

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Impact of Adopting Facebook on Developing Descriptive and Narrative Paragraph Writing Skills of ESL Young Adult Learners

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Abstract: Facebook, as one of the popular social media sites worldwide and in Sri Lanka, has been highlighted as a powerful influencer on language learning. While Sri Lanka is working to modernize its paper-based traditional education system and follow global trends of incorporating technology and social media into teaching methods, Facebook use by students for learning reasons is a rarely explored area. The current study's problem stems from students' poor performance in English writing assessments and decreased interest in paper-based education. The objective of this study was to see how using Facebook assisted tertiary-level ESL students build descriptive and narrative paragraph writing skills. The study used an intervention research approach, with data obtained through pre and post-tests. The study included 60 intermediate-level ESL students from the University of Kelaniya who studied in the first-year "English for Social Sciences" course. Participants were chosen after the pre-test, and the experimental group's 30 students were taught for six weeks through a closed Facebook group, whereas the control group's 30 students were taught using paper-based method in regular classes. The similar lessons on descriptive and narrative paragraph writing were delivered to the students on the Facebook group and for the controlled group employing the conventional paper-based approach. The findings demonstrated statistically significant differences between scores of the controlled group and the experimental group, in favour of the experimental group subjected to Facebook learning, proving that Facebook is a modern arena that should be promoted as an appealing online platform to refine students' language skills.

Keywords: *English learning, Facebook, Facebook learning, Paragraph writing, Social media, Writing skills*

Introduction

The application of Internet technologies in the education sector can be regarded as one of the fundamental changes in the scholarly realm recently, in which social media appears as popular exemplars (Arteaga Sánchez et al., 2014). Social media sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram enable knowledge exchange among people in diverse ways. Thus, there are numerous reasons which make them beneficial for education, mainly because of the wide range of educational opportunities that social media

provides relative to other technologies; and, secondly, because social media is already well-known among students and teachers, making them more likely and confident to continue using it in educational settings (Joosten, 2012).

Amid ample social media available, this research chooses Facebook social networking site (SNS) as the focal point by recognizing its expansion and dominance in recent years, notably among young adults. As announced by its CEO Mark Zuckerberg, since its launch in 2004, Facebook has achieved

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around two billion active users by July 2017, surpassing plenty of other sites to become the world's most popular network. Furthermore, according to the Global Web Index (2018) the social media audience in Sri Lanka is distributed as follows. Facebook constitutes of 6.00 million users while Instagram has 1.10 million users, Twitter has 182.5 thousand accounts and LinkedIn consists of 980.0 thousand profiles making Facebook the most popular social media platform within Sri Lanka. Facebook's rapid growth has prompted extensive research into its adoption and uses from personal to study, job and social life in various facets.

Regarding education, mainly in universities where the popularity of Facebook is thought to be most “apparent” and “transforming the ways students communicate, collaborate, and learn”, the application of Facebook has given rise to controversial discussions (Tess, 2013). The distinguishing prospective of Facebook in education has been declared through plentiful research worldwide. The varied social features of it have been corroborated to play a significant role in enhancing communication, interaction, collaboration, and knowledge sharing in teaching-learning contexts (Hung and Yuen, 2010, Joosten, 2012, Barczyk and Duncan, 2013). Moreover, Facebook effectively supports learning administration because it perhaps functions similar to a learning management system (Wang et al., 2012). Additionally, the multimedia capacity of it can facilitate enriching academic content and varying learning behaviour (Joosten, 2012). Generally, concerning education and learning, Facebook has been broadly studied in recent years with ensuing debatable outcomes.

Besides, writing is one of the four language skills that need to be mastered to communicate with others. Writing proficiency is a tool of survival and it plays a great role in conveying a written message effectively and accurately. Millrood (2001) emphasizes that “writing is a communicative skill to send, store and retrieve messages with the help of written symbols. It can be expressive, poetic, informative and persuasive” (p.134). Among writing skills, paragraph writing is a prominent skill that needs to be practised by English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. According to Popescu et al. (2015) paragraph writing in a foreign language is a complex task, which implies not only knowledge from different fields, but also written expression skills, as well as intellectual qualities. Thus, it is fundamental for teachers to employ effective teaching methods to enhance students' ability to communicate through writing. (Monaghan, 2007) stated that the students are weak in writing because teachers concentrate more on teaching

grammar, spelling drills, and punctuation rather than involving students in the writing process.

Tertiary-level ESL learners often find some difficulties in mastering writing skills. Al-Ghussain's study (as cited in Al-Haj (2015)) confirms that many complaints are raised by language teachers regarding students' low levels in writing; both in mother tongue and in English as a foreign language. In this study, the researcher focuses on the paragraph writing skills because they have great importance for Sri Lankan tertiary-level ESL learners as an expressive tool to enable them to communicate their ideas fluently and effortlessly. Among the diverse types of paragraphs, this study focuses only on description and narration paragraph styles as they are frequently being used in diverse contexts. As (Gerald, 1999) states, description paragraph requires to record a series of detailed observations and it is enriched with descriptive sensory language with adjectives and adverbs while narration paragraph is a sequential arrangement of the events that add up to a story and it generally contains characters, setting, conflict, and resolution. The paragraph writing skills such as organization (topic sentence, supporting sentences and concluding sentence) grammar, vocabulary and mechanics (spelling, punctuation and capitalization) are essential to be improved to formulate it an effectual tool in the ESL learners' academic life to report their ideas, feelings, and opinions. However, writing is a thinking process in its own right that needs countless efforts to rearrange thoughts and ideas (El-Shami, 2011).

Thus, by adopting Facebook as a modern technique for developing paragraph writing skills, the teachers are able to improve the students' writing ability because it is an effective medium to make the students comfortable in writing. While Sri Lanka is making efforts to modify its paper-based traditional education system and adhere to worldwide trends of integrating novel technologies and social media into educational purposes, Facebook consumption among undergraduates for the teaching-learning process remains a rarely studied topic. To address such a knowledge void, this research is directed on examining the impact of Facebook in enhancing paragraph writing skills of Sri Lankan undergraduates, by answering the research question of “What is the impact of adopting Facebook on developing descriptive and narrative paragraph writing skills for tertiary-level ESL learners?”. Therefore, the overall objective of the study was to suggest a solution that the ESL teachers can implement as a teaching tool to assist English learners to expand their paragraph writing skills in English. In December 2023, there were 8688000 Facebook users in Sri Lanka, which represented 40.1% of the country's total population.

People aged 18 to 34 were the major user group accounting for 58.5% of the total number of users (Napoleoncat., 2024). Thus, ESL learners at tertiary-level have adequate access to Facebook for daily conversation and entertainment though it is not often considered by Sri Lankan educators and researchers. The familiarity of undergraduates with Facebook is an undeniable feature that justifies its use for educational purposes. As Facebook is the proposed technique which may develop ESL learners' writing ability, the objective of the present research is to investigate the impact of adopting Facebook as a platform to develop descriptive and narrative paragraph writing skills of tertiary level ESL learners at the University of Kelaniya.

Significance of the Study

The study serves ESL teachers at tertiary-level by adopting an innovative approach such as Facebook in teaching language skills to solve existing issues in the teaching sphere in Sri Lanka. The study persuades curriculum designers and policymakers to consider the usefulness of Facebook in blended learning settings. The current study is significant to the field due to the absence of previous studies about incorporating Facebook to teach paragraph writing skills to tertiary-level ESL learners at the University of Kelaniya.

Theoretical Framework

In terms of education, Facebook upholds Ito et al.'s Connected Learning Theory. Connected learning is a pedagogical approach that values interest-driven, socially embedded learning and is oriented towards educational, political or economic development (Ito et al., 2013). Its basic concept is that learning becomes successful when students are motivated by personal interests while getting social support from others, and accordingly, manages to connect such learning with interests to academic attainments, career-building, or civic involvement (Ito, et al., 2013). Thus, the Theory of Connected Learning aims to fill the "gap between how learners live and how and what they learn at school" (Kumpulainen and Sefton-Green, 2014). Besides, it "connects formal education with other meaningful social contexts" (Brown et al., 2019). Based on this perspective, learning does not occur within fixed restricted settings, but in a complex of contexts spreading over diverse disciplines and having blurred boundaries among personal, formal, informal and social spheres (Kumpulainen and Sefton-Green, 2014). Especially, in this digital era, informal learning can be conducted not only physically but also virtually or in a hybrid manner because of the availability of plentiful digitalized content and modern technologies

among which social media holds a major role (Klomsri et al., 2013).

As the result of their study on learning in the context of current social, economic, technological and cultural changes, Ito and his colleagues proposed the Connected Learning Framework which highlights educational equity and employment of new media to create collective capacities for learning and opportunity (Ito et al., 2013).

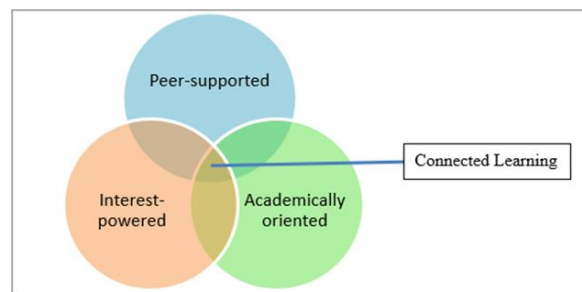


Figure 1. The three crucial contexts for connected learning
(Source: Ito et al., 2013)

According to Ito et al. (2013), connected learning is principally comprised of three important contexts (Figure 1). First, peer-supported context symbolizes daily interactions with friends in which young people get engaged and share ideas as well as constructive feedback with each other. Secondly, interest-powered context illustrates the situation in which the studied subjects truly stimulate learners' interests and concerns enabling better learning outcomes. Finally, academically oriented context shows that the students can expand their potential by connecting their interests and social interaction to obtain academic achievements.

Moreover, in Ito et al.'s framework of connected learning (2013), new media emerge not only as inevitable parts of the digital age but extremely prospective tools to increase opportunities for connected learning. "We see new media, particularly as it is linked to youth-centered interests and community contribution, as providing new entry points into learning, opportunity, achievement, and civic participation. As a society, we are clearly early in exploring these new pathways" (Ito et al., 2013). Additionally, new media with their diverse affordances are proposed to be a helpful "connector" between various life spheres and a "bridge" bringing learners more educational prospects. These opportunities should connect formal education with other significant social contexts in the everyday life of youth (Brown et al., 2019). In the scope of this research, Facebook is considered as a typical example

of thriving new media to offer undergraduate students more opportunities for connected learning.

Previous research

Social media is one of the prominent platforms which allows people to share explicit knowledge and efficient communication. The technological advancements have contributed progressively to young people's adoption of social media, a term often used interchangeably with Web 2.0, to refer to online applications that promote users, user-generated content and their interconnections (Barnes, 2006). Thus, according to Yunus and Salehi (2012), social networks are defined as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. Social media has become pervasive, impacting the social and cultural fabric of our society and changing the nature of social relationships (Mahmood and Farooq, 2014).

Moreover, Srirat (2014), states that social media sites such as Youtube, Twitter, and Facebook have been known of playing important roles in the lives of "Net-Generation" students, who have engaged in digital and highly social networks for several years. Hence, Twitter presently revolves around publishing short 140-character text messages and this feature has led Twitter to evolve toward a trendy tool for short and instantaneous commentary on real-time happenings, including both personal and news events (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2011). Moreover, Antenos-Conforti (2009), proclaims that Twitter communication "corresponds to just a small part of Facebook status updates" (p.84). Besides, WhatsApp is considered as one of the most popular mobile-based instant messenger applications is in general used to communicate directly with one or a few friends and thus denotes a private channel of communication (Karapanos et al., 2016). Additionally, Instagram is a platform focused mainly on the sharing of pictures enhanced by filters emphasizing visuals and aesthetics (Lup et al., 2015).

On the contrary, on Facebook, many "teaching strategies can be employed to actively engage students in the learning process such as discussions, problem-solving, case studies, role plays, journal writing and structured learning groups" (Al-Haj, 2015). They aim at improved critical thinking skills, increased retention and transfer of new information, increased motivation, and improved interpersonal skills which are in the center of the Intended Learning Outcomes (Scarpelli,

2009). Based on this, a new setting that is appealing, pleasing and full of social interactions can be created by the appropriate use of Facebook in teaching English language skills (Al-Haj, 2015).

Providing a step in this direction, Suthiwartnarueput and Wasanasomsithi (2012), states that Facebook is a Web 2.0 technology that should be promoted and used as an online community for students to discuss their English grammar and writing difficulties. Therefore, Facebook is a social networking site that assists collaborative work among learners, sharing experiences in opinions and ideas especially in the writing skill which by its turn plays an exceptionally significant role in improving the learners' abilities to write effectively (Al-Haj, 2015). Furthermore, Gulek and Demirtas (2005) emphasized that rapid technological advances in the last decade have ignited educational practitioners' interest in utilizing laptops and Facebook as instructional tools to improve students' learning.

Besides, according to (Al-Haj, 2015), writing is a matter of construction where people need to combine their mental activity with physical activity, following explicit writing conventions to fabricate a message to be communicated. As benefits of developing writing, Isleem (2012) states that " (1) writing is the primary basis upon which one's work, or learning, intellect, will be judged whether in school, college, workplace, or in the community; (2) it expresses one's personality; (3) it makes one's thinking visible; (4) it helps one move easily among facts, inferences, opinions without getting confused and without confusing one's readers; (5) it fosters one's ability to explain a complex position to readers, and oneself; and (6) it stimulates one to extend a line of thought beyond one's first impressions or responses" (p.14).

Moreover, education and career opportunities require a high degree of writing skills. As cited in Grabe (2000), Andreassen et al. (2013) surveyed 841 university graduates in seven diverse fields of study and declared that formal writing is exceptionally vital in the workplace. Thus, writing skills are "being assessed more often in standardized assessment for purposes of educational accountability" (White and Bruning, 2005). According to Davis et al. (2009), writing is considered as an employability skill that transforms an employee from being a liability to an asset to the company.

The paragraph is a "group of sentences connected with relevant transition words that focus on one main topic or idea. It consists of one topic sentence, three supporting sentences and on concluding sentence

which should be unified, coherent, ordered and complete to form a well-organized paragraph” (Al-Haj, 2015). Furthermore, according to Niquet (1983) the main paragraph writing skills are brainstorming, outlining, providing a topic sentence and its controlling idea, writing supporting sentences, constructing a conclusion and writing a unified and coherent paragraph. According to the classification of Niquet (1983) the paragraphs can be divided into three categories such as paragraphs that develop a fact, paragraphs which develop an opinion and paragraphs which answer a question. Moreover, Gerald (1999) explicates seven types of paragraph development as narration, exposition, definition, classification, description, process analysis, and persuasion.

Materials and Methods

Participants

A purposive sample of 60 intermediate-level ESL learners of the University of Kelaniya who study in the first year “English for Social Sciences” course participated in the study. Furthermore, “English for Social Sciences” is a compulsory course conducted by the Department of English Language Teaching for the first-year undergraduates in the Faculty of Social Sciences to cover all the four language skills. The particular sample included intermediate-level learners whose marks were between 41 to 60 for the pre-test given by the researcher. The 60 students in the sample ranged in between age 21 to 23 while their First Language (L1) was Sinhala. Among them, 30 students were randomly assigned to the experimental group while the other 30 participants were allotted to the controlled group.

Research Design

To study the impact of Facebook in developing descriptive and narrative paragraph writing skills of tertiary-level ESL learners, the researcher implemented an intervention research design. By conducting the pre-test with random 100 students of the general batch, 60 intermediate-level students were selected and afterwards the sample became homogenous creating less possibility for errors. The intermediate level (41-60 marks) was chosen considering their adequate proficiency to engage successfully with lessons and the focus of the researcher was to shifting them into the advanced level (60-100 marks) after the intervention. The particular marks range was adapted based on the categorization of scores by Vidanapathirana and Gamini (2009).

According to the former study as ‘below 40, 41 to 60 and over 60’ in which 41 to 60 appears as the average level. A closed Facebook learning group was used with the experimental group for six weeks to identify its impact on students’ ability to develop paragraph writing skills. Subsequently, based on the ‘Paragraph Hamburger Strategy’ lessons on ‘descriptive’ and ‘narrative’ paragraph writing procedure were posted on the Facebook learning group. Lessons were posted on every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. Students were expected to practice and engage with lessons by commenting answers on posts continually while the researcher provided feedback on students’ comments by checking for their errors. Moreover, after each lesson participants were expected to post a fifty-word paragraph on the given topic incorporating trained paragraph writing skills. Besides, participants were encouraged to take part in giving opinions and contributing ideas actively.

Simultaneously, the same paragraph writing lessons were conducted in a classroom setting with the controlled group for six weeks. Lessons were conducted using paper-based materials within 12 hours allocating 2 hours per week. They were also asked to practise writing paragraphs on given topics using pen and paper and provided written feedback on their answers. After that, the same paragraph writing test given at the beginning was administered with both groups as the post-test.

Data Collection Tools and Data Analysis

The research instruments were the pre-test and the post-test. The paragraph writing tests aimed to evaluate the improvement of ESL learners’ paragraph writing skills and the same tests were used with both experimental and controlled groups before and after the intervention. The pre-test was undertaken in the first week to select the sample and measure the existing knowledge of participants on paragraph writing. The test consisted of a set of intermediate-level descriptive and narrative paragraph topics while the participants were expected to choose two and write well-organized paragraphs of 50 words within 30 minutes. Participants’ descriptive and narrative paragraphs were marked using two separate rubrics. The objective of the post-test in the sixth week was to check the participants’ improvement in paragraph writing skills after the intervention. Furthermore, the data were collected during the usual lecture time and the required permission was given by the module coordinator to conduct this research.

The quantitative data analysis of pre-tests and post-tests is done utilizing Paired sample t-tests in

Statistical Analysis Tool SPSS 25 to report “correlations, comparisons of means and statistically significant findings” (Van Esch, 2013, p.216). Moreover, for the reliability analysis of the test, Cronbach’s Alpha was used while the researcher used the Spearman Correlation test to ensure the validity of the test.

Results

Comparison between Paper-Based and Facebook-Based Learning

Total test marks

There was a significant average difference between total pre-test and post-test scores ($t_{29} = 5.318$, $p < 0.001$) in paper-based learning. On average, total post-test scores were 1.967 points higher than total pre-test scores (95% CI [2.723, 1.210]). It indicates that paper-based learning can enhance the paragraph writing skills of ESL learners to some extent but the intensity of enhancement is low.

Furthermore, there was a significant average difference between total pre-test and post-test scores ($t_{29} = 10.094$, $p < 0.001$) in Facebook-based learning. On average, total post-test scores were 13.167 points higher than total pre-test scores (95% CI [15.834, 10.499]). It indicates that Facebook group adoption had a beneficial potential to enhance the paragraph writing skills of ESL learners.

Therefore, there was a significant average difference between the growth of marks (marks grown after the adoption of learning method) of paper-based learning and Facebook learning ($t_{29} = 8.550$, $p < 0.001$). On average, growth of marks of Facebook learning was 11.2 points higher than the growth of marks of paper-based learning (95% CI [13.879, 8.521]). It indicates that Facebook group adoption is more effective than paper-based learning for enhancing the paragraph writing skills of ESL learners.

Descriptive Paragraphs

Considering the descriptive paragraphs, there was a significant average difference between the growth of marks (marks grown after the adoption of learning method) of paper-based learning and Facebook learning ($t_{29} = 7.704$, $p < 0.001$). On average, growth of marks of Facebook learning was 5.667 points higher than the growth of marks of Paper-based learning (95% CI [7.171, 4.162]).

It conveys that Facebook group adoption is more productive than paper-based learning for enhancing

the descriptive paragraph writing skills of ESL learners.

Narrative Paragraphs

Regarding the narrative paragraphs, there was a significant average difference between the growth of marks (marks grown after the adoption of learning method) of paper-based learning and Facebook learning ($t_{29} = 7.781$, $p < 0.001$). On average, the growth of marks of Facebook learning was 5.467 points higher than the growth of marks of paper-based learning (95% CI [6.904, 4.030]).

It shows that Facebook adoption is more efficacious than paper-based learning to improve the narrative paragraph writing skills of ESL learners.

Choosing the Most Suitable Paragraph Type for Facebook Adoption

This is another significant finding emerged through the data analysis. On average, descriptive paragraphs’ post-test scores were 7.167 points higher than descriptive paragraph pre-test scores (95% CI [5.699, 8.635]) and narrative paragraph post-test scores were 5.933 points higher than narrative paragraph pre-test scores (95% CI [4.543, 7.323]). Thus, the difference of points was higher in descriptive than narrative paragraphs. Therefore, descriptive paragraphs can be considered as the most suitable paragraph type tested for the Facebook group adoption in the present research.

Shifting from the Intermediate Level (41-60) to the Advanced Level (61-100)

Intermediate-level (41-60) students were selected for the present research with the intention of shifting their paragraph writing test scores to the advanced (61-100) level. The following table illustrates the level of students after the intervention.

Considering Facebook-based learning, students were at the intermediate level (Mean = 53.50) and they have shifted to the advanced level (Mean = 66.70). Thus, the students have been shifted from the intermediate level to the advanced level after the intervention through Facebook.

However, considering the paper-based learning, students were at the intermediate level (Mean = 53.53) and they have not shifted to the advanced level (Mean = 55.47). Consequently, students have not been shifted from the intermediate level to the advanced level

under paper-based learning. This is a significant finding emerged from the present study.

Table 1- Descriptive statistics on shifting from the intermediate level to the advanced level

Criteria	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Pre-test marks under Facebook learning	30	43	60	53.53
Post-test marks under Facebook learning	30	42	82	66.70
Pre-test marks under Paper Based learning	30	43	60	53.50
Post-test marks under Paper Based learning	30	42	62	55.47
Valid N (listwise)	30			

Discussion

Based on the findings of this study, Facebook has a significant effect on the students' levels of paragraph writing skills than traditional paper-based method. Considering the average marks level, average of total pre-test marks was 53.53 and the average of total post-test marks were 66.70. In relation to the effectiveness of Facebook group adoption, there was a significant average difference between total pre-test and post-test scores ($t_{29} = 10.094$, $p < 0.001$) in terms of total marks and it indicates that Facebook group adoption can enhance the paragraph writing skills of ESL learners. Moreover, this corresponds with the study of Al-Haj (2015) on the effectiveness of using Facebook on developing Paragraph Writing Skills among Al-Aqsa University English Majors. In this study, the results of the Paired samples-Wilcoxon test show that the mean of all paragraphs in post-test (39.63) is greater than the mean values of all paragraphs in the pre-test (11.37). Furthermore, this result agrees with the findings of Alias et al. (2013) who used Facebook-based learning to enhance creativity and proved its effectiveness, Yunus and Salehi (2012) who found out the students' view on the effectiveness of Facebook groups for teaching and improving writing, and also it agreed with Moon (2011) who proved the impact of Facebook use on undergraduate academic performance.

Finally, the researcher has revealed that descriptive paragraph is the most suitable paragraph type for Facebook group adoption because the students' improvement is more visible in descriptive paragraphs

than narrative paragraphs. Moreover, students shifted from the intermediate level (41-60 marks) to the advanced level (61-100 marks) through Facebook-based learning. In Facebook-based learning, the mean score of the pre-test was 53.50 and the mean score of the post-test was 66.70. However, in the paper-based learning, the mean score of the pre-test was 53.53 while the mean score of the post-test was 55.47. Hence, a considerable augmentation of marks was visible in the post-test scores of the students under Facebook-based learning plus according to the categorization of marks by Vidanapathirana and Gamini (2009) they were at the advanced level. Thus, in this study, the students have been shifted from the intermediate level to the advanced level only after the intervention through Facebook. Therefore, these results indicate that Facebook has a remarkable effect on developing students' writing skills. This agrees with the results of Keshta and Harb (2013) who investigated the effectiveness of using a blended learning program on developing and retention Palestinian tenth graders' English writing skills. Therefore, Facebook adoption has been identified as an effective tool for enhancing the paragraph writing skills of ESL learners.

Conclusions

The results of the study shed light on matters concerning using modern and enthusiastic social networking websites especially Facebook in the academic field for teaching paragraph writing skills. The results showed that using Facebook has a significant effect on the students' levels of descriptive and narrative paragraph writing skills in favour of the experimental group who were taught using Facebook. This depicts that Facebook is considered effective in refining students' paragraph writing skills as it has led to stimulate students' creativity and organization to write about diverse topics. Learners' paragraph writing competence was enhanced when they were given opportunities to use Facebook for practicing writing continuously. Thus, a large number of students in the experimental group performed better in the post-test, using more meaningful content, correct spelling and grammar, appropriate vocabulary and punctuation, cohesion, coherence within a well-organized paragraph including topic sentences, supporting sentences and concluding sentences. Therefore, these findings support the theoretical framework of this study namely Connected Learning Theory because Facebook provided language learners with prospects for connected learning. Hence, Facebook is a modern technique that should be promoted and used as an appealing online platform for

tertiary-level ESL students to develop paragraph writing skills. Moreover, this study provides evidence to fill the knowledge void in understanding on social networking sites such as Facebook in relation to education within the Sri Lankan context.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. Conducting the study based only on two paragraph types such as descriptive and narrative was a limitation of the study. The study was confined only to these two paragraph types because all the paragraph types cannot be mastered in depth within the limited time. Furthermore, as the lessons of the experimental group were conducted online using Facebook, it was challenging to ensure participants' concentration and commitment.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, certain recommendations can be suggested for decision-makers, administrations & supervisors, teachers, and ESL learners as follows.

Decision-makers are required to support universities with all effective audio-visual aids and computers to facilitate teachers' implementation of the novel strategies and techniques. They should promote Facebook-based teaching by exchanging visits among teachers and organizing discussion seminars. Moreover, they should enrich course books with teaching paragraph writing skills by using modern technology such as Facebook to improve writing electronically.

Administrators and supervisors should provide teachers with training courses to enhance implementing social media for teaching paragraph writing skills in their classes. Conducting workshops that aim at familiarizing teachers with methods to teach writing using modern technology like Facebook is another recommendation. Additionally, Facebook groups should be monitored by the university administration for ensuring the ethical use and security of the group because there are several negative impacts of Facebook such as privacy issues and unethical texts/calls, etc. Furthermore, the accuracy of language usage in the group should be observed by the university and should be commented on individual mistakes.

Teachers should consider the significance of using Facebook on the teaching-learning process, as Facebook is not only a social networking website that

has countless effects on the students' social life but also it has an unlimited impact on the students' academic improvement. Besides, teachers should always search for innovative and enthusiastic procedures of teaching, especially in teaching English writing to attract the students' attention and motivation to learn. Accordingly, using Facebook in teaching appears as a good solution for the teachers. Teachers have the potential to create a closed Facebook group enrolling all the students in the class. Perhaps, teachers are able to deliver a full English writing course through Facebook or they are capable of keeping a separate Facebook group to share writing assessments. Thus, teachers should encourage progressing students in writing by showing their piece of writing on the Facebook group. Besides, incorporating writing competitions, games and quizzes through Facebook to intensify the motivation of students is an advantageous preference for ESL teachers.

Students should worth the indispensable change made for improving their writing by using modern technological tools. Moreover, students should collaborate enthusiastically in Facebook learning groups to get the benefit of good writing through Facebook. Especially, students are required to respect the privacy of others to keep professional boundaries within the platform.

In conclusion, utilizing Facebook is efficient in developing descriptive and narrative paragraph writing skills of tertiary-level ESL learners. Furthermore, this study uncovers the potential of advancing the traditional teaching techniques used in Sri Lankan universities into the global trends of assimilating modern technologies for language teaching. Future studies can focus on Facebook usage in enhancing students' communication skills. Moreover, usage patterns of Facebook among genders and their learning progress is worthy to investigate in order to gain more insights and distinguish potential differences. Facebook usage in developing reading, listening and speaking competencies are also worth further investigation. Since the present research focused only on intermediate learners, it is suggested to conduct studies based on Facebook to boost English writing for the lower and advanced levels. Additionally, in this study, all the participants' L1 was Sinhala. Thus, it is worthy to examine whether using participants with other L1s generate a difference in the results obtained in the present study.

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