

# Engaging Students In Enhancing Writing Competency: An Integration Of Social Media As A Learning Tool

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## ABSTRACT

*Social media nowadays has necessarily become a part of the daily life of millions of people all over the world and has created a tremendous impact upon every facet of our personal and professional lives. One of the most popular social networking websites where people could interact with each other is Facebook. The objective of this paper is to examine whether social media, specifically Facebook, would be an effective learning tool to enhance the students' writing competency. A study using the One Group Pretest-Posttest Design was conducted to 69 grade eight students of Misamis Oriental General Comprehensive High School (MOGCHS).*

*The study revealed that the use of Facebook to enhance the students' writing competency has been effective. Using paired samples t-test, the mean scores between the pretest and post-test results of the students revealed there has been an improvement on the students' competency in terms of punctuation, organization, grammar rules and usage, and composition as a whole and individually on their grammar and writing skills. Results also showed that the integration of social media has developed positive attitudes among the students and has created a collaborative learning environment among the students themselves, the teacher and social media.*

*Taking these findings into account, this study concluded that Facebook has now become an alternative learning tool, providing teachers and students a more convenient and attractive means to engage in discussions and activities. Hence, a module containing the activities used during the intervention has been crafted to aid future teachers in integrating Facebook in their classes as well.*

**KEYWORDS**

*Facebook, Learning Tool, Social Media, Writing Competency*

**INTRODUCTION**

Over the last twenty years, there has been a major shift from the teacher-centered pedagogy to a student-centered approach in learning. As teachers familiarize toward this, the role of technology continues to grow as teachers look for new and inspired ways to engage with their students. Dunn (2013) testified that an increased expectation has been placed into the role that technology can play to harness effective learning; however, the reality is that up until today, there remains to be a disconnect between our desire for interactive student-centered learning through technology and the realities of our practice.

For Devaney (2013) since the first email was delivered in 1971, social media has evolved from being a Bulletin Board System (BBS) to inform friends of meetings, make announcements and share information through postings, to graphical pages and Web browsers as we know today; social networking became open to the public and its users grew to 3 million in its first 3 months. To date, an estimated 1.41 billion people around the world owns a social media account. Logically, a large number of this population is learners who are more exposed and absorbed to these advancements than parents or teachers who may belong to an older stratum; learners who often have limited understanding of accountability and responsibility and have more focus on entertainment and leisure.

Some institutions which have tried to ban social media have reaped negative results. Since social media has now become an integral part of a young person's life, prohibiting them from having access to the Internet has encouraged them to become rebellious. For instance, schools in Britain that tried to lock down their internet access found that social media was taking up their students' time and detracting them from learning. In his study, Kessler (2010) said that it did not encourage the pupils to take responsibility for their actions. Instead of fighting a losing battle, it is better to be on the cutting edge and be moving with the kids

than moving against them. Social media is a tool that learners already know how to use so it would be more beneficial to embrace it than to ban it and see to it that its benefits outweigh its risks.

Further studies may be made on developing social media guidelines to protect our students along the course. According to Kessler (2010) on her online article *The Case for Social Media in Schools*, students learn better when they are engaged, and social media, as statistics have shown, is something that they are currently captivated to. Kirschner & Karpinski (2010) and Pasek & Hargittai (2009) as cited by Mallia (2013) stated that “the use of Facebook as an educational tool develops a positive approach to learning and teaching objectives.”

Initially, Facebook was created in 2004 along with the development of Web 2.0 technology which adds interactional features in internet communication. Started in the US, Facebook soon spread to all over the world. In February 2015, Castro reported that social media in the Philippines have penetrated up from 32% to 40% and 21,785,985 of the country’s population are considered as active daily users of Facebook, 15% of which are teenagers aged 13-17 and 40% are young adults aged 18-24. Given the fact that Facebook is a universal phenomenon and is quite popular among learners, teachers could try to see the potentials of integrating Facebook in their lessons.

A study in the Philippines conducted by Cruz and Cruz (2013) on exploring the use of social media as a tool in enhancing students’ learning experiences revealed on their findings that “a majority felt that they had better experience when they used social networking sites.” Further, the study also revealed that the students had a better engagement in the course and “enhanced the learning process of students indicating a positive effect on student knowledge acquisition.” The findings were used to develop and design a new format for the syllabus and learning guidelines which incorporates the blended format of instruction or the combination of face-to-face and online environment.

On a previous study conducted by the researcher which focused on the perception of the students and teachers on the use of social media to enhance student learning, a number of the students displayed interest in using social media in their classes and pointed out that the use of Facebook has improved their motivation to participate in the activities and has provided for them a worthwhile experience to learn. Hence,

the researcher decided to conduct this study which now focused on the effectiveness of social media when applied to a specific competency which is writing.

This study explored whether the use of social media, specifically the use of Facebook, as learning tool can enhance the students' writing competency. The possible effects that using Facebook as a learning tool will provide us with more opportunities to enhance student learning, bridge the gap between our ambition for interactive learning through technology and the realities of our practice, and identify the various challenges that will have to be addressed.

This study is anchored on scaffolding theory which was first introduced in the late 1950s by Jerome Bruner, a cognitive psychologist. He used the term to describe young children's oral language acquisition. Helped by their parents when they first learn to speak, young children are provided with informal instructional formats within which their learning is facilitated. In education, scaffolding refers to a variety of instructional techniques used to move students progressively toward stronger understanding and, ultimately, greater independence in the learning process. Scaffolding is widely considered to be an essential element of effective teaching, and all teachers—to a greater or lesser extent—almost certainly use various forms of instructional scaffolding in their teaching.

Reciprocal scaffolding, a method first coined by Holton and Thomas (2006), is a method that involves a group of two or more collaboratively working together. In this situation, the group can learn from each other's experience and knowledge. Holton and Clarke (2006) describes that the scaffolding is shared by each member and changes constantly as the group work on a task. Many researchers nowadays recognize that social media is an effective tool for social and collaborative learning. Kabilan, et. Al. (2010) as cited by Hua, McDonough & Tarantino (2013) found that "students build learning communities by working collaboratively to construct knowledge." As a result, social media supports collaborative learning, which in turn helps to strengthen the creative learning process.

One of the main goals of scaffolding is to reduce the negative emotions and self-perceptions that students may experience when they get frustrated, intimidated, or discouraged when attempting a difficult

task without the assistance, direction, or understanding they need to complete it. When students use Facebook as a tool for their study by spending time browsing files, meeting new people, and exploring relationships using the English language, they have greater opportunities to collaborate with a large number of people worldwide and learn the target language at the same time. When students receive feedbacks and guidance in the form of comments and suggestions from their teachers and peers, they are able to receive temporary support or scaffolding which helps them reach higher levels of comprehension and skill acquisition which they would not be able to achieve without assistance. Once the students show improvements on their assessment results, the teacher may remove her support or proceed to the next area where the student is showing difficulty.

In addition to being scaffolded, Media Dependency Theory suggests that students avail of social media to satisfy their need to be connected and to be communicated with by others. Apart from this, when students discuss on Facebook, they have the option not to use their real names or perhaps, connect with their teachers and peers privately through private messaging. They can avoid face-to-face interaction and thus lower their level of anxiety compared to their experience in the classroom. Such scenario can reduce the Affective Filter, a term Krashen (1987) has used to refer to the complex of negative emotional and motivational factors that may interfere with the reception and processing of comprehensible input. Such factors include: anxiety, self-consciousness, boredom, annoyance, alienation, and so forth.

The development of social networking sites, as mentioned by Cruz and Cruz (2013), has created communication tools to aid many methods that can be applied in teaching and learning. This study focuses on exploring the potentials of integrating Facebook as a learning tool with the aim of enhancing the students' writing competency. As an output of this study, the strategies and activities that were utilized during the integration shall be created into a module which shall then be entitled "Facebook Learning Tool".

Notice that the variables of the study are explicit in the paradigm presented in Figure 1. The social media platform that was used in this study is Facebook. The schema is anchored on the concept of scaffolding which refers to a variety of instructional techniques used to move

students progressively toward stronger understanding and, ultimately, greater independence in the learning process. There is no single strategy that is best for helping a learner to progress. Educators need to vary the strategy according to how the students are doing.

The initial scaffolding provided is the assessment of the students' writing competency by conducting the pretest. Once the areas for improvement are identified, the teacher can create or decide activities that can be used for the intervention. The helpful interactions between the teacher and the students begin in the third step which is conducted by posting specific activities to address the learners' needs and providing support by means of giving feedback. The teacher may then conduct an assessment to check if the students are doing well. If the students are doing well, the teacher can become less specific in her help and proceed to giving another activity. However, if the students continue to perform poorly, the teacher has to continue providing the support until the students improve.

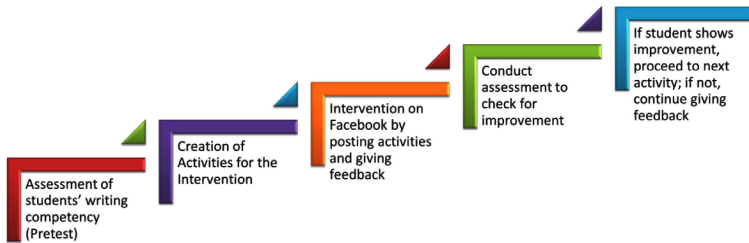


Figure 1. *Schematic Diagram*

## METHODS

This study used One Group Pretest-Posttest Design in exploring the effects of integrating Facebook as a learning tool to enhance students' writing competency. This is a quasi-experimental design wherein participants were being studied before and after the intervention. The goal of this design is to see if the integration of Facebook in the class has caused an improvement on the writing competency of the students. This is a preferred method because it allowed the researcher to assess the intervention by looking at the differences between the pretest and posttest.

To facilitate the gathering of the data, a qualitative approach was

used for this study. The qualitative data came from the results of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the identified participants and respondents. FGD is an in-depth group interview that allowed participants with similar experiences and backgrounds to discuss a particular topic together. Through the FGD, the researcher was able to gain information about the attitudes of the students toward the effects of using Facebook as a learning tool.

The respondents of the study were the students from Grade 8 Levi Celerio and Grade 8 James Naismith of MOGCHS for the SY 2015-2016. They are students handled academically by the researcher giving a free hand in gathering the data.

Respondents	Gender		Total
	Boys	Girls	
Grade 8 Levi Celerio	9	21	21
Grade 8 James Naismith	12	27	48
			69

The respondents were selected via convenience sampling and judgmental sampling, both of which are non-probability sampling techniques wherein the students were selected based on their availability and the researcher’s personal assessment. With respect to their background in Facebook use, 2 students, each coming from the two sections did not own a personal Facebook account; however, they both were able to create one during the duration of the integration.

In gathering the data, the researcher first sought the approval of the schools’ division superintendent and the school head to realize the conduct of the study. The data were collected during the fourth grading period of the school year 2015-2016.

This study was done in two phases. Phase one began by conducting a pretest administered on the 25th of January, 2016. The purpose of the pretest was to find out the respondents’ level of writing competency before the integration. Prior to this day, a Facebook group named “Facebook Learning Tool” was created, the students were added into the group, and an orientation was given to the students on how to go about with the integration.

The integration began on the 26th day of January, 2016. One activity per day was being posted on the group page for about 15 days. The activities given by the researcher were all adapted and modified from various online and classroom activities.

The posting of the activities on the group page ended on February 9, 2016 having in all 15 activity worksheets. However, since not everyone in the class could answer the activities on a daily basis, the respondents were given until February 14 to answer them.

During the entire duration of the integration, the researcher provided feedback and interaction to the respondents through private messaging, replies and comment. The respondents were also allowed to leave messages, post pieces of writing, and chat on Facebook about their English grammar activities and/or difficulties with their teacher and classmates. The posttest was then conducted on the 15th of February 2016.

Phase two of the data gathering procedure included the Focus Group Discussion with its corresponding questionnaire. After which, the data gathered were being analyzed and interpreted by the researcher to address the statement of the problem.

The respondents' written outputs during the pretest, the intervention, and the posttest were analyzed using content analysis. It aimed to find out their writing competency level, the common grammatical errors they usually commit, and the grammar and writing difficulties they have gone through. The content analysis rubric was utilized to score the writing part of both pretest and posttest outputs of the students.

The data collected from the pretest and posttests of the respondents were analyzed using the Paired T-test to compare the students' grammatical and writing competence before and after receiving the treatment. The mean and average from both pretest and posttest were also compared using the following scales:

41-50	Excellent
31-40	Very Good
21-30	Good
11-20	Needs Improvement
0-10	Poor



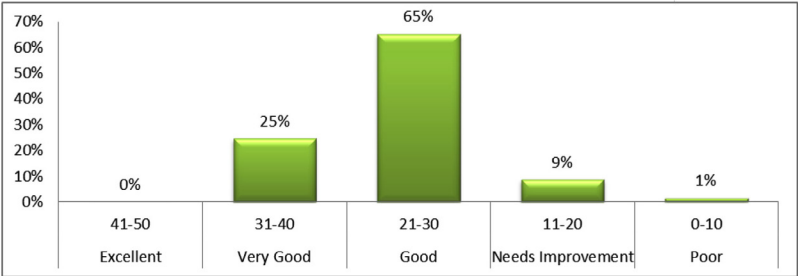
Finally, descriptive statistics shown in tabular form or matrix was used to display the results of the interview through Focus Group Discussion and of the observation was done by the researcher.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results which were gained from the pretest were used to analyze the first problem for this study. Table 1.1 shows the percentage of the respondents’ scores when they took the first part of the pretest which focused on grammar rules. The graph revealed that none of the 69 respondents scored between 41-50 points on their pretest, only 25% scored between 31-40 points, 65% scored between 21-30 points, 9% scored between 11-20 points, and 1% scored between 0-10 points. More than half of the population of the respondents was able to get a score above the passing rate; however, none of them reached an excellent level in terms of their scores in grammar.

Table 1.1  
*Percentage Result of the Respondents’ Pretest Scores  
(Part 1: Grammar Rules—Parts of Speech, Determiners,  
Verb Tenses and Subject-Verb Agreement)*

A slightly similar trend can be seen on Table 1.2 which shows the

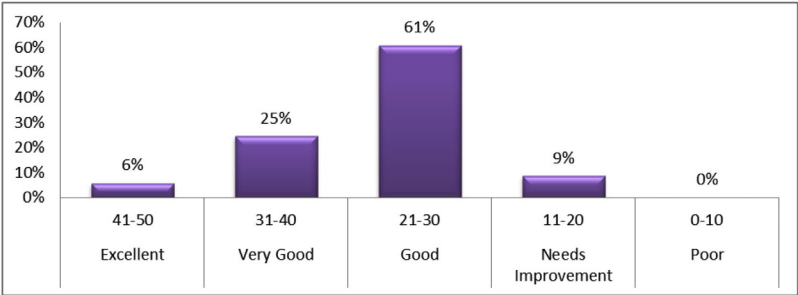


percentage of the respondents’ scores when they took the second part of the pretest which focused on writing. The highest percentage of students which is 61% still belonged to the “good” category scoring between 21-30, 25% scored between 31-40 points and 9% scored between 11-20 points; nonetheless, 6% of the students were able to reach the “excellent” category scoring between 41-50 points, and none of them scored below 10. The scores on this part of the test were de-

rived from the content analysis rubric adapted by the researcher.

Table 1.2  
*Percentage Result of the Respondents' Pretest Scores  
(Part 2: Writing Competency)*

This result implies that the students were more competent when they were already applying the grammar rules in their writing than



when it was tested separately. This also implies that the respondents scored higher when they were asked to compose a written output because they were more in-tune or comfortable with the vocabulary and mechanics that they were using; they were able to elaborate their thoughts using the rules and mechanics which are familiar to them, compared to the ones that were given in the test items in the first part of the test.

Given the analysis of the respondents' scores in the pretest, it can be inferred that the writing competency level of the respondents is fairly above the passing rate but not exemplary enough to be well-versed of the mechanics, rules, and usage of grammar.

Table 2 shows the common grammatical errors committed by the respondents before the integration based on the content analysis made by the researcher of the students' pretest outputs.

*Table 2 Common Grammatical Errors Committed by the Respondents Before the Treatment*

Common Errors	Examples from the respondents
Misused articles and determiners	<i>"To address this I would ask <u>a</u> help of my teacher or classmate to teach me."</i>
	<i>"I walked to city." (lacking determiner)</i>
	<i>"A fireman is helping the victim."</i>
Misused capital letters	<i>"Stay with me <u>Master</u>."</i>
	<i>You cannot please everybody. <u>But</u> you can make yourself happy."</i>
	<i>"She is my <u>Hero</u> because she tries her best to be the Mother and Father of our family."</i>
Misused nouns/ adjectives	<i>"I don't like to recite in front because I am not very <u>confidence</u> of myself"</i>
	<i>"It is better to use computer than tablet because it has high <u>accurate</u>."</i>
	<i>"She said she likes me because I am <u>humility</u>."</i>
Misused prepositions	<i>"The night before exams, I place my books <u>in</u> my head <u>in</u> my pillow"</i>
	<i>"I am doing my best <u>to</u> my family..."</i>
	<i>"My cousins and I love to run above the mountains."</i>
Misused punctuations	<i>You cannot please everybody. But you can make yourself happy."</i>
	<i>"My favorite sports are: basketball, badminton and swimming."</i>
	<i>"I am not so used to typing on a <u>key-board</u>."</i>
Misused pronouns; possessive pronouns	<i>I usually ask the help of my older brother because <u>she</u> is already in college."</i>
	<i>"Studying in the morning has their own benefit"</i>
	<i>"When I was little, me and my little sister play outside..."</i>
Misused singular/ plural nouns	<i>"I am the type of <u>women</u> who likes to try new things."</i>
	<i>"When I was small, I was afraid of policemen because my mother told me they would arrest me if I misbehave."</i>
	<i>"I wish we had a lot of gadgets and equipments."</i>
Misused tenses	<i>"As a student, I didn't realized that it was becoming a study habit."</i>
	<i>"wherever you go I'll come with you, because you are my master and you'll always be my master. That can't be <u>change</u>."</i>
	<i>"I would <u>asked</u> the help of my elder brother"</i>
Misused verbs (Subject-Verb Agreement)	<i>"This picture <u>show</u> a man and his best friend"</i>
	<i>"Don't go far because you will lost..."</i>
	<i>"One of the places I like to visit are my lola's province..."</i>

Misused vocabulary; spelling	<i>"My study habits include writting..."</i>
	<i>"...because i love you, and i don't want to loose you even just a second."</i>
	<i>"I choose my words carefully and analyze if it has a complete <u>though</u>."</i>

Based on the observation, one of the rampant errors that the respondents usually made was on the formation and choice of words—either this it is on spelling, tense, usage, contraction, part of speech, and the like. Often these errors can be classified into two categories: first, those that are caused by lack of understanding, meaning they really do not know how to apply the rule even if they go and look at their notes or books; and, second, those that are termed “performative errors”, meaning they can self-correct but somehow in the course of writing, they forget how to use it.

With this, Krashen (1981) pointed out that in second language acquisition; the level of anxiety of the students affects the quality of outputs that they produce. Other factors to grammatical errors committed by students may include lack of feedback, lack of practice, and overgeneralization.

A content analysis was undertaken of the comments, interview responses, and outputs of the respondents during the sharing and discussion on Facebook. The respondents used the discussion board, the comment box, and the private messaging application in the integration. Table 3 shows the results that were identified during the onset of the integration.

*Table 3 Grammar and Writing Difficulties Shown by the Respondents during the Sharing and Discussion on Facebook*

Difficulties	Examples
The respondents showed difficulty in distinguishing formal writing from informal writing styles	Language like “gonna” and “wanna” were often used. Even in descriptive or informative essays, the respondents often add terminologies like “hehehe” or “LOL”.
Some respondents shared that they have difficulty in composing sentences	One respondent shared: <i>“It is difficult for me to identify if my sentence already has a complete thought.”</i>
	Another respondent shared: <i>“Some of my sentences get mixed with other sentences.”</i>

Other difficulties on sentence composition include committing sentence errors	Student A: <i>"The integration of Facebook has helped me improve my writing skills because it's easy to detect the errors in the statements and my friends helped me my teacher helped me to answer the questions correctly and be direct to the point."</i> — Run-on sentence (when two or more sentences are brought together with no punctuation between them)
	Student B: <i>"Because we can easily communicate with our classmates if we need help."</i> — Sentence fragment (almost a sentence but lacks a subject, a finite verb, or a completed thought)
	Student C: <i>"The picture shows a man and a dog, dogs are men's best friend, we have three dogs at home..."</i> — Comma splices (when a comma separates two complete sentences)
	Student D: <i>"I like to go to the mall, surf on Facebook, and playing Dota 2."</i> — Faulty parallelism (when parts of a sentence that are either in balance or part of a series are not presented with the same grammatical structure).
Some respondents reported having difficulty with parts of speech.	Student A: <i>"When I use possessive nouns, sometimes it sounds really confusing. And I'm starting to think if I'm writing it correctly."</i>
	Student B: <i>"I usually encounter a difficulty by writing possessive nouns, sometimes it is confusing, like Its raining and it is supposed to be It's raining."</i>
	Student C: <i>"I do not how to write sentences with prepositions."</i>
	Student D: <i>"It's difficult for me to use a conjunction in a sentence. I don't even know what the use of conjunction is."</i>
Several respondents show difficulty in making the subjects and verbs agree.	Student A: <i>"It's a better ways to open Facebook because it is easier."</i>
There were also respondents who showed difficulty in using the correct pronouns or the consistency in using them	Student A: <i>"I find it helpful because you have the freedom to ask anyone in the group if we have difficulties in the activity."</i>

Based on these results, there are similar difficulties exhibited by the students at the beginning of the treatment (shown in the presentation of Problem 2) and during the sharing and discussion on Facebook at the onset of the integration. Because of this, the researcher increased the interaction with the respondents by encouraging those students who are performing well to help those who are not, at the same time, by giving feedbacks through comments and private messaging.

The same trend went on with the interaction and giving of feedbacks until the end of the integration. The strategy used by the researcher is parallel to the concept of Wood's scaffolding wherein in order to achieve a specific learning goal, the learner receives guidance from an adult or his peers within the zone of proximal development.

The pretest and posttest results were statistically treated to reveal the comparison of the respondents' scores before and after receiving the treatment.

Table 1 presents the comparison of the overall scores of the respondents in both pretest and posttest using paired samples t-test. It was found out that there is a significant difference between their pretest and posttests results ( $t=5.06 > t_c=1.9955$ ) which suggests that the students showed improvement in English grammar and writing after receiving the treatment.

Table 4.  
*A Comparison between the Mean Scores of the Pretest  
and Posttest Using Paired Samples t-Test*

	Mean	Variance	SD	N	t	Decision
Pretest	54.75	146.92	12.12	69	5.06	significant
Posttest	67.29	276.39	16.62	69		

According to the respondents' replies during the FGD, the use of Facebook had been helpful "because you have the freedom to ask anyone in the group if you have difficulties in the activity." Another respondent said "It was easier when we were using Facebook because we were already online, we could easily look up to Google some concepts that we do not understand. We are able to learn by ourselves and also with the help of others." Lev Vygotsky views interaction with peers as an effective way of developing skills and strategies. At this stage, a zone of proximal development (ZPD) is constructed on Facebook. Vygotsky believed that when a student is in the ZPD for a particular task, providing the appropriate assistance will give the student enough of a "boost" to achieve the task.

Not only did the mean scores of these two tests show a statistically significant difference as a whole, each of them also showed a signifi-

cant difference when separated into two discrete parts: grammar and writing. Table 2 shows the comparison between the mean scores in the grammar part of the pretest and posttest using paired samples t-test.

Table 4.1  
*A Comparison Between the Mean Scores in the Grammar Part of the Pretest and Posttest Using Paired Samples t-Test*

	Mean	Variance	SD	N	t	Decision
Pretest	26.68	29.13	5.39	69	5.66	significant
Posttest	33.52	71.75	8.47	69		

On table 4.1, it can be seen that there is a significant difference in the pretest and posttest result in grammar ( $t=5.66 > t_c=1.9955$ ). Therefore, there has been an improvement in the performance of the students in terms of their grammar.

Table 4.2  
*A Comparison Between the Mean Scores in the Writing Part of the Pretest and Posttest Using Paired Samples t-Test*

	Mean	Variance	SD	N	t	Decision
Pretest	28.07	47.13	6.86	69	4.44	significant
Posttest	33.77	67.21	8.19	69		

Similarly, on table 4.2 which shows the comparison between the mean scores in the writing part of the pretest and posttest using paired samples t-test, it can be seen that there is a significant difference in their pretest and posttest scores ( $t=4.44 > t_c = 1.9955$ ) indicating that the respondents’ scores have improved in their posttest on the writing part.

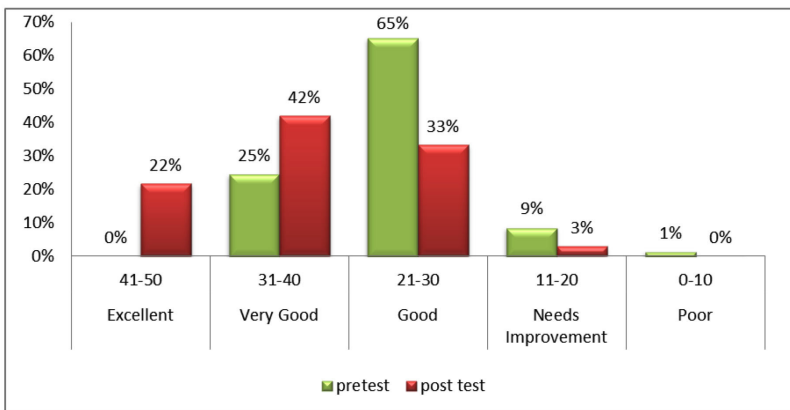
Table 4.3 shows the comparison of the percentage result of the respondents’ pretest and posttest scores on grammar rules. Based on the graph, compared to the pretest wherein none of the students reached the “excellent” category which is between 41-50 points, 22% of the respondents were already able to reach this during the posttest. There is also an increase of the students’ performance that scored between

31-40 points, from 25% during the pretest to 42% during the posttest. However, there is a decrease on some of the students' performance who scored only between 21-30 points, from 65% during the pretest to 33% during the posttest. This is due to the spread of the scores towards the higher scales which are "very good" and "excellent". A similar trend is seen among the respondents who scored between 11-20 points which showed a decrease from 9% during the pretest to 3% during the posttest. Finally, from 1% during the pretest, none of the respondents scored between 0-10 points during the posttest.

Table 4.3

*A Comparison of the Percentage Result of the Respondents' Pretest and Posttest Scores (Part 1: Grammar Rules—Parts of Speech, Determiners, Verb Tenses and Subject-Verb Agreement)*

Compared to the pretest wherein majority of the respondents belonged to the "good" category, the posttest results show that majority of the respondents have now achieved the "very good" category, even the "excellent" category. This supports the statistical results showing an



improvement on the mean of the scores of the respondents. Content analysis of the students' tests reveals that the students have shown improvement on the following areas in grammar: vocabulary, preposition, verb tense, adverb, and subject-verb agreement.

Table 4.4 shows the comparison on the percentage result of the respondents' pretest and posttest scores in their writing competency. It can be seen that there is a similar trend on the respondents' scores



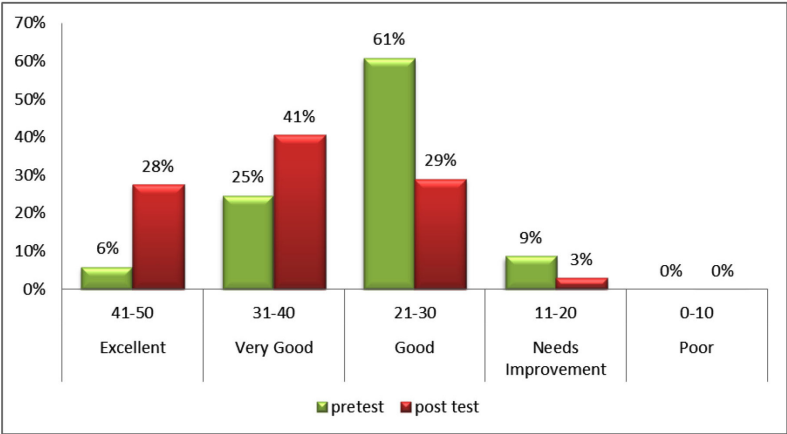
on grammar wherein the majority of the students have reached the “very good” category from only 25% during the pretest to 41% during the posttest. There is also an increase of the respondents’ performance who reached the “excellent” category from 6% during the pretest to 28% in the posttest. Consequently, the respondents who scored between 21-30 points decreased from 61% during the pretest to 29% during the posttest. There is also a decrease in the respondents’ performance that scored between 11-20 points from 9% during the pretest to 3% during the posttest. None of the respondents scored below 10 points in both pretest and posttest.

Table 4.4

*A Comparison of the Percentage Result of the Respondents’ Pretest and Posttest Scores (Part 2: Writing Competency)*

The content analysis of the respondents’ work reveals that there has been an improvement on the respondents’ capitalization, punctuation, organization, and application of grammar rules and usage.

The respondents’ responses during the FGD describe how the in-



tervention had improved their writing skills. A student commented: “The integration of Facebook has improved my writing skill by giving me more knowledge about how to write a correct sentence. Also, it adds my vocabulary in making a better essay.” Another student responded: “My writing skill was improved by the Facebook learning tool because it helped me improve my grammar and my ability to write a sentence.

Before, my writing skills were very poor even when we had classes every day, but I think my writing is better now because we were able to practice through our activities on Facebook. Another response from a student said: "I think Facebook learning tool has helped me understand some lessons faster." One respondent commented: "The activities we had on Facebook had helped me to learn to write grammar and writing on my own. I did not have to depend on the explanation of the teacher like what we do in the classroom. On Facebook, I read the examples and practice the concept through the activities and understand them. Sometimes when I get confused, I read the comments posted by my classmates and get some ideas from them." Finally, another respondent said: "I think Facebook learning tool has been a very comfortable way to improve my writing."

The interviews indicated that the respondents enjoyed it and found it to be significant. These findings indicate that the grammatical and writing competence of the students have improved after the integration of Facebook learning tool in their English class and has, therefore, revealed that the integration was effective. Suthiwartnarueput and Wasanasomsithi (2012) also presented a similar result in their study on using the effects of Facebook as a medium for discussion of English grammar and writing of low-intermediate EFL students conducted at a university in Nakhon Pathom Province, Thailand. According to them, grammatical competence contributes to writing competence; therefore, understanding grammar rules and usage can help the students write better.

They also added that although Facebook was not originally developed for language learning, it could be used as a means. Wasoh (2014), in his study on integrating social networking tool as a medium in writing classroom, also revealed that the students' grammatical and writing competence were enhanced after a period when they were given opportunities to use Facebook for discussions. According to him, Facebook was an alternative and up-to-date learning tool which is easily accessible to all. "It provides convenience and more choices for students to study the English grammar, thus, developing their writing competence," he further added.

From the 15 activities used by the researcher during the entire treatment period, a module entitled "Facebook Learning Tool" was de-

signed with the aim of helping other English teachers in the field to improve the writing competence of their students through Facebook.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it can be implied that the students have become more competent when they were already applying the grammar rules in their writing than when it was tested separately. The respondents scored higher when they were asked to compose a written output because they were more comfortable with the vocabulary and mechanics that they were using; they were able to elaborate their thoughts using rules and mechanics that were familiar to them, compared to the ones that were given in the test items in the first part of the test. The writing competency level of the respondents is fairly above the passing rate but not exemplary enough to be on the excellent level, being well-versed of the mechanics, rules, and usage of grammar. This showed that the respondents still had the potential to improve their writing competency with the treatment designed in this study.

The errors were classified into two categories: (1) those that were caused by lack of understanding; and (2) those that were termed “performative errors”, where the respondents were capable of but were unable to perform self-correction. Several factors that could have led to these errors were: (1) having bad models, (2) first language interference, (3) performance pressure as well as other factors such as anxiety, lack of feedback, lack of practice, and overgeneralization. These errors showed that the respondents also had the potential to improve their grammar with the treatment designed in this study. The pre-test results in both grammar and writing competency tests served as the basis for designing the sharing and discussion activities on Facebook.

The difficulties in grammar and writing areas that were observed in the pre-tests were also detected during the beginning of the treatment. The succeeding Facebook activities were designed to address these difficulties. These were coupled with interaction with the respondents by giving immediate feedback and correction to encourage reciprocal scaffolding among respondents. The findings showed that using Facebook for the FGD improved the grammatical and writing competence of the respondents which were evident in the posttests and their writings. While a few of the respondents were unable to fully appreciate the

treatment due to access and resource issues, most respondents developed a positive attitude towards Facebook and perceived it as a potential reinforcement for their learning. These confirm that Facebook could be a powerful teaching and learning tool when used for FGD and other learning activities.

Finally, it can be inferred that a module can be flexibly designed to properly target the learning difficulties of the respondents in grammar and writing. As this study has already shown that the module has the potential to aid the learning of students, the challenge now for the teacher is to appropriately design the model to properly address the difficulties of the students. The module could also be appropriately modified for other areas of learning. This provides educators a fresh avenue for academic innovation.

From the foregoing findings and conclusions, this study recommends the following:

- Teachers who intend to use Facebook in their classes have to understand that interaction is essential in the integration. It is not enough that an activity or new information only has to be posted on the group account from time to time or that the students are just participating without prior knowledge of the main objective. The teacher has to monitor their answers, correct errors, give feedbacks, and provide encouragement to the students in order for the integration to be successful. Other than that, the teacher also has to monitor if there are harmful posts or unhealthy interactions that are taking place in the group account so that they can be addressed or corrected immediately.
- A separate study in the future should be conducted in developing clear and definite guidelines for the incorporation of social media in classes to eliminate concerns and issues faced by the teachers, parents, and students themselves.
- Given the result of this study, it is recommended that the integration be contributed to the general knowledge such that it can also be utilized by other English teachers in the field.
- The school administrators should consider providing facilities wherein both the teachers and the students could access the

internet while they are inside the school such as a computer laboratory or having a WiFi zone.

- Other social networking sites, such as Instagram and Twitter, should be considered as a community for learning where the participants could combine the best aspects of both face-to-face and online instructions.

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