is in agreement that humans use “tools” to make sense of their surroundings. These tools serve in solving problems that cannot be solved in the same manner without them. By doing that, these tools indirectly exercise an influence on individuals in how they perceive these activities and the way to execute them. Therefore, these tools undergo modification from one generation to the next with amendments in each generation in order to cater to the needs of its individuals and communities (Vygotsky, 1978).

Sociocultural interactions are critical to learning because they influence individuals in how they use the tools around them to learn, the most important being language (Vygotsky; 1962, 1978 and 1981). Furthermore, he claimed that technology has the potential to mediate students' learning in a multitude of creative ways (Vygotsky as cited in Erben et al, 2009). Creatively using technology in student-centred ways can indirectly help the silent and non-participatory learners in a classroom (Erben et al, 2009). This mediated process involves mediation by artefacts, self through private speech, and others in social interactions (Lantolf, 2000).

The mediated process according to Vygotsky (1978) posits that learners are able to make connections between incoming stimulations with their responses directly through various links instead of mere simple stimulus responses. In this context therefore, the use of devices that “...intervene in the context of an interaction between human beings and the world of objects, events, and behavior” can be referred to as “mediation” (Block, 2003, p. 100). One of these devices is the Social Networking Systems; the archetype of which is Facebook. In this context, therefore, the use of FB as an online writing platform for second language learning can be denoted and explored as a mediated process. In this study, the language learning process involves mediation by artefacts (FB), self (through self-regulation captured in the weekly reports), and others (peers and their comments).

A socially mediated activity would lead to cognitive changes as a result of using these tools in internalizing the social interactions and then mentally transforming those interactions (Vygotsky, 1962). Hence, these tools serve as a mediational means to effect learning (Vygotsky, 1962). The mediated action could be further explained based on Vygotsky's basic mediated action triangle (Cole and Engeström, 1993) as seen below:

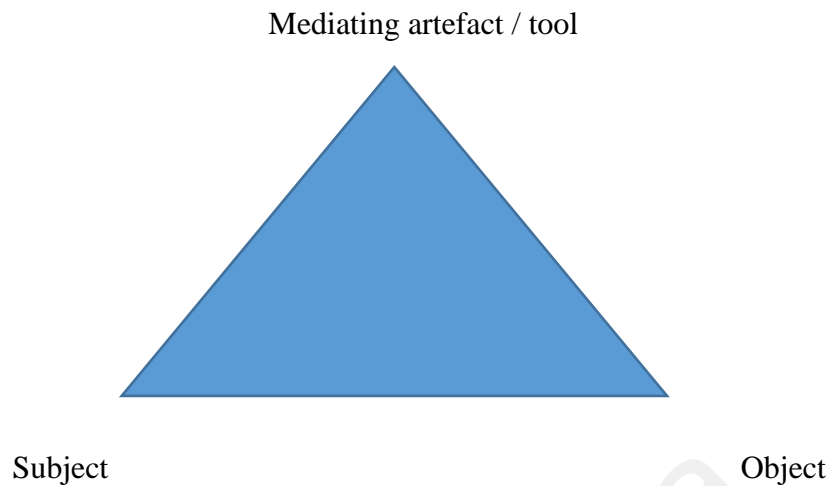


Figure 2.1: Vygotsky's basic mediated action triangle (adapted from Cole & Engeström, 1993)

**Subject* - Individuals engaged in the activity

Mediating artefact or tool – Artefacts, social others and prior knowledge which contribute to the subjects' mediated action experiences within the activity

Object – Goal of the activity

2.5.2 Mediation and language learning writing

Writing refers to using language as a mediator to make sense of knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). Activities of writing use various tools to mediate learning such as “*theories, concepts, cultural, professional norms and guidelines.*” Moreover, writing is action at an individual level comprising different “*social and cultural signs, symbols and words*” to bring new perspectives of “*meaning*” (Wittek, 2013). The process of writing is through interacting with culturally developed tools (e.g. instructions on how to write an assignment) as well as with others on the periphery or third parties (Linell, 2009) such as the author of a book.

Through Wertsch's (2007) analysis on Vygotsky's writings, he differentiated two core categories of mediation which are explicit and implicit mediations. Explicit mediation refers to "*the intentional introduction of signs into an ongoing flow of activity*" (Wertsch, 2007, p. 185) while implicit mediation consists of signs "*in the form of natural language that have evolved in the service of communication and are then harnessed in other forms of activity*" (Wertsch, 2007, p. 185). In the context of Facebook, explicit mediation is when learners are exposed to concrete theories, didactical models or instructions for a written task; while implicit mediation consists of specific manners of reasoning, procedures in finding for the right solution or the accepted manners of argument in a written task for a specific field (Wertsch, 2007). Naturally, these processes are not made explicit but must be unpacked by the learners for comprehension. Moreover, implicit mediation is achievable when learners are involved in the development and exploration of the potential meanings with the tools they use (e.g concepts, theories, didactical models or electronic devices for teaching and learning).

2.5.3 Facebook as a Mediator of Learning

Technology mediated learning is to use technology to assist learning (Oliver & Herrington, 2003). There has been an increase in the use of new technologies in teaching and learning (Laurillard, 2006). Furthermore, these new technologies with their evolving tools and SNSs as language learning platforms have been receptive to learners but in the context that educators facilitate knowledge to guide learners in the learning process (Lantolf & Appel, 1994; Vygotsky, 1978). It has also been advocated that technology mediated learning platforms of SNSs like Facebook can be integrated for

developing competency in English language learning and extending learning beyond the classroom (Blattner & Lomicka, 2012).

Facebook can provide great learning support to learners, that is, it can offer learners at the click of a key, a vast amount of information and at the same time, it can also be a receiver of information when learners learn to be the provider of information (Rambe & Ng'ambi, 2011). Besides that, the increased interactions between learners and content will lead to meaningful learning (Anderson, 2003). This will lead to the development within individuals (Vygotsky, 1978) as the active presence of learners and tutors to interact at any time or anywhere, increases accessibility for learning while reducing isolation (Rambe & Ng'ambi, 2011).

University of Malaya

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Method

This section elaborates on the study. It elaborates on the important aspects of the study such as research site, participants, instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis procedure as well as reliability of the data and coder agreement.

3.1 The study

This study employs a qualitative research design to answer the research questions. The first research question aims to elicit the perceptions of secondary school learners and teacher towards the use of Facebook in English paragraph writing over a period of time. The second question is on how the learners use the Facebook features in English paragraph writing. Both research questions will be based on learners' weekly self-reports and a post study question as well as teacher's diary entries. It will be supported by the transcripts from the Facebook page.

3.2 Research site

This study was conducted over a period of seven weeks. The consensus of the participants and the institution was essential. Hence, a decision was made based on convenience sampling. An established language centre was chosen for this study because it is the researcher's place of work and there was an appropriate target group of willing participants.

3.3 Participants

Eight intermediate learners in the Pre-First Certificate of English (Pre-FCE) were the participants who volunteered for this study. Their Preliminary English Test (PET), a standard test of Cambridge ESOL, was used as a benchmark for selection. The learners in this class had taken and passed PET at the end of the previous term and had scored above 70%. They are of the same level of language proficiency, and therefore homogenous in their abilities. Furthermore, if there are new students in the class, the learners will have to take an entrance test from the language institute before being placed into the respective class level (Eg. KET, PET and Pre-FCE). The entrance test is based on writing, reading, speaking and listening conducted by the principal of the centre at the beginning of the year.

Their ages ranged from 15-17 years old and they spoke a variety of first language (Bahasa Malaysia, English, Mandarin and Tamil). All the learners had previous experiences using computers and they had been active Facebook users prior to the class and research study except for one learner who was not very active in using Facebook frequently. The learners usually used Facebook as a platform to communicate with their friends, check the public wall page on what is going on with their friends and for entertainment purposes (posting and looking at interesting, weird or funny pictures as well as videos). In addition, they also used a mixture of English and their native language when conversing on Facebook with their friends. All the learners admitted verbally and some in written form during the research study that they had not used Facebook as a platform for language learning.

A teacher in the language centre who was teaching in the Pre-FCE class was chosen. This particular teacher was teaching a group of young learners suitable for the study and she has experiences in teaching with technology. She has been in the teaching field for

ten years in various language centres and is familiar with teaching learners in the Malaysian Secondary Education System. In the last six years, she has been using different types of technological tools to teach the four language skills (listening, speaking, writing and reading) such as blogs, websites, WhatsApp and YouTube.

3.4 Instruments

This study made use of learners' weekly self-report sheets (Appendix A) and a post study question (Appendix B) as a means to gather information on the learners' weekly and end of the study perceptions of using FB for paragraph writing. The weekly self-report was used to gather the learners' perception of using Facebook in the narrative paragraph writing. The post study was an open-ended question to retrieve the features that were used and how FB helped in improving learners' narrative paragraph writing at the end of the study. Furthermore, it was used to see if there were changes in the learners' perceptions from their initial viewpoints. The use of open-ended question will enable learners to elaborate their "accounts" and "observations" that are not restricted by any pre-existing categories (Elliot & Timulak, 2005).

To investigate the teacher's perception, her diary entries were recorded. These diary entries were also known as teacher's written documentation which was seen as a reliable source of data that would allow the teachers to clarify their thoughts on teaching for enhancing professional development (Yang, 2009). The diary entries allow teachers to reflect on their teaching process based on their own observation (Richards, 1991, p.4). There was no guideline or format given to the teacher for the weekly diary entries unlike the learners' instruments. This was because the teacher was already giving her observation of learners in class and on the Facebook group wall page as well as

perspectives and experiences as a language teacher in using Facebook as a learning writing platform. The researcher decided to let the diary entries to be an open format.

All the instruments in this study whether used by the participants or teacher were type written or by email. This also made it easier for the learners and their teacher to keep track of their own reflections in the teaching and learning process.

For the summary of the instruments, please refer to Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1: Research questions and instruments

Research question	Instrument
1(a):Learners' perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven weeks of self-reports • Post study question • FB wall page (Screenshots taken from English Paragraph Writing wall page)
1(b):Teacher's perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher's diary entries • FB wall page (Screenshots taken from English Paragraph Writing wall page)
2:The use of FB features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FB wall page (Screenshots taken from English Paragraph Writing wall page) • Seven weeks of self-reports • Teacher's diary entries • Post study question

Material: Paragraph writing tasks

The paragraph writing topics were extracted from the Pre-First Certificate of English syllabus (Pre-FCE) and given to the learners by their teacher. A hundred-word paragraph was expected for each topic from each learner. One week was given for learners to finish each paragraph writing topic. The seven weekly paragraph writing sessions covered the following topics: relationships, sports and fitness, changes, mystery and history, the natural world, free time and fashion.

3.5 Data collection procedure

There were three stages in the data collection procedure: pre-study, actual research study (weeks 1 to 7) and post-study (Week 7 and the consecutive weeks). The following Table 3.2 below shows the stages and the activities conducted:

Table 3.2: Stages of the research study

Pre-study stage	Actual study stage (Weeks 1-7)	Post-study stage (Week 7 and the consecutive weeks)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing • Consent • Demonstration - Pairing of learners - Time frame of study - Q&A session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners' weekly paragraph writing posts on Facebook • Learners' weekly self-reports • Teacher's diary entries • Activities on the Facebook wall group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-study question • Semi-structured interviews (for clarifications – week 8 and onwards)

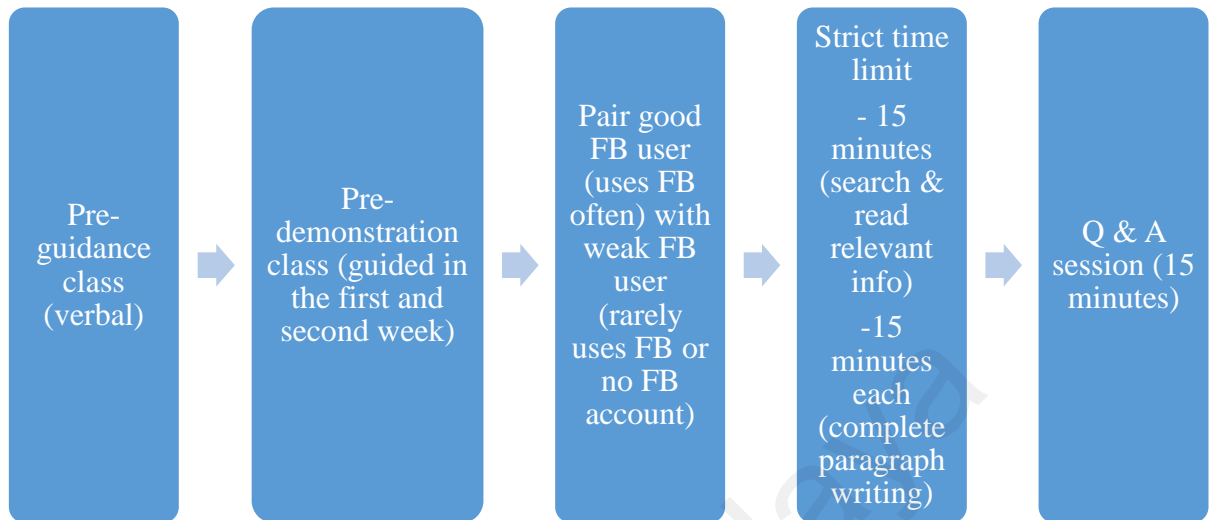
A pre-study stage for two weeks was conducted before the actual research took place. The researcher was able to observe and brief the participants on the actual research study such as the weekly self-reports and post study question. Besides that, the researcher also explained about the consent letter for both the participants and their respective guardians as these participants were still considered as underage according to the Malaysian Law and University of Malaya constitution. The teacher acted as a facilitator throughout this research. The aim is to nurture autonomous learning. Furthermore, explanation and instructions were given by the teacher of the class (e.g. general suggestions on relevant online language sites). The teacher briefed the participants that no mark would be given for their work during the whole research study as it was on a voluntary basis.

All the participants and their teacher gave their written informed consent to take part in this study. This consent letter also ensured anonymity whereby no information gathered and reported would refer to any individual or the language centre that provided the information. The researcher gave everyone the option to use either their current Facebook account or create a new one depending on each one's convenience and comfort. All the participants agreed to use their current Facebook account while the teacher agreed to use her teaching Facebook account instead of her personal one.

A few simple guidelines were given to the participants verbally by the teacher. Participants were reminded to use correct English for writing (complete and grammatically correct sentences) without the use of abbreviations or short forms in the Facebook group and always be respectful to one another while participating in this research study. This is because past studies have argued that using Facebook platform have a negative side as it may lead to distraction among learners, the use of “non-standard English” during online interactions as well as the habit of using too many abbreviations in writing (White, 2009; Yunus et al, 2012). They were also told that they could use any electronic gadgets to post their narrative paragraph writing weekly at their own convenience within the week.

A demonstration on using Facebook for narrative paragraph writing was carried out for two weeks by the teacher. The lesson was carried out as shown in Table 3.3 (Refer to appendix for further information):

Table 3.3: Pre-guidance class (verbal)



For the actual study stage, a private FB group labelled “EPW” (English Paragraph Writing – Henceforth referred as EPW) was set up by one of the learners within the group. The researcher observed the learners and their teacher during the research study and wrote field notes. The researcher was also a teacher in the language centre so the learners were not uncomfortable with the presence of the researcher. A narrative paragraph was consecutively posted on FB by learners for seven weeks. Paragraphs on different topics from the syllabus were posted each week (relationships, sports and fitness, changes, mystery and history, the natural world, free time and fashion). Seven weeks of learners’ self-reports were gathered. At the end of the seventh week, a post study question was given and a semi-structured interview was conducted for further clarification when necessary. As for the teacher, weekly diary entries were required throughout the research. The Table 3.4 below shows the implementation procedure.

Table 3.4: Procedure of the qualitative study

Submitted by	Weeks 1-7	Week 7
Learners	Weekly paragraph writing postings on FB wall and weekly self-reports	Open-ended question (and interviews for clarifications)
Teacher	Teacher diary entries	Teacher diary entries

3.6 Data analysis procedure

Thematic analysis was applied to analyze the weekly self-reports, open-ended question and diary entries. Thematic analysis is used to analyze the life story materials narrated within the context (Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013). This type of analysis identifies the patterns and themes that emerge from the narratives in order to provide detailed information on the subject of study (Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013). Thematic analysis uses less time and it is a flexible approach to use in this study (Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013; Boyatzis, R.E. 1998). Furthermore, it is considered as a “*rigorous approach*” in order to shed light on the “*insightful analysis that answers particular research questions*” (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In addition, this approach complemented the research questions by facilitating an investigation on the data from two perspectives:

- a) data driven perspectives based on coding in an inductive way
- b) to check if the data was consistent with the research questions and provided sufficient information.

The researcher looked into semantic themes that were identified within the surface meanings of the data and not looking beyond what a participant has said or written. The thematic analysis used in this study was mainly built upon the theoretical positions of Braun and Clarke (2006).

Braun and Clarke's have mentioned six phases of conducting thematic analysis which are (Refer to Table 3.5 for further explanation):

- 1) Familiarisation of data
- 2) Generating initial codes
- 3) Searching for themes
- 4) Reviewing themes
- 5) Defining and naming themes
- 6) Producing the report

Table 3.5: Phases of thematic analysis

Phase	Description of the process
Familiarising yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
Reviewing themes	Checking the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Braun & Clarke (2006)

In applying thematic analysis, learners' perceptions were extracted from the weekly self-reports and open-ended question while teacher's perception was extracted from diary entries. This inductive analysis helped to investigate the changes or process of teaching and learning with FB. A 20% sample of data was coded by three peer coders and an expert coder. All the peer coders have backgrounds related to language. Two of them have PhD degrees and one has an MA. Besides that, one of the PhD coders has more than 10 years of teaching experience in a government school. The transcripts from FB wall (learners' posts and history of clicking behavior) helped to gather the FB features that were used for narrative paragraph writing.

3.6.1 Reliability of the data and coder agreement

Firstly, all the coders underwent a coding training session in which they were briefed and trained in coding the relevant data. After that, moderation of coding occurred where coding would cease when the "*refinements* (coded data extracts for themes) *did not add anything substantial*" to the overall thematic mapping (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In order to reach a consensus on the extracted themes (main themes, sub themes and second level of coding) as followed in the Braun and Clarke's phases, all the coders must come to an agreement in terms of "*defining and naming themes*" with the appropriate participants' excerpts before the report on the data analysis was written. Whenever one of the coders did not agree on the phrasing of the theme, the researcher would refer to the past literature reviews in "*defining and naming themes*" in order to gain absolute (100%) coder agreement.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

This section presents the data that dealt with research question 1, which are in two parts:

- 1) (a) How do secondary school learners perceive the use of Facebook in English paragraph writing over a period of time?
(b) How does the secondary school teacher perceive the use of Facebook in English paragraph writing over a period of time?

4.1 Learners' perceptions

The weekly self-reports and open-ended question submitted by the learners were analyzed in order to answer research question 1 (a). The aim of these self-reports (see Appendix A) was to gain insights of the learners' perceptions towards using Facebook for learning English paragraph writing.

4.2 Weekly self-reports

The insights gained from these self-reports show that there were four main themes: uses, challenges, affective domains and suggestions for improvements on FB as an English learning narrative paragraph as a writing platform. The changes in the process of learning with FB over time were also explored.

4.2.1 Uses of Facebook as an English learning narrative paragraph writing platform

All the participants agreed that one of the major uses of FB was to learn language skills relevant to English paragraph writing through a common platform. The majority of the participants were in agreement that reading or correcting friends' essays on paragraph writing could help them to learn, apply or practice vocabulary, idioms and grammar (Participants A, B, D, E, G and H). Excerpts taken from their self-reports are shown below:

Participant A "... gain more knowledge from the[friend's] essay and gain new word and vocabulary." (Week 2)
Participant B - "I could apply and practice what I have learnt in the class like grammar lessons onto my friends' essay or how to improve their storyline for instance." (Week 4)
Participant D - "I learnt much from reading my friends' comments and their essays to learn grammar, words and idioms." (Week 5)

Besides that, participants stated that they could learn and improve their narrative paragraph writing in terms of interesting storylines (Participants B, G and H), attempting "different style of narrating a story" (Participant F) and varying "sentence structures, choice of words and phrases... used to describe things" (Participant H). Furthermore, many of them regarded FB as a useful platform for them to practice paragraph writing (Participants B, C, D, G and H). This method also encouraged the participants to read articles or watch informative and educational videos such as National Geographic and Reader's Digest (Participants B, C, D and E). Apart from that, participants felt that reading English websites have helped them in learning idioms and words for English writing (Participants B, C and E), and in their own words:

Participant F - "... learning the different style of narrating a story from reading my friends' essays." (Week 3)
Participant H - "I learnt a lot of new things by reading my friends' essays like interesting storylines, sentence structures, choice of words and phrases they used to describe things. I also learnt new vocabularies related to the topic weekly." (Week 6)

It is worth noting that the participants were taking turns in posting 10 new words or idioms weekly on FB which were related to the weekly topics. Interestingly, learning writing on FB has helped in understanding the definitions of idioms and the way to use them “*correctly in a sentence*” in appropriate contexts according to Participant E. This seems to be a better approach to comprehend the new vocabularies and idioms “*instead of randomly memorising 100 words from dictionary*” (Participant G) or “*being forced to memorize a chunk of words for no reason*” (Participant H). More essentially, posting such narrative writing has assisted in the learning of idioms and vocabulary according to Participant D., who has also come to realization and awareness on the importance of reading books to enhance one’s writing skills through completing the weekly task on EPW. Other participants posted the following:

Participant E – “*In my opinion, I like reading my friends’ essays and how they used the idioms in their essays. This help me to learn better than asking me to memorize 50 new idioms and their meanings. I can understand it better this way. I felt happy to learn the idioms used by my friends correctly in a sentence depending on the situation.*” (Week 3)
Participant G – “*I like learning the 10 new words related to the topic posted by my friends weekly instead of randomly memorising 100 words from dictionary which helped in improving my essay writing.*” (Week 3)
Participant H – “*This week I learnt 10 new words again relating to the topic posted by my friends. It is easier for me to learn 10 new words related to the topic every week instead of being forced to memorize a chunk of words for no reason.*” (Week 7)

Apart from reading and posting, the majority of the participants felt that the application of knowledge from class could be transferred to EPW through practicing essay writing (Participants B, C, D, G and H). By doing so, it has helped them to improve grammar, storylines and vocabulary whether through practicing essay on Facebook, classroom or during examinations (Participants B, C, D, G and H).

Participant D stated that doing paragraph writing on EPW has helped overcome fears towards writing. Besides that, participants felt “*lost*”, had “*writer’s block*” and lack of ideas in initiating writing on EPW due to inadequate information in their prior knowledge (Participants D, G and H). However, they felt that Facebook served as a scaffold with a community of friends in helping them to learn how to write online, whether through “*reading my friends’ essays on FB and relating narrative essays online*” or to “*find information online while typing essay for EPW*” (Participant D, G and H), as shown in the excerpts below:

Participant D – “*At times, I have no idea how to start my paragraph writing but by reading my friends’ essays on FB and relating narrative essays online helps me very much to overcome the fear of writing.*” (Week 6)
Participant G – “*I used to feel lost as I do not know how to start writing because I have no idea or information on certain topics while writing essays in class. Yet, it was different here as doing it together with my friends helped me to learn from them or with the internet.*” (Week 6)
Participant H – “*I would have writer’s block when writing essays in the classroom especially for topics which I am not familiar with. But doing EPW has helped me to overcome this as I can easily find information online while typing essay for EPW.*” (Week 2)

Another subtheme to highlight was the sharing of information with peers on English paragraph writing through FB. Two participants realized that they were able to discuss vocabulary, idioms, story creation and English writing with their friends on EPW (Participants A and F). Furthermore, discussion with friends enabled one to ask on appropriate use of idioms and the way to source for “*interesting and colourful websites*” (Participants A and F). Participants felt that they could share information through the act of posting on FB. For instance, participants felt that posting ten words or idioms weekly was an act of information sharing and learning with friends (Participants A, C, G and H). Besides that, participant B stated the convenience of sharing website links, quotes, pictures and videos with friends on EPW. With further clarification (interview through email), the researcher found that the participants were using FB app, website and

WhatsApp for sharing information through discussion, posting information or sharing website links without the need of face-to-face in learning writing.

Participant F – *“I can discuss with my friends on words and idioms through EPW. I can also ask my friends on where to find information on interesting, colourful language websites.”* (Week 2)

Another interesting sub theme was learning through the process of commenting, where participants experienced being a commenter to being commented and then having the awareness in learning. Participant F stated that commenting helped in learning *“grammar, words and English writing”* while participant H felt that it assisted in identifying mistakes in terms of spelling vocabulary, grammar and sentence structures for friends. Commenting has helped the participant to be more aware on *“what to look at to improve essays”* (Participant D) while improving his or her skill in giving opinion (Participant B). Interestingly, Participant C felt that being a commenter was equivalent to being *“like a teacher”*. This may be due to the relaxed and comfortable virtual environment that enabled one to *“comment without face-to-face unlike the class where everyone stare at me”* (Participant D). According to Participant B, *“... friends would help me correct my mistakes and I would also help my friends correcting their mistakes”* which clearly reflect the mutual benefit in this process of commenting.

Participant B – *“My friends would help me correct my mistakes and I would also help my friends correcting their mistakes.”* (Week 1)

Participant C – *“In the group, I am able to comment on my friends’ essay as well. I like to comment on others’ essays because I can be like a “teacher”. I can indirectly teach and help them to improve. Besides, I can improve my English writing by commenting on my friends’ essays.”* (Week 5)

Participant D – *“I felt slightly comfortable to try in commenting on my friends’ essays now as I now know what to look at to improve essays.”* (Week 7)

“I felt relaxed that I could comment on friends’ work without face to face unlike in the class where all my friends will stare at me.” (Week 7)

Participant F – *“I like to comment on my friends’ essay as it help me to learn grammar, new words and English writing when I check my friends’ essays.”* (Week 1)

The majority of the participants felt that they have improved from the comments made by friends on EPW (Participants A, D, E, F, G and H) as they felt that they could learn as well as improve grammar, spelling, idioms and vocabulary based on their friends' comments (Participants B, C D, and H). Additionally, friends' comments enabled one to "*know... what mistakes... I have made like wrong choice of words or grammar mistakes.*" (Participant D). Participants also felt that they would be "*more confident and not being scared of making mistakes*" based on their friends' comments (Participants C and G).

<p>Participant C – "<i>My friends' comments on my essays makes me feel more confident and not being scared of making mistakes because everyone should learn from their own mistakes.</i>" (Week 4)</p> <p>Participant D – "<i>My friends' comments would always let me know what are my mistakes that I have made like wrong choice of words or grammar mistakes.</i>" (Week 6)</p>

In the process of commenting, all of the participants stated that it helped them to reflect on their own mistakes and indirectly assisted in learning writing (Participants A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H). A few participants "*realized*" their own mistakes either through friends' comments or by themselves (Participants C, E, and G). However, this realization helped participants to be "*motivated ... to write better*" or even understood that essay writing was not as difficult as they expected through the assistance of "*friends' comments*" and "*methods on how to improve essay*" (Participant C and F). Participant E "*realized*" the need in reading one's own paragraph writing before posting on EPW. Furthermore, Participant G felt EPW was similar with "*killing two birds with one stone*" as one could learn writing while helping friends to improve theirs. Participant G further elaborated on the benefit of EPW whereby it was a good change of learning environment and mutually beneficial in learning writing among friends "*instead of being told of my mistakes by the teacher [only] every single time*" [sic]. Friends' comments enabled Participant B and E to be more "*alert*" in noticing their

mistakes such as “*simple grammar mistakes*” and “*mistakes in story.*” Apart from their friends’ comments, reading friends’ essays also helped one to be “*aware*” of learning “*new words, idioms and grammar*” (Participant G). By having awareness on mistakes, understanding one’s own English writing level and ways to improve writing would help the participants to reflect. Participant H learnt “*from the mistakes [I] make while doing essays on EPW*”. Besides that, Participant D felt that his or her own “*narrative writing skills and grammar*” were below par, based on friends’ comments. He or she also felt that friends’ comments have enabled one to “*reflect on [my] own work*” while coming to a realization on the need to “*always read my paragraph writing again before and after posting it on FB.*” Through reflection, participants stated that they could improve their essays, grammar, words, idioms and phrases while learning from their mistakes in the process of commenting and being commented by friends on EPW (Participants A, E and H). In addition, Participant E further stated on being able to retain knowledge better due to the consistent corrections and suggestions by friends while Participant H “*like*” the fact that one could learn in expressing opinions and suggestions on friends’ mistakes through EPW.

Participant C – “*It was really helpful as I realized the mistakes that I have done and motivated me to write better by learning from my friends’ comments.*” (Week 2)

Participant D – “*It makes me reflect on my own work and I realised I should always read my paragraph writing again before and after posting it on FB.*” (Week 6)

Participant F – “*If not because of EPW, I will not realize that essay writing is not as difficult as I expected by learning from my friends’ comments and felt great in knowing more methods on how to improve my essays.*” (Week 4)

Participant E – “*I was embarrassed about my silly mistake because I wrote ‘a go’ instead of ‘ago’. I realized I have to read my paragraph first before posting my essay on FB.*” (Week 1)

Participant G – “*It was like killing two birds with one stone for EPW as I get to learn English writing and help my friends in their writing as well. It was nice to help one another in learning writing instead of being told of my mistakes by the teacher only every single time.*” (Week 1)

Participant H – “*I get to improve my vocabulary and learn from the mistakes I make while doing essays on EPW.*” (Week 1)

The analysis of these self-reports also revealed another theme, which is that the participants were learning at one's own pace. Many of them were in agreement that the setting of EPW assisted in breaking space and time constraints (as cited in Kamnoetsin, T., 2014) while having the opportunity to edit one's weekly paragraph writing (Participants A, B, C, E, F and H). The participants stated that EPW helped in breaking space restrictions as it was not compulsory nor even a "*pressure*" for them to finish the task in class (Participants A and B). Besides that, Participant B felt that one would have more time to ponder on the mistakes for revising, while Participants C and H stated that one would have more time to complete the writing task without "*rushing to finish within an hour or less*" in class and having the "*whole week instead of doing it within a time limit*". Participant C further elaborated on being able to "*practice doing more essay writing as my school teacher always does not have time to give us many essays to do*". On the other hand, majority of the participants felt that they were able to edit their paragraph writing repeatedly on Facebook to their own satisfaction throughout the week (Participants A, B, C, E, F and H). Furthermore, it was "*convenient*" and "*easy*" in editing or posting the paragraph writing "*without typing the whole essay every time*" (Participants C, E and F).

Participant B – "*I am not pressure to finish it in the class*" (Week 6)

Participant C – "*I also have a week to do my paragraph writing instead of rushing to finish within an hour or less.*" (Week 3)

"I could also practice doing more essay writing as my school teacher always does not have time to give us many essays to do." (Week 4)

Participant E – "*It is also easy to use as I get to post a new essay whenever I am not satisfied with the story I wrote.*" (Week 1)

"It is also convenient to edit my essay without typing the whole essay every time." (Week 3)

Participant H – "*I like that I could take my time to do this for the whole week instead of doing it within a time limit.*" (Week 3)

Certain participants were aware of the benefits in commenting at the initial stage of the research study which was in week 1 and then with friends' comments at the later stage (Participants B, F and H). On the other hand, there were participants who were aware of the benefits in friends' comments at the beginning stage of the research study and then with commenting on friends at a later stage (Participants A [Week 4], C [Week 2], D [Week 1] and G [Week 2]). There was also one participant who was aware of the benefits in commenting and being commented while having the ability to reflect on his or her mistakes in the first week of the research study (Participant H). This indicated that the participants have different perspectives in learning whereby certain participants were more inclined towards commenting initially and then being commented by friends and vice versa. However, there was a participant who was only aware on the benefits of friends' comments in the sixth week while reflecting on mistakes and being aware of making improvements almost every single week (Participant E - Weeks 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7).

To sum up, learners have found FB to be helpful in terms of building vocabulary, idioms, phrases and grammar as well as gaining perspectives on storylines and the different styles of narrating a story. This was in agreement with certain previous studies on helping learners learn new vocabulary, grammar and writing (Hiew, 2012; Kabilan et al, 2010; Omar et al, 2012; Shih, 2011; Yunus et al, 2009; Yunus & Salehi, 2012; Yunus, Salehi & Chenzi, 2012). Besides that, the act of sharing information with peers has changed vastly due to the influence of technology whereby learners source for information online and then share it through different gadgets with the convenience of the "share" feature. This has been advocated as "*self-discovery skills*" and sharing resources for assisting the process of writing (Yunus et al, 2013; Maarof et al, 2011). Furthermore, the process of commenting and being commented have enabled learners to reflect and edit their own work. This could lead learners to enhance their critical

reflections through technology (Yang, 2009). All these were made possible due to the FB settings which allow learners to complete the task weekly at any time and place. This concurs with McCarthy's (2013) and Manan et al's (2012) studies which suggested learning at one's own pace without time and space restrictions.

In this section, FB acted as a mediator or "tool" for language learning writing in order for the occurrence of meaningful learning and internalisation (Vygotsky, 1987). From the perspective of learners, it was feasible in terms of learning specific micro aspects of writing with the support of information sharing as well as the process of commenting and being commented with FB as a mediator. All these were made feasible due to the nature or characteristics of FB and its features which enabled learners to change cognitively while performing the writing task (reading friends' comments, filtering information and sharing of information) and then mentally transforming those "interactions" with peers (Vygotsky, 1962). Furthermore, implicit mediation could be seen whereby learners were independently searching for solutions in accomplishing their written tasks like reading, filtering and sharing (Wertsch, 2007) which was unpacked by themselves in the process of posting their paragraph writing on Facebook.

4.2.2 Challenges of using Facebook as an English learning narrative paragraph writing platform

Half of the participants in this research believe that self-consciousness was one of the main challenges in the learning of narrative paragraph writing on FB. First and foremost, it was a concern for participants to present "*interesting essays*" (Participants A and B) on the EPW wall as well as thinking of ways to "*reduce grammar mistakes*" (Participants B and C). Furthermore, Participants B and C were very concerned with how their essays were "*being viewed*", "*seen*" and "*commented*" by friends on EPW. On

the negative side, Participant H felt “*nervous and shy*” as he or she was concerned at being laughed at or given negative comments on one’s essays. Interestingly, Participant H felt that “*it was not as bad as I have thought*” after reflecting at the end of the week. The excerpts below revealed these.

Participant A – “*The challenges of doing paragraph writing using Facebook is I have to make sure that my essay is interesting to read for my friends.*” (Week 6)
Participant B – “*It is also challenging and worrying for me to think on how to make my essay more interesting to read, how to reduce grammar mistakes or how it is being view by my friends.*” (Week 2)
Participant C – “*It was challenging as I am trying my best to reduce my grammar mistakes as my essays will be seen and commented by my friends.*” (Week 2)
Participant H – “*I always feel nervous and shy because I am scared that my friends will laugh at my essays or say something bad about it. Strangely, it was not as bad as I have thought.*” (Week 1)

Another challenge noted by the participants is the shortcoming of the technology. According to Participant B, the smartphones have a downside because when posting their writing on FB there is a feature which “*would auto installed or sometimes auto deleted*”. This is time consuming and they need to spend more time to “*update or download it back.*” Apart from that, the same participant also elaborated that the smartphone will at times “*hung up*” and then automatically post his or her paragraph writing before one could finish typing the essay. Besides that, the same occurrence happened to Participant F but on a different technology gadget whereby the “*computer just shut off itself.*”

Participant B – “*While writing, my phone will sometimes hung up and it will auto post my post.*” (Week 1)
“*The lagging of my phone have confused me. Plus, sometimes, my FB would auto installed or sometimes auto deleted. It need some time to update or download it back.*” (Week 2)
Participant F – “*Besides that, the challenges that I face in English paragraph writing was I have to check again my essay before I posted it on the page but unfortunately the computer just shut off itself. I felt so helpless.*” (Week 1)

There were a few participants who were not familiar with the features and are “*confused*” in choosing appropriate features of FB for writing at the initial stage of the research study (Participants A, F and H). However, this perception changed over time. Participant A was one of them who struggled with the process of learning how to use the features for writing, at the beginning and towards the end of the study. Participant F regarded it as a challenge, however it also made this participant to take the initiative to do “*some research from the internet to help*” in learning to use the suitable features correctly. Participant H on the other hand was having difficulty in using the correct features in completing the task at the beginning because he or she rarely used FB. Only after being more familiar was H able to differentiate and use the right features and this happened nearly at the end of the study.

Participant F – “ <i>There were some challenges in using the Facebook features that I have to settle it, so I did some research from the internet to help me.</i> ” (Week 2) Participant H – “ <i>I was confused with how to use the tools on Facebook by getting them mixed up at the beginning as I do not use Facebook often.</i> ” (Week 6)
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Though the participants revealed difficulties and challenges in using FB as a writing platform, they also have some positive perspectives. For instance, Participant A who faced difficulties in using appropriate FB features, and was concerned with presenting “*interesting essays*” and pondered how to improve writing an essay which will interest the readers. Yet, this participant still kept a positive perspective like being “*more confident and brave to comment on [my] friends’ post*”, “*confident to write essay*” and “*confident to post [my] essay after [I] do this [in] several times*”. On the other hand, Participant B had “*no idea*” on writing in English, had difficulty in making the essay more interesting and reducing grammar mistakes. Participant B overcame these through sourcing “*inspiration online*”, friends’ comments and “*sharing websites’ links related to English language when online with my friends like TED talks and language blogs.*”

Furthermore, Participant B stated that the challenges of using the handphone for posting essays through FB “*has lessened*” over the weeks. Participant C also faced difficulty and was hesitant and “scared” of making mistakes in posting essays and the need to reduce grammar mistakes due to being “*seen and commented by my friends.*” However, Participant C was optimistic about being “*able to learn the mistakes in [my] essays... through [my] friends’ comments*” who used simple explanation in conveying the mistakes as well as friends’ comments which was “*helpful*” in identifying mistakes and motivating participant to “*write better.*”

Participant A – “*My feelings in this week’s EPW is more confident and brave to comment on my friends post.*” (Week 1)
Participant B – “*I will also face the challenges while doing the paragraph writing like having no idea but I overcome it by finding inspiration online.*” (Week 1)
“*In my opinion, FB sometimes gives us advantages such as easy in sharing websites links related to English language when online with my friends like TEDtalks and language blogs.*” (Week 2)
“*The challenges with using my hand phone for posting essay on Fb has lessened.*” (Week 3)
Participant C – “*As I was about to post the essay, I was hesitating because I was scared that I will make mistake and other people will judge it. I was able to learn the mistakes in my essays like the grammar and sentence structures through my friends’ comments. It was easy as they explained with simple grammar rules and told me the correct way to rephrase my sentences.*” (Week 1)
“*It was challenging as I am trying my best to reduce my grammar mistakes as my essays will be seen and commented by my friends.*” (Week 2)

It may be concluded that it is feasible to use FB as a language learning platform provided that the teacher takes into account the expected self-consciousness. These negative perceptions and feelings (*being viewed, seen and nervous and shy*) indirectly affect learners when they write though it may be a virtual platform (Burrows, 2010; Maley & Duff, 2005; Wang, 1993). A teacher who is sensitive may be able to guide learners by supporting and helping them to be prepared step by step. Furthermore, it is essential to take note of the technology’s shortcomings; each type of gadget and its

different applications and issues need to be looked into beforehand or addressed adequately as they surface according to the tasks given.

4.2.3 Learners' affective domains

Learners expressed both positive and negative emotions with FB as a platform for learning English narrative paragraph writing. All the participants agreed on having motivation towards learning writing through using FB as a platform. Majority of the participants felt that reading friends' essays and comments would further motivate one to "*write better*" (Participants A, C, D, E, F and G). This may be due to the fact that when they could see improvement in their friends' essays, this indirectly spurred them to work harder in order to stay on par with their friends in producing "*good essays*" (Participant D) or being "*fascinated*" with the pictures "*while learning the different [styles] of narrating a story from reading my friends' essays*" (Participant F). Furthermore, EPW has motivated several participants in being "*eager*" and "*curious*" to "*explore*" and "*express*" themselves through writing in learning vocabulary, grammar, phrases and idioms at the same time (Participants C, E, F and G). For instance, the setting of FB which enabled one of them to attach "*nice pictures, videos and music*" has made it more interesting and hence increased the motivation level (Participant C). Participant D stated that it motivated him or her "*to read more storybooks for learning new words and sentences*".

Participant C – "*... motivated me to write better by learning from my friends' comments.*" (Week 2)

"*Even though it is just a short story, it was interesting and motivated me to write as I was able to express my imagination through words.*" (Week 7)

Participant D – "*It really motivated me to write good essays when I saw my friends' essays were improving. I want to be like them and improve my own essays.*" (Week 2)

"*It motivated me to read more storybooks for learning new words and sentences.*" (Week 4)

Participant E – "*Doing this EPW makes me curious to know what words or phrases I*

should use in writing my story. EPW makes me curious to learn the meaning of the new words and idioms compare with learning by myself.” (Week 7)
Participant F – *“I was very fascinated to look at the pictures while learning the different style of narrating a story from reading my friends’ essays.” (Week 3)*
“It makes me eager to learn more idioms and new words.” (Week 6)

Majority of the participants felt enjoyment, excitement or a sense of accomplishment as one of the core positive emotions in learning paragraph writing through FB. Several participants “like”, were “happy” and “excited” when posting essays, reading friends’ essays, commenting friends’ essays, being commented on one’s own essays and receiving positive comments from friends (Participants A, E, F and H). Furthermore, they felt “happy”, “excited”, “glad” and “great” to learn things related to essay writing such as vocabulary, idioms and friends’ comments through EPW instead of a usual classroom setting (Participants A, B, C, E, F and H). Besides that, several participants felt a sense of accomplishment and “satisfaction” in terms of sourcing for relevant idioms for writing one’s essay, completing weekly task on EPW independently and ability to express “the story [I] wanted through my essay” (Participants E and F). Interestingly, participants felt “great”, “appreciated”, “happy”, “glad” and a sense of “acknowledgement” when their essays posts were being “seen”, “praised” and “complimented” by friends (Participants B, E and H). The reason was that friends would usually only bother posting comments when they “are interested with [my own] essays” (Participant H) while feeling “great” to have a community of friends in writing (Participant F).

Participant A – *“I like to use FB because I can post my English essay and also I can read my friends English essays.” (Week 2)*
Participant B – *“It feels great when my essays are being ‘seen’ and being complimented by my friends.” (Week 6)*
Participant F – *“It was great to do EPW as I have friends who are there with me in learning and doing paragraph writing instead of learning by myself.” (Week 2)*
“Luckily, I was able to read my friends’ poem to get me started and for inspiration. I started to think and imagine what I want to say through my own poem. Fortunately, I did it and I felt a sense of satisfaction in me for being able to create a poem. Although it

was difficult at first but I learnt to do it with my friends' encouragement and help on EPW. I completed the mission!!!" (Week 5)

"I felt satisfied as I was able to express the story that I wanted through my essay. I also used a good idiom in my essay. I realized the importance of learning idioms and words as it can help to improve my writing skill." (Week 6)

Participant H – *"I felt really proud and on cloud nine when all my friends commented that they liked my essay and it was actually funny."* (Week 3)

"I was happy and glad that my friends like my essay as it made me feel appreciated by my friends who takes their time to read and comment on my essay weekly." (Week 4)

"It is convenient nowadays to check on Facebook anytime and anywhere but it is not easy for people to post their comments on what they are not interested in. This showed that my friends are interested with my own essays and it is a kind of acknowledgement." (Week 4)

"It was great to learn grammar and vocabularies through EPW instead of just the normal class lessons." (Week 5)

In addition, it was interesting for the participants to attach pictures or poems with the narrative writing posts (Participants E, F, G and H). Participant E also further elaborated that attaching pictures to his or her essay was similar like *"in those magazines"* while according to Participant F, attaching their own original poems with essays were *"like a competition"*.

Participant E – *"It was quite interesting to upload the picture for my story too like in those magazines. I like it when all my friends start to post pictures one by one with their own essays."* (Week 3)

Participant F – *"This week, one of my friends in EPW started to post an essay with a poem. She challenged all of us to post a poem with our essays. It was very interesting and like a competition."* (Week 5)

Half of the participants gained self-confidence while completing the writing on EPW, commenting on friends' post, being commented by friends, receiving friends' compliments as well as reading friends' *"poems and essays"* (Participants A, B, C and G). The process of commenting and being commented on by friends has enabled one to gain confidence as one can learn from one's own mistakes. Receiving compliments on one's work (Participant C) as well as friends' comments, poems and essays served as a support for one's prior knowledge (Participants C and G). Participant C further

elaborated on how commenting on friends' essays has helped him or her in recognizing mistakes that occurred in friends' essays while finding ways to improve them. Participant C also felt *"not ... scared of making mistakes because everyone should learn from their own mistakes"* while Participant E felt *"less worried"* in being able to complete the writing tasks on EPW *"like my friends"* though *"without any guidance"* from the teacher. In addition, Participants G and H felt confident in having the ability to use new vocabulary and idioms while Participant F felt a sense of achievement for *"at last completed it week after week"* by posting their writing on EPW.

Participant C – *"My friends' comments on my essays makes me feel more confident and not being scared of making mistakes because everyone should learn from their own mistakes."* (Week 4)

Participant E – *"This makes me less worried as I felt that I am able to do it like my friends instead of doing it by myself without any 'guidance.'" (Week 5)*

Participant F – *"I felt this EPW was so difficult but at last I completed it week after week! Yayy!!!" (Week 4)*

Participant G – *"This is also my first time but I will try my best to do it as I felt more confident after reading my friends' poems and essays."* (Week 5)

Moreover, all the participants felt relaxed in viewing FB as a conducive environment. More than half of the participants felt *"relaxed"* in completing English writing tasks on EPW, commenting on friends' essays, expressing *"feelings and opinions"* in narrative essays and being able to write better on certain essay topics which they were more familiar with (Participants B, C, D, F and G). Participant D further elaborated that it was relaxing to comment on friends' essays *"without face-to-face unlike in the class where all my friends will stare at me."* Participant A felt *"less stressful"* and *"not feel left behind by [my] friends"* in completing essay due to having a week's duration though one may be *"slow in writing [my] essay in class"* while Participant C did not *"feel a lot of pressure"* in posting on EPW instead of *"passing up to teacher."* Participant E did not feel *"so embarrassed and shy doing EPW"* in comparison to being *"corrected in the class on the spot by friends or teacher."*

Moreover, Participant H felt the FB platform “*relieved*” one’s stress by reading friends’ essays which were “*funny, exciting and interesting.*” Participant B perceived this activity differently over time as this participant felt “*worried*” initially in posting stories due to being “*afraid of being commented*” but gradually changed to “*enjoying the process of posting [my] stories on FB.*”

Participant A – “*I felt less stressful to complete the essay as I have one week to draft my essay first before posting and not feel left behind by my friends when I am slow in writing my essay in class.*” (Week 4)
Participant B – “*At first, I was worried about posting my stories as I was afraid of being commented. But I do not feel like this anymore as I am enjoying the process of posting my stories on FB.*” (Week 6)
Participant C – “*I like to post my essays on Facebook rather than passing up to teacher because I won’t feel a lot of pressure.*” (Week 4)
Participant D – “*I felt relaxed that I could comment on friends’ work without face to face unlike in the class where all my friends will stare at me.*” (Week 7)
Participant E – “*I don’t feel so embarrassed and shy doing EPW instead of being corrected in the class on the spot by friends or teacher.*” (Week 6)
Participant F – “*When I was writing this essay, I felt so relax in writing this story. I was able to write all my feelings and opinions in my essay.*” (Week 6)
Participant H – “*I always feel relieved when I read my friends’ essays because their essays are funny, exciting and interesting. I get to relieve my stress when I read my friends’ essays.*” (Week 7)

It was worth noting that there was a sense of novelty among most of the participants. Participants stated that they thought FB was a platform for “*playing online games*”, “*chatting with friends*” and “*post pictures*” (Participants A, E and H) and thus it was overall seen as “*not beneficial*” as it was geared more towards “*entertainment*”, according to Participant H. Furthermore, Participants C, E and G have never realized the benefits of using FB as a writing platform. However, there was a change in the perspectives of the participants after doing this kind of writing on FB. EPW was viewed as a “*unique*”, “*different*”, “*new*” and “*cool*” learning manner (Participants A, F and G). Participant H further elaborated on how “*innovative it can be when used properly like a new way of learning English writing.*”

Participant A – *“Before the EPW secret group is create, I used to play online games and chatting with friends. But now, I use FB to post my essay. I like this kind of activity very much.”* (Week 3)

“I have never use Facebook for English language but for only chatting with friends in school. Now I understand that technology like Facebook can be a new learning tool besides studying in class.” (Week 6)

Participant G – *“It was unique and different as I have never did anything like this before.”* (Week 5)

Participant H – *“I thought it is not beneficial as it is for entertainment, posting pictures and chatting with friends. However, I now realized how beneficial and innovative it can be when used properly like a new way of learning English writing.”* (Week 6)

The participants also expressed a few less positive emotions about FB. More than half of the participants expressed in the weekly self-reports that they felt nervous or scared in using the FB for learning paragraph writing. They felt this way because they were scared of making mistakes e.g. using *“the wrong words or idioms”* and *“grammar mistakes”* (Participants A, B, C, F and G). This may be due to their *“first time”* experiencing the process of learning narrative paragraph writing on FB according to Participant F. It is worth noting that a few participants who wrote about being self-conscious were afraid of making mistakes as well as worried about how *“other people will judge it”* on a public platform though it was a private FB group among trusted friends (Participants C and G).

Participant A – *“I was nervous because I am not sure that my grammar are correct or not.”* (Week 1)

Participant B – *“I felt nervous. While writing, I would be worried if I could have many grammar mistakes.”* (Week 1)

Participant C – *“... I was scared that I will make mistake and other people will judge it.”* (Week 1)

Participant F – *“... my feeling in this week’s EPW are nervous because this is the first time I wrote an essay then posted it on the Facebook and let my friends to give comments on my mistakes.”* (Week 1)

Participant G – *“I was very nervous to post my essay on it because I was scared that I have used the wrong words or idioms in my essay.”* (Week 2)

Interestingly, it could be revealed that there were various negative emotions among majority of the participants in the first half of the research study weeks which shifted to positive emotions in the latter half of the research study. The majority of the participants felt negative emotions such as being “*nervous*”, “*scared*”, “*sad*” and lack of self-confidence in the first to the third week of the research. However, it gradually shifted to positive emotions as the weeks went on such as “*excited*”, “*motivated*”, “*enjoyable*” and “*relaxed*.”

Motivation, relaxation and enjoyment, excitement or a sense of accomplishment appear to be the core emotions with regard to learners using FB as a writing platform. Interestingly, there was a sense of novelty among the learners as they did not expect FB could be used as an educational platform. This could be due to their constant exposure to only their usual surroundings either at school or home, where FB as a social media tool is regarded as a tool for “*entertainment*”. These positive emotions were in support of certain previous studies in viewing FB as a feasible language learning platform from learners’ perspectives as well as experiences (Akbari, Eghtesad & Simons, 2012; Eren, 2012; Kabilan et al, 2010).

The fear of making mistakes in public and being seen to lack knowledge seem to be the main concerns. These can also be turned into positive emotions to underpin learning. Undoubtedly, it is essential to prepare tasks and strategies which would take into consideration both the positive and negative emotions of the learners to achieve successful language learning goals.

4.2.4 Suggestions for improving Facebook as an English learning narrative paragraph writing platform

Some suggestions for using FB as a platform to improve narrative paragraph writing in English was offered by the participants. First, to make it more interesting, they suggested a different essay presentation format or learning format where they can incorporate pictures, poems, videos or music together with their essays (Participants A, C, G and H). Besides that, Participant B stated that he or she prefers to learn writing through “*interesting and colourful PowerPoint slides*” and not merely with words only. Participant G went further by suggesting that learners can create their own video with appropriate “*pictures and music using Movie Maker*” and attach it with the essays.

Participant B – “*I suggest that we should go on youtube, websites or blogs for powerpoint links on English language writing for learning or sharing them with friends. I like it very much when I get to see interesting and colourful powerpoint slides to learn essay writing instead of just words.*” (Week 3)
Participant G – “*I would suggest to do our own video with suitable pictures and music using Movie Maker to post together with our essays.*” (Week 4)

Secondly, they suggested sharing relevant website links in relation to the English language and writing especially such as YouTube, websites or blogs for English writing PowerPoint slides for instance (Participants B and H). This would make learning “*more interesting and fun*” according to H. Besides that, Participant G suggested sharing vocabulary and idioms by using “*online dictionary through Google*” or “*internet*” for learning and improving essay writing. Participant G also suggested attaching songs to the posted list of weekly new words on EPW to enjoy learning vocabulary and essays.

Participant G – “*Lastly, I suggest writing essay using a lot of new words and idioms from the online dictionary through Google and learn it together.*” (Week 1)
“*I suggest that we should find more new idioms besides new words from the internet and learn their meanings too. Then, we can share it in EPW with friends so that we can all learn together and improve my skills in essay writing.*”(Week 2)
Participant H – “*In my opinion, we could share some English writing website links with friends to make it more interesting and fun.*” (Week 2)

A theme to take note of was the perceived level of involvement by the teacher. In the context of this research study, it was planned for the teacher to act as a facilitator in the learners' learning process. There was no scoring of weekly essay posts, only monitoring of progress of participants. This in fact was planned as such to prompt learners to take a more independent and active role in their own learning progress. However, the participants felt the need for the teacher to give feedback, comments (Participants A, B, C and D) or mark their essays (Participant B). This was because they felt the teacher was "*more experienced*" and "*knowledgeable*" (Participants A and B) in giving "*guidance*" as well as commenting on the appropriate use of "*vocabularies and idioms*" (Participants C and D).

<p>Participant A – "<i>Maybe it will be good if teacher can give her feedback on our storyline since she is more experienced in it.</i>" (Week 7)</p> <p>Participant B – "<i>It is better for my teacher to comment on Fb as well like my content and grammar as she is more knowledgeable.</i>" (Week 7)</p> <p>Participant C – "<i>I suggest that the teacher should give her comments on our essays like the correct way to use the vocabularies and idioms in our essays.</i>" (Week 6)</p> <p>Participant D – "<i>I think it will be great if teacher can give some guidance before we post our essays on FB.</i>" (Week 3)</p>
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Researchers and educators could take these suggestions into account in the future planning of teaching or learning of such kinds of writing. The presentation of learners' writing could be given more flexibility in order to 'push' learners to write. Moreover, sharing website links in relevance to language learning could be seen as activating or supporting learners' prior knowledge. Teachers also need to assure the learners that they are on the right track with some form of feedback. These findings are in support of Kozulin et al (2002) take on human mediation where educators need to be sensitive towards their appropriate level of participation in improving learners' performance

while symbolic mediation refers to changes in the learners' performance due to the exposure of the symbolic tools mediators (FB or EPW).

4.3 Post study question

This section discusses the question posed in the post study question (see Appendix B) which was to allow learners to reflect on their experiences in using FB for paragraph writing at the end of the seventh week. The post study question also helps to explore the possibility of change in the perception towards FB as a web-based language learning tool after the whole process of the research.

All eight participants agreed that being able to share their posts on this FB platform motivated them on this learning journey. Participant H labelled FB platform as a “*win-win situation*”, for participants to learn through the process of commenting (where they gain knowledge by commenting on friends' essays and receiving comments) and also to “*learn from each other*”. Furthermore, the peers' comments influenced the participants to be more “*aware*” of and “*alert*” about one's own mistakes in one's draft especially “*grammar*” and “*spelling*” mistakes (Participants B and G). After that, the participants then “*try not to repeat*” these mistakes weekly as, according to them, it would be embarrassing to “*keep making the same mistakes and my friends need to keep pointing them out for me*” (Participants D and H). Friends' comments also helped them to improve by “*pointing out each other mistakes*”, “*correcting*”, “*complimenting*”, “*encouraging*” and “*giving simple feedbacks*” while motivating one “*to try my best*” due to being worried of being “*not good enough*” in comparison with the other friends on EPW (Participants C, E, G and H). Interestingly, G was motivated to learn writing skills together with friends on EPW instead of by himself or herself while F was motivated to “*read native English bloggers who have their own diary blogs*” for EPW.

Participant B – *“This EPW has helped in many ways like my friends’ comments on my essays has helped me to be more alert with my English writing especially grammar and spelling mistakes over the weeks.”*

Participant C – *“By doing this, I realized that I am helping my friends and myself at the same time through complimenting, encouraging and pointing out each other mistakes so we can learn from them.”*

Participant D – *“It was helpful to me as EPW is a place where my friends and I can comment each other’s essays to learn what mistakes we may make. I will try my best to not repeat these mistakes in my essays every week as my essays will be seen by my friends. I also feel embarrassed if I keep making the same mistakes and my friends need to keep pointing them out for me.”*

Participant E – *“I always worry about how my friends may judge my essays as I felt that mine is still not good enough when compare with my other friends. Since I do not want to embarrass myself too much, it motivated me to try my best to improve my essay writing being among friends who has better essay writing skills.”*

Participant F – *“Besides that, it motivated me to read on native English bloggers who have their own diary blogs by doing EPW.”*

Participant G – *“I also like that we can comment on my friends’ essays which made me more aware about the mistakes I may make like grammar or spelling while drafting my paragraph writing. Plus, my friends were there to help me by correcting and giving me simple feedbacks on my paragraph writing weekly.”*

Participant H – *“Furthermore, it is easy to understand my friends’ comments. Besides that, I can help my friends to improve their essays by commenting on them. I felt it was a win-win situation for both my friends and I to go through commenting and being commented as all of us will be able to learn from each other through EPW.”*

It also needs to be highlighted that a few learners did their self-reflection and these were captured in the end-of-study open-ended question. Keeping their posts in FB enabled them to track their own progress. By reading or “*checking out*” their previous posts especially at the beginning weeks of the study, participants were able to perceive their progress, revise past mistakes, review essay writing points or be reminded of previously used “*idioms and phrasal verbs*” in order not to repeat the same use of these phrases in the following weeks (Participants A, B, D, F and G). Also, this would help them in their preparations for school examinations on “*ideas on content, writing styles and different types of genres*” instead of “*reading the whole essay reference guidebook*” according to D. These findings were in support of the notion on the convenience of FB features in encouraging tolerance within learners for their imperfect writing (Minocha & Roberts, 2008; Richardson, 2006) and enabled learners to self-reflect in their process

and progress of learning narrative writing due to the accessibility of the posts regardless of older or new posts on the FB page (Najafi & Hashemi, 2011).

Participant A – *“The most important of all is that I can also check out my older posts to see my progress and revise on my past mistakes whenever I want by scrolling down the EPW page.”*

Participant B – *“I also like that I can easily check and read up on my previous stories like in week 1 to 3 what types of idioms or phrasal verbs so that I do not use the same ones in the next following week.”*

Participant D – *“Finally, I like it very much as I could review and revise my narrative writing with EPW before my school exam. This is better than reading the whole of essay reference guidebook. I could get more ideas on content, writing styles and different types of genres.”*

It appears vital that the group sharing or ‘public’ feature of FB encourages a positive practice of giving and receiving comments and this indirectly prompted the learners to reflect on their own writing and future behaviour for improvement of this skill.

4.4 Teacher’s perception

This section analyses the teacher’s diary entries to answer the second part of the first research question, “How do the secondary school teacher perceive the use of Facebook in English paragraph writing over a period of time?”

The teacher took note that all the participants were discovering language concepts on their own rather than waited or depended on the teacher. She felt that the participants had more “*initiative*”, were more “*willing*” and “*independent*” in exploring or seeking understanding of language concepts such as spelling, grammar, idioms or phrasal verbs on their own (Weeks 1 to 7). Instead of waiting to be “*spoon fed*” by the teacher, the participants were actively trying to solve or figure out a way to understand certain aspects relevant to narrative paragraph writing by themselves (Weeks 2, 3, 4 and 5). She further elaborated on the ways that the participants have sought to understand or

enhance these language concepts such as “Google search”, “WhatsApp or FB chat their friends”, “smartphones apps related to language writing”, “visually colourful PowerPoint slides” and “watching videos on language narrative writing” in completing the tasks on EPW (Weeks 1 - 7). She realized that her participants were “eager” and “enthusiastic” in seeking for information when in doubt in comparison to merely learning in the classroom solely without gadgets (Weeks 1, 2, 4 and 5).

Week 1 – “My students were willing and eager to search for information such as spelling, idioms and phrasal verbs through Google search in order to type their narrative paragraph writing instead asking me for them to my surprise.”

Week 2 – “They (students) took the initiative to WhatsApp or FB chat their friends whether in or out of the class in order to ask questions regarding the paragraph writing or where to source for relevant information like grammar, vocabulary, phrasal verbs and idioms. They did not wait for me to solve these questions when in doubt but were enthusiastic to seek help from their friends.”

Week 3 – “A student of mine WhatsApp me a message on how to understand the differences between simple past tense and past perfect tense. However, I was so busy that I replied the message late. However, this student of mine has already search through Google for information by the time I replied to my amazement. Instead of waiting for me to spoon feed her as usual she has taken the initiative to find for information online.”

Week 4 – “Besides that, they (students) were very independent and eager in searching for visually colourful PowerPoint slides and watching videos on language narrative writing online when they did not comprehend them instead of waiting to ask or learn from me to complete the weekly writing.”

Week 5 – “As the weeks went by, my students were willing and getting better with using the technology gadgets like installing smartphones apps related to language writing such as for spelling and idioms. Instead of waiting for me, they enthusiastically tried to find ways to understand these language writing skills by themselves.”

Week 6 – “They did not wait for me to provide them with all the necessary knowledge for completing their lessons or EPW tasks instead they were able to manipulate these gadgets wisely in supporting them in their English learning process. A few of my students were not able to comprehend the grammar rules or needed to translate certain words or phrases from their mother tongue, they would use Google to help them.”

Week 7 – “They were independent in exploring the various ways through technology either computer, laptop or smartphones to understand language narrative paragraph writing.”

The teacher had observed that the participants were keen to perform better on FB as a writing platform. She noticed that during these seven weeks of the writing classes, the participants had ‘unusual actions or behaviors’; they “compare their essays with one

another”, sought out friends “on how to write a more interesting storyline”, were “eager to ask me more questions in class”, “continuously searching for resources relevant and suitable to English writing such as apps, websites, blogs and videos” and they also “ask friends in class on how to learn certain language writing aspects with the technology gadgets available.” (Weeks 1 - 5). Furthermore, her learners were installing English language apps on their smartphones such as “Wattpad, Oxford English Dictionary and TED.” She saw these positively as technology prompting autonomous language writing.

Week 1 – “I was surprised to observe my students trying to compare their essays with one another during the half an hour paragraph writing posting on Facebook. It is considered an uncommon sight as my students tend to just filed up the marked essays papers from me without reading or reflecting most of the times.”

Week 2 – “One of my introvert student was asking her friend on how to write a more interesting storyline which was rare as she usually never did that in class with her previous essays.”

Week 3 – “Most of my students were passive in nature except for a few extroverts who were willing to speak out their minds or ask questions. However, there was a change especially among the passive ones as they were eager to ask me more questions in class.”

“Besides that, my students were downloading more apps related to English in their smartphones like Wattpad, Oxford English Dictionary and TED. They also have come to know about many other websites, blogs and videos related to English language while completing their weekly narrative paragraph writing on EPW.”

Week 4 – “... I realized that my students were more open to the idea of seeking for help from friends in learning narrative paragraph writing with EPW as a stepping stone. Moreover, they were willing to ask friends in class on how to learn certain language writing aspects with the technology gadgets available.”

Week 5 – “I realized that my students were continuously searching for resources relevant and suitable to English writing such as apps, websites, blogs and videos.”

In the beginning, the teacher was concerned on whether her learners have the “capabilities” in identifying the mistakes on their friends’ essay as “as they were not even able to do that on their own writing or want to be bothered with taking their time to comment on their friends’ work.” As the weeks went by, the teacher was surprised that FB as an online platform has helped her learners to “express their thoughts better”, “use gadgets more wisely for educational purposes”, “think critically on their own or friends’ essays” and “source for English materials to read, watch or listen online.”

Furthermore, it helped learners to think for themselves *“instead of merely accepting my [teacher] feedback without fully internalizing them.”* Through the teacher’s reflection, it could be revealed that with *“the right gadget, appropriate task, conducive environment and having the positive mindset may help students gear towards learning with technology.”* The teacher further elaborated that the reasons for *“success”* in this research study may be the *“appropriate platform... free rein in their own work”, “Facebook features and responsive learners who are motivated”* which have led to the *“positive attitude towards English writing and active participation.”*

Week 1 – *“I was very worried in the beginning whether my students have the capabilities to pick out the mistakes on their friends’ paragraph writing as they were not even able to do that on their own writing or want to be bothered with taking their time to comment on their friends’ work. It was out of my expectation!”*

“This proved that my students were capable of handling such a task if given the appropriate platform and free rein in their own work.”

Week 2 - *“Facebook helps my students to express their thoughts better with a different learning approach on hand. This indirectly made me feel that it could make a difference in the way I teach while making me confident in utilising these educational technology more often.”*

“Through interacting with my students, I was able to find out more on how they manipulate these gadgets in assisting them to learn English writing through Facebook. I realized online English writing has made them to use gadgets more wisely for educational purposes.”

Week 4 – *“From my perspective, I am in agreement that Facebook is a conducive environment for teaching narrative essays without stressing me out on marking additional essays of my students due to inadequate time. Instead I can merely observed while keeping tab on their progress from the Facebook wall whenever I want.”*

“However, Facebook has given me the alternative to allow my students to learn English writing from each other while applying what they have learnt from the classroom. This enabled my students to think critically on their own or friends’ essays instead of merely accepting my feedback without fully internalizing them.”

Week 5 – *“From my observations in class, Facebook could support teaching narrative paragraph writing for my students as they were able to source for English materials to read, watch or listen online. However, educators need to give their own students basic guidelines on how and where to search for related information to jumpstart on their own learning experiences as some may feel lost.”*

Week 7 – *“However, it could also serve as a platform for educational purposes. I realized that by using the right gadget, appropriate task, conducive environment and having the positive mindset may help students gear towards learning with technology.”*

“In my opinion, I think that the success of this research study especially in terms of positive attitude towards English writing and active participation is due to the Facebook features and responsive learners who are motivated.”

Thus, the teacher felt that there was a positive change in the participants' actions and behavior in comparison to the traditional face-to-face classroom settings.

4.5 Facebook features

To answer the second research question on “How do learners use the Facebook features in English paragraph writing?”, instances from the weekly self-reports, post study question and teacher's diary entries that captured the type of features and how participants used the FB features in English paragraph writing were extracted. The findings will be further supported with screenshots from EPW wall page.

From the weekly self-reports, it was found that the ability to post, comment and edit on this FB platform has made it easier for the learning of narrative writing (Participant E). Moreover, Participant H noted that the activity of posting such as posting paragraphs and “*weekly 10 new words*” have helped in learning vocabulary as well as idioms. Besides that, Participant F stated that the autocorrect function has helped to reduce spelling mistakes in the paragraphs as well. In addition, posting narrative paragraph writing on FB has made Participant F go to the extent of downloading an app (on the participant's smartphone) to check the spelling as this participant felt that he or she tends to make “*many silly mistakes*”. Being on Facebook has made it easier to use the online dictionary to “*translate Mandarin words and phrases into English*” whenever in doubt according to Participant E.

Participant E – “*I learn to use the online dictionary to translate Mandarin words and phrases into English whenever I am not sure.*” (Week 7)

Participant H – “*I can learn new words and idioms from reading my friends' essays as well as the weekly 10 new words posted by my friends.*” (Week 2)

Participant F – “*Besides that, I also download an app to check my spelling because I made many silly mistakes.*” (Week 3)

From the post study question, the majority of the participants felt that the most relevant FB features for this research study were “comment”, “post”, “like” and “share” (Participants A, B, C, D, G and H). Furthermore, it was found that Participant C felt that doing narrative paragraph writing on FB only required specific FB features such as “post”, “comment”, “like” and “reply” to complete the task. On the other hand, Participant G has learnt to “post an essay, comment on the posts, tag a photo, video and share a music website link” by doing this EPW.

Participant C – “I felt that we do not need to use all the Facebook features but only the ones suitable for our paragraph writing. For example, “post”, “comment”, “like” and “reply.” “

Participant G – “Facebook has helped me to know the different types of tools (Facebook features) during the paragraph writing. I learnt how to post an essay, comment on the posts, tag a photo, video and share a music website link.”

From the teacher’s diary entries, the FB functions which were “easy”, “convenient”, “relevant” (Week 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7) and “used regularly” (Week 5) for learning English narrative paragraph writing were “write post”, “edit post”, “delete post”, “comment” and “add photo or video”. She also observed that the “like” FB function was used often by the participants on friends’ essay and weekly related vocabulary, phrasal verbs or idioms’ posts however it decreased over time (From week 1 with 9 times of “Like” to week 7 with 2 times of “Like”). Besides that, the teacher felt that “the convenience of these gadgets (smartphones, iPads and laptops) and their features ... for learning English writing” would be an asset in the teaching and learning writing when “used appropriately based on the tasks as well as instructions given.” Additionally, these relevant Facebook features would “further support the learning of English narrative paragraph writing” for learners even “without too much of interferences and criticism from the teacher.”

Week 1 – *“I observed that most of my students found it convenient to use the FB features such as “write post” and “comment” in completing the task. Besides that, they even helped their friends who were not familiar with these features”*

Week 2 – *“My students were swiftly clicking while moving the mouse to “edit post” and “delete post” on the EPW group page to complete their weekly task. This showed how easy and convenient it was to use these features in posting their paragraph writing.”*

“First and foremost of all, the convenience of these gadgets and their features like smartphones, iPads and laptops for learning English writing if they are used appropriately based on the tasks as well as instructions given.”

Week 3 – *“It was interesting to see how convenient it was for my students to attach a photo with their essays.”*

Week 5 – *“I realized from the EPW wall page that features such as posting, editing and commenting between them (students) were used regularly over the weeks.”*

Week 6 – *“I observed that to add photo or video with essays was really relevant in this particular task as it has certainly helped in learning narrative paragraph writing for my students. “*

Week 7 – *“Based on my observation over the weeks on the EPW wall page, I think the most relevant FB features were “write post”, “edit post”, “delete post”, “comment” and “add photo or video” in learning English narrative paragraph writing. Furthermore, it is convenient to use these features. These Facebook features has indeed helped to further support the learning of English narrative paragraph writing especially through these few weeks of practices without too much of interferences and criticism from the teacher.”*

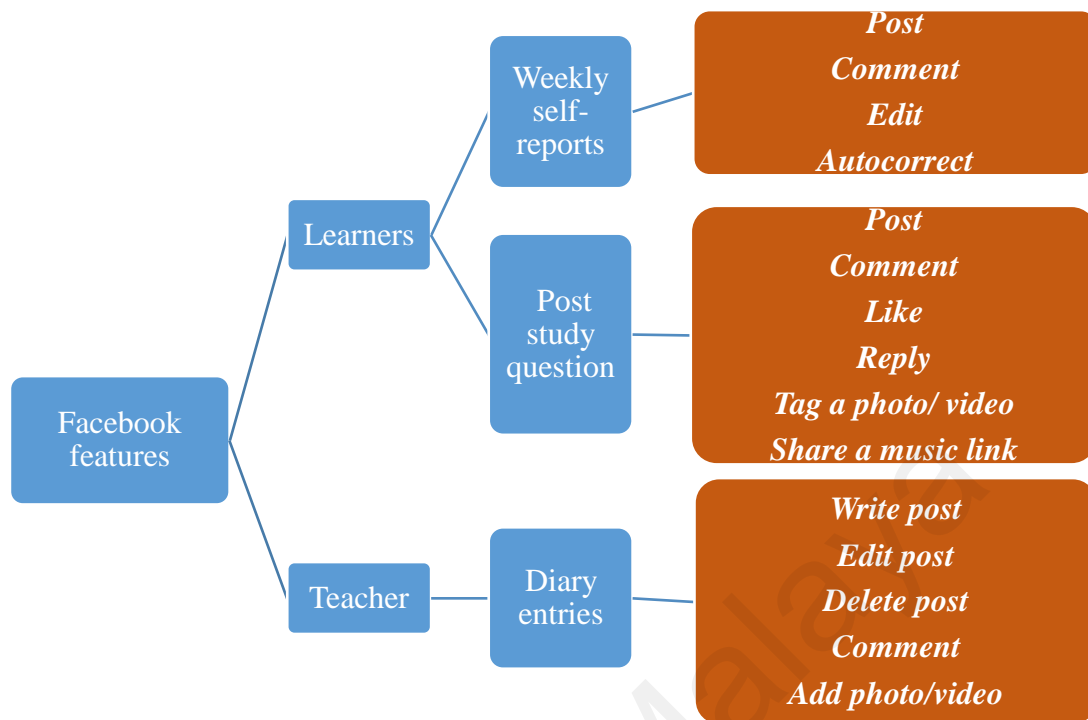


Figure 4.1: Overview on the use of Facebook features (Participants' and teacher's perspectives)

The chart (Figure 4.1) above has shown the differences in the certain Facebook features which were mentioned in the participants (weekly self-reports and post study question) and teacher's perspectives. It is revealed that the participants were only aware of certain Facebook features while they were using these features for specific tasks in that particular week; these features were “*post*”, “*edit*”, “*comment*” and “*autocorrect*.” In contrast, the post study question revealed that the participants were more aware of the necessary Facebook features at the completion of the EPW task. The participants felt that the overall Facebook features needed were “*post*”, “*edit*”, “*comment*”, “*like*”, “*reply*”, “*tag a photo or video*” and “*share a music link*”. On the other hand, the teacher felt that “*write post*”, “*edit post*”, “*delete post*”, “*comment*” and “*add photo or video*” were the only necessary Facebook features in completing the task on EPW.

4.6 Discussion

In facing the rapid changes and challenges of the 21st century, it is essential for learners to have creativity, critical thinking and collaboration (Partnership for 21st century skills, 2011). This was also consistent with learners' perception in "*randomly memorising 100 words from dictionary*" (Participant G) or "*being forced to memorize a chunk of words for no reason*" (Participant H). Furthermore, Participant E found Facebook relevant for learning related idioms in the weekly topics especially in terms of definitions and the way to use them "*correctly in a sentence*".

"Gone were those days whereby students merely listen while teacher teach as my students are equipped and surrounded with gadgets constantly."

(Teacher's diary entries of Week 1)

This means that teaching approaches have to change and adapt to the current style of learning among young learners as traditional face-to-face classroom learning alone is no longer adequate in helping learners retain existing as well as newly acquired knowledge such as English grammar (Ganapathy et al, 2016). This could be seen from the way learners make use of Facebook as a mediator of language learning in terms of building vocabulary, idioms, phrase and grammar. Learners learn language writing skills differently on a virtual platform such as reading or correcting friends' essays on EPW wall page and sourcing for relevant information through online articles, videos and websites. Besides that, learners share knowledge through the act of posting website links, vocabulary, idioms, quotes, pictures and videos on Facebook as well as having discussions with or answering queries from friends. It was noteworthy to realize that learners were using various platforms like Facebook messenger app, Facebook website and WhatsApp for sharing information (discussion, posting information or sharing website links) without the need to meet with each other in learning English writing. All

these “new” writing skills (source relevant information, share knowledge, discussion) used by learners through FB have enabled learners to overcome the difficulty in obtaining ideas and conveying them in writing (Ong, 2013). Instead of books and educators, technology and the internet were the new kids on the block as provider of knowledge. The gradual incorporation of technology and the internet into teaching and learning (Stickler et al, 2015) has changed the way learners learn. Through this research it could be seen that the teacher was able to unobtrusively identify the learners’ mistakes captured on Facebook weekly. After that, subtle feedback was also given to the learners during classes without indicating who made these mistakes; this creates a more conducive learning environment without bringing too much attention to the learners’ who made the mistakes. Vygotsky (1978) was ahead of his time with his theory about adapting to tools (gadgets and online platforms) which will constantly undergo modification from one generation to the next with amendments in each generation in order to cater to the needs of its individuals and communities. Therefore, it is essential for learners to be equipped with skills development and learning strategies in order to have meaningful and relevant learning experiences for growth “as a whole person” instead of being rigidly focused onto instruction theories or philosophies (Williams & Burden, 1997).

Another subtheme worth noting is the notion of self-consciousness as one of the main challenges in the learning of narrative paragraph writing on Facebook. Self-consciousness is generally known as “shyness” which tends to be a deterrent for learners in learning language as they are highly influenced by shame, embarrassment and anxiety due to the people surrounding them (Costa & Mcrae, 1992). Moreover, language learning research has revealed that ESL learners who are self-conscious tend to be at a disadvantaged position when learning the language (Burrows, 2010; Maley & Duff, 2005). This study revealed that self-consciousness is not merely restricted to face-

to-face interaction but it can also surface in a virtual environment like Facebook. Though the participants revealed difficulties and challenges in using Facebook as a writing platform, the participants were facing these obstacles with positive attitudes. For instance, Participant B was having “*no idea*” for English writing, facing difficulty in making the essay more interesting and at a loss on how to reduce grammar mistakes. This participant overcame these obstacles through sourcing “*inspiration online*”, friends’ comments and “*sharing websites links related to English language when online with my friends like TEDtalks and language blogs.*” Furthermore, this participant stated that the challenges of using the handphone for posting essay through Facebook “*has lessened*” over the weeks. This has shown that there was a change as being “*viewed*” virtually by friends on EPW has led to a positive aspect of “*kiasu*” behavior towards learning writing. “*Kiasu*” is regarded as ‘diligence’ whereby learners go beyond what is instructed for the task (Chua, 1989). In the context of this research study, Participant B has indeed gone beyond what is expected or instructed; he posted weekly paragraphs in order to overcome his or her lack of prior knowledge, made each paragraph more interesting and attempted to reduce grammar mistakes on his own. Besides that, “*kiasu-positive*” attitude enabled learners to seek more feedbacks as they believe this will help them to get ahead of others (Ng & Ang, 1997). This was supported by the findings in this research study: learners felt the need and sought the assistance of the teacher to give feedback and comments (Participants A, B, C and D) or mark essays (Participant B). The reason was because they felt the teacher was “*more experienced*” and “*knowledgeable*” (Participants A and B) in giving “*guidance*” as well as comments on the appropriate use of “*vocabularies and idioms*” (Participants C and D). Yet, this was in contrast with the Vygotskian theory that believed that the language educator should be viewed as facilitator of knowledge in order to guide learners in the process of learning writing (Lantolf & Appel, 1994; Vygotsky, 1978).

This has shown that it is feasible to use Facebook as a mediator of learning writing as learners these days are different in terms of their manner of learning. Nevertheless, learners' attitude and learning strategy need to be considered to maximize the learning from the process and not solely looking into the end product or work (narrative paragraph writing). As advocated by Lantolf and Thorne (2006), the comprehension of how learners mentally function is not in "*the outcome of the development*" but the "*process*" of learning.

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CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This research has shed light on how Facebook and its relevant features can support learners' narrative paragraph writing from the perspectives of learners and their teacher. It aims to determine the feasibility of Facebook as a tool for language learning writing.

Facebook is feasible as a platform for the teaching and learning of narrative paragraph writing. It is able to promote the qualitative aspects of writing skills such as vocabulary, idioms, phrases and grammar. The global perspective of narrative paragraph writing such as storylines and styles of narrating a story has also gained the attention of the learners. Besides that, the process of providing comments (and receiving comments) has enabled learners to reflect on their own work which is not possible in class due to space and time constraints. Additionally, FB as a sharing platform is also able to foster positive emotions in terms of promoting motivation, a sense of novelty and relaxation, providing enjoyment while instilling self-confidence. Hence, the study has found FB to be a feasible tool for language learning, particularly it is able to overcome certain challenges for ESL writers: lack of time in the process of writing, unable to do multiple writing drafts and difficulty in seeking an appropriate platform to practice writing (Hiew, 2012; Maarof, Yamat and Li, 2011; Kho & Chuah, 2012).

From the teacher's perspective, the participants took charge of their own learning compared to the traditional face-to-face classroom settings. In preparing classroom lessons on narrative paragraph writing, the teacher can make use of the FB platforms' different ways of sharing posts with additional interesting visuals. Apart from that, the process of commenting (comment and being commented) promotes self-regulation and this needs to be nurtured. However, one will need to take measures against certain learners' self-consciousness by turning it into a motivation or a positive perspective for learners. Furthermore, it is essential to take note of the shortcomings of technology in

order to allow the learners to understand the type of gadgets and applications which may be more feasible for them to use according to the tasks given.

The act of posting weekly narrative paragraph writing served as a socially mediated activity that involved the use of various Facebook features (“*write post*”, “*edit post*”, “*delete post*”, “*comment*”, “*like*” and “*add photo or video*”). Furthermore, this mediated action alters how learners learn or make sense of narrative writing through an online platform with a different approach to learning. All these proved that Facebook is a feasible platform or mediator for learning narrative paragraph writing among secondary school learners. Since FB is feasible as an educational platform, using the various technological gadgets as input, educators should not deter learners from bringing these “powerful learning devices” into the language classrooms (Prensky, 2005). It is also essential for educators to keep abreast of these current technological gadgets in order to select appropriate online platforms to mediate language learning.

As for future research recommendation, more studies could be carried out on the effectiveness of Facebook as an educational language learning platform among Malaysian secondary school learners. These could be conducted using pre-and post-tests designs.

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