ESL Students' Perceptions on The Use of Facebook as A Collaborative Writing Tool in Improving Writing Performance*

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Abstract*:* The authors previously measured student achievement in writing test after the intervention of *Facebook* as a tool in improving writing skill. In this paper, the authors identified undergraduate students perceptions on the effectiveness of *Facebook* as a collaborative writing tool, which was extended from their previous research. The study adopted a quasi-experimental design with a total number of 33 participants taking part in the study. Out of 33 participants, 16 of them were assigned to an experimental group, while another 17 participants were assigned to a comparison group using a matching-only design. *Facebook*, as the treatment in the study, was compared to a conventional method; face-to-face in the collaborative writing activities. The comparison between the use of *Facebook* and face-to-face methods was made in order to measure student perceptions of the intervention authentically. After using this approach, a set of questionnaire was given to the *Facebook* collaborative writing group. It was found that majority of the students indicated positive perceptions towards the *Facebook* collaborative writing group.

Keywords: social media, web 2.0, computer supported collaborative learning, collaborative writing, writing in ESL

INTRODUCTION

Over the past century, there has been a dramatic change in the teaching and learning of English skills.Writing skill, for instance, has always been challenging for native speakers, let alone second language learners. Writing is a process that requires learners to stay focused in order to produce a good piece of writing, That is why many learners perceive writing as a mundane activity, especially for those who have obstacles in linguistics, psychology and cognitive problems. Since writing is seen as the least preferred activity among second language learners, a self-perpetuating alternative is needed in order to boost second language learners' interest in writing and also to instill love and passion towards this one particular skill. Being surrounded by techno-utopians and hyper-tech netizens has made the conventional teaching method of writing more loathed and sometimes too upstream for Gen Y language learners. Prensky (2001) perceives changing in the education world as a radical shift. This has affected the education repertoire from a different perspective and spoilt the education world with various choices of teaching methodology.

From a language learning perspective, many scholars have conducted studies pertaining to the use of Web 2.0 tools as a general guideline to educators in catering to the Gen Y learning needs. Today's students can be called as digital natives due to early exposure of technology ever since their childhood, especially on web-based technology such as social networking sites, blogs, wikis and many mushrooming web 2.0 tools. The teaching profession has become more challenging especially in maintaining student attention and to make learning a fun and intriguing process. *Facebook*, being one of the top social networking sites has the most number of users from all around the world regardless of races, ages and nations at large. Having easy access to the service from computers to smartphones and other related gadgets such as notebooks, tablets and other smart devices, has allowed users to not only be connected everywhere and anytime, but also to offer ample space for collaborative activities to take

place. Today, collaborative activities are no longer confined in the brick-and-mortar environment. With the mushrooming web-based applications, collaborative projects can be done over the Internet without having the hassle to do face-to-face meetings. Experimenting with those burgeoning social media in language learning could elevate student's learning experience thus accommodate better learning as well as intensifies interest in the English language. This, in return, could be beneficial not only to the students but also shed useful insights to other stakeholders especially language practitioners.

As one of the most famous social networking websites, *Facebook* has more than 1.06 billion monthly active users from all over the world, which 618 million of the active users logging on to *Facebook* on a daily basis and another 680 million users logging on to the mobile application. McCarthy (2010) asserts that the most used social networking and visited daily is *Facebook* but it has yet to be applied in tertiary education. Most people feel *Facebook* is a medium that is only applicable to improving interpersonal relationship, making new friends and establishing connection instead of using it for teaching and learning purposes. This statement is further strengthened by some scholars who emphasize that they could not see meaningful relation of *Facebook* and any web 2.0 tools in teaching and learning repertoire and identified them as an inappropriate platform for that purpose (Lohnes & Kinzer, 2007; Salaway, Caruso & Nelson, 2007; Waycott, Bennett, Kennedy Dalgamo & Gray, 2010). Very little evidence in terms of its potential in teaching and learning endeavor is found.

McLoughin and Lee (2010) postulate that the tertiary level of education does not take advantage of such an available and interactive social networking even though the technology has huge potential in participation globally through learning networks, collaboration as well as social networking. The main reason is because many at the tertiary level are still relying on traditional method and some people are just reluctant to step out of their comfort zone due to attitudinal factors such as awe and fear.On the other hand, some technology enthusiasts are being too

comfortable with existing technology and rely heavily on established application, for instance course management systems (CMSc), virtual learning environments (VLEs), just to name a few.

Recent developments in technology such as web-based platform have created another learning space for students to engage with. This space offers a more interactive and stimulating learning experience in an informal learning environment. The advancement of technology provides students a convenient place to practice their English in a non-intimidating way, safer, more anonymous and change their insecurity and fear of making errors gradually outside classroom teaching. Many research studies related to Web 2.0 tools have pointed out the advantages that students and educators can gain in the implementation of such tools in strengthening the four skills in language learning, especially in writing. This view is supported by Hoopingarner (2009) who strongly asserts that "writing process can be enhanced through the web 2.0 tools and encourage them to show their final output of writings" (p. 228).

This research is an attempt to investigate ESL student perceptions on *Facebook* whether it has the potential to be an effective collaborative writing tool. Collaborative writing is not new to the language learning world. However, projects that involve multiple writers are difficult to find and actually undertaken. Therefore, the outcome of this study is to revolutionise the perspective of some entities that social networking and other web 2.0 tools are not only appropriate for social activities and interpersonal relationship, but also for academic purposes too. The researcher sought answers to the research questions as follows:

To investigate student perceptions towards *Facebook* collaborative writing on:

a. The use of *Facebook* as digital language learning platform,
b. The use of collaborative writing in language learning,
c. The use of *Facebook* in collaborative writing for language learners,
d. The effects of *Facebook* usage in collaborative writing for language learners.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Collaborative Writing in Language Learning

Collaborative writing is always done in pairs using the conventional approach; face-to-face. Storch (2005) posits that a collaborative project which involves more than two writers is difficult to find. The perks of collaborating with other parties cannot be denied. Greater understanding and definitive consensus could be achieved via collaboration. As such, to achieve a common objective or overlapping purposes, individuals put their efforts to work together in a collaborative setting (Wells, 2000; Wenger, 1998; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Freire, 1970). In a comparison to individual understanding, collaboration isa means to construct common understanding collectively (Wells, 2000). Through the act of "doing things together, negotiate new meaning and learn from each other" has enhanced learning (Wenger, 1998). Freiri (1970) added that knowledge is usually contributed by many learners and not merely relying on teacher or instructor. Interaction from collaborative learning has made the learning more dynamics and meaningful in many ways.

In order to meet the global demand in language learning, students are spoilt for choice on how to engage with writing activities and the best option in this digital age is through technology. Web 2.0 is the second generation of the world wide web that allows users to work collaboratively due to its dynamic and user-generated content features. With the growth of web 2.0 tools such as social media, educators and researchers are offered huge opportunities to integrate collaborative writing in the technologies and give additional insight in comprehending the effects of such technologies in collaborative writing process (Kessler et al., 2012). Thus, an attempt to experiment with social media in language skills should be an eye opener to practitioners in promoting innovation and improving the pedagogical of education in language learning.

Social Media in Language Learning

According to Hughes (2009), social media tools have attracted students and practitioners to actively engage in the teaching and learning endeavour and thus motivate them to become active users. With the presence of such tools, the learning process is becoming more interesting, unlike the previous conventional methods before the emerging of advanced technology. This could be gained through the use of social media such as blogs, wikis and social networking sites for instance Twitter, Instagram and *Facebook* (Ebner et al., 2010; Schroeder et al., 2010; Grosseck, Holotescur & Rankin, 2009). Meanwhile, according to eBizMBA website in 2010, *Facebook* has been the most popular and most heavily visited social networking website. On top of that, according to a survey that was conducted by an international company (TNS), Malaysia is among the highest number of friends on social networking website with an average of 233 friends, followed by Brazil and Norway with an average of 231 and 217 respectively. In the meantime, the least number of friends belongs to Japan with an average of 29 people only. Due to the prevalent use of the social media, informal learning could act as a supplement to formal learning.

Facebook has a similar element of computer-mediated communication in the second language classroom. With the existence of features such as wall, timeline, group page, fan page and many more, it has developed remarkable opportunities for students to engage in communication written-based activities such as praising, negotiating as well as criticising. Such changes have given learners plenty of room to practice their language skills, particularly in written form. According to Mills (2009), language learners are able to be pertinent and timely through the use of *Facebook* as a valuable environment to experience and engage with. In her previous study, she found that her students were able to be immersed in an authentic French course environment through *Facebook* hence acquired grammatical functional and linguistics objectives. She added that her students enjoyed French classroom more and enhanced meaningful discussion

among them. Besides the use of *Facebook* as a platform for learning a French subject, there were also other studies pertinent to reading skills in language learning. Haverback (2009), in her study had incorporated *Facebook* in Reading Education Method course. From the study, she found that her students were motivated to be a part of *Facebook* discussions and they had better comprehension towards theories learned in the effective reading strategies. Furthermore, her students also portrayed better understanding and worked effectively in groups as opposed to individual reading.

In another major study, Kabilan et al. (2010) conducted a survey in identifying student opinions on *Facebook*. Their opinions contribute to a journey in finding how social networking like *Facebook* could support, enhance and strengthening meaning English language learning. Kabilan and his fellow researchers had gathered student general opinions about *Facebook* as an online learning environment to facilitate English language learning on i) students' improvement of language skills and ii) students' motivation, confidence and attitudes towards English language learning. Overall, most students agreed that *Facebook* can enhance their communication skills. This can be seen from the result showing that a total of 3.82 mean scores was obtained from the survey items. Meanwhile, another mean score of 3.82 displayed that *Facebook* can help them practicing English writing while a total mean score of 3.80 showed that students had enhanced their confidence to write in English. From the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that it is feasible to learn English through *Facebook*. Although initially students just wanted to socialise, *Facebook* is able to promote and engage students in language-based activities. The ability of *Facebook* to be a platform in new learning experience has provided authentic interaction and communication that inculcate student's positive views and opinions on *Facebook*. Besides, more positive effect of meaningful English learning could be gained through *Facebook* with proper planning in educational projects (Kabilan et al. 2010).

Following this, Shih (2011) had also conducted a study using *Facebook* as a platform in blended learning for teaching

writing skill. In his study, he unleashed the potential of *Facebook* in English writing as it provides easy access for students to discuss, comment and interact with one another in a meaningful context. Shih (2011) acted as a facilitator for seven consecutive weeks in the *Facebook* discussion. From the findings, Shih (2011) found out those 30 items from the questionnaire had higher mean scores ranging from 3.63 to 4.31 (5= strongly agree, 1=strongly disagree) with standard deviations ranging from 0.30 to 0.79 proves that most students agreed to the statements in the questionnaire. This showed that his students agreed through the integration of *Facebook* and peer assessment evaluation to observe others' writing in English writing class helped improve their writing skill. This resulted from the cooperation which happened throughout the entire process and at the same time enhanced students' communication, friendship, trust, interaction, active learning as well as learning attitudes. In addition, in terms of language writing, students were assisted by *Facebook*-integrated blended learning approach effectively in the writing organisation, grammar and structure, content, vocabulary and spelling. Overall, their attitudes towards *Facebook* in English writing class were highly positive and they displayed high satisfaction with the course arrangement.

In another study, Melor Md Yunus et al. (2012) explored the potential of *Facebook* group in teaching ESL writing. In contrast to Shih's (2011) study, Melor Md Yunus et al. (2012) employed *Facebook* group in order to create personalized environments in learning writing. The intention of this study was to gauge students' perceptions on the use of *Facebook* group in ESL writing. Participants in their study were required to join the *Facebook* group that was named as 'Write Out Loud' and complete tasks prepared by the researchers such as summary and brainstorming activity for four weeks. Further statistical analysis revealed that 80% of the respondents agreed that *Facebook* somehow had assisted them in their writing process, especially during the brainstorming session. The participants also emphasized that through brainstorming, they learnt how to clearly organise their thoughts before the actual writing. Additionally, the

comment feature also provided opportunities to pick up new vocabulary from reading the comments, gather better ideas as well as reduce spelling error via spell-check. However, participants in this study stated that they were distracted by information on *Facebook* that is irrelevant to the learning process. This in return, could jeopardise the learning process, thus, affects their learning outcome.

However, the study conducted by Kabilan (2010) and his fellow researchers had focused on the perceptions without conducting an actual study on the use of *Facebook* in language learning. Perhaps the researchers could conduct a piece of research that really utilises *Facebook* as a platform in the learning process and gather respondents perceptions after using *Facebook* throughout the entire process so that precise information could be gathered authentically. This would have provided respondents with authentic context and the effect of authentic context could provide more valid and tangible results as opposed to just gaining student opinions by merely distributing questionnaires randomly. The current researcher believes that different results would have been obtained when student perceptions were gathered after the respondents had truly utilised *Facebook* for the intended purposes as opposed to asking their perceptions before using the method. This could result in superficial perceptions, especially for enthusiasts and technology determinists.

Meanwhile, some studies on *Facebook* have not dealt with *Facebook* groups in nature. For instance, instead of using a *Facebook* group Shih's (2011) study utilised individual *Facebook* account. Besides that, he had employed a single group design in his experimental study. This study had employed a weak single group design since it did not include any control or comparison group. For this reason, it had caused difficulties in measuring the validity of the studies as well as the significance of an observed change. As far as privacy issue is concerned, Wan Rusli Wan Ahmad and Nuraihan Md Daud (2011) pointed out in their research that students are normally against the idea of using a personal *Facebook* account in classroom setting due to invasion of privacy.

However, *Facebook* is always evolving and expanding. Due to this nature, *Facebook* has now included group application which is intended for all users. In a *Facebook* group, users do not have to expose their personal account if they want to join in the group discussion. They can limit their audience on who can view their personal account while discussing freely in the discussion. In spite of that, they are still able to receive and follow or unfollow selected notifications made by the group members in every post and comment. This feature gives a huge advantage to researchers to track students' involvement in the *Facebook* group. Besides, in the study conducted by Melor Md Yunus et al. (2012) has shown that lack of empirical data which could be obtained by conducting an experimental research.

Apart from that, although extensive studies have been carried out in writing on *Facebook*, the research to date has tended to focus on single writer rather than collaborative authors. There is no single study that adequately covers collaborative writing in depth. Presumably, most of the previous studies either utilised *Facebook* for writing, grammar acquisition or solely discussion in language learning. Therefore, in this present study, the researcher conducted a study on collaborative writing in improving students' writing performance and to find out the participants' perceptions of this approach.

METHODOLOGY

This quasi-experimental research was carried out for 11 weeks at Universiti Putra Malaysia. 33 ESL participants with mixed ethnicity and gender had willingly involved in the study. Prior to the study, a pre-test was given to all participants. Subsequently, the participants were given a treatment in a form of *Facebook* collaborative writing and the comparison group in a form of face-to-face collaborative writing. The participants in the experimental and comparison groups were required to complete three written assignments

using *Facebook* and face-to-face collaborative writing respectively. After the treatment, a post-test was given to all participants. Then, the participants in the experimental group were handed a set of questionnaire that consisted of 42 items which attempts to ascertain participants' perceptions after using the *Facebook* collaborative writing method. The questionnaire was adapted from two previous studies; Shih (2011) and Melor Md Yunus et al. (2012). In Shih's (2011) study, he obtained 0.928 Cronbach alpha coefficient, inferring that the questionnaire had a high degree of internal consistency reliability. On the other hand, Melor Md Yunus et al. (2012) attained 0.75, indicating that the questionnaire had a satisfactory internal consistency reliability. In this study, after the researcher had adapted and finalized the questionnaire, two experts in this field were requested to validate all items. Then, a pilot study was conducted prior to validating the questionnaire. Two groups of four students from a different university were chosen as a subject for the pilot study. The respondents from this university were chosen based on similar characteristics that they have with the actual participants in the current study. From the pilot study, the questionnaire had obtained 0.941 Cronbach alpha coefficient implying that this questionnaire had a high degree of internal consistency reliability. At the end of the intervention, the *Facebook* collaborative writing group was given the questionnaire upon completing this research. With regard to the data analysis, the justification of the data interpretation is summarized in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1 Guidelines of Data Interpretation in Perception Questionnaire

Scale	Interpretation
1 (1.00-1.75)	Strongly disagree (very negative perception)
2 (1.76-2.49)	Disagree (fairly negative perception)
3 (2.50-3.24)	Agree (fairly positive perception)
4 (3.25-4.00)	Strongly agree (very positive perception)

FINDINGS

The findings of this study are presented in four sections. First, the use of Faebook as digital language learning platform. Following this section is the use of collaborative writing in language learning. The final two sections are Use of *Facebook* in collaborative writing for language learners and the effects of *Facebook* usage in collaborative writing for language learners. The findings are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2 Questionnaire Results of Students' Perceptions toward Facebook

	ITEM	Mean	SD
	Use of *Facebook* as digital language learning platform		
1	I agree *Facebook* act successfully as an online environment that facilitated English language learning.	2.69	.602
29	I reviewed my writing (spelling, vocabulary, grammar) carefully before posting on the wall in the *Facebook*.	3.38	.500
30	The peer comment activities allowed me to learn autonomously.	3.06	.443
31	The peer comment activities increased my motivation to learn English.	3.00	.365
32	I learned new words through the comments posted on *Facebook*.	3.19	.750
33	I looked up the meanings of the new words found or learned through *Facebook* postings.	3.13	.619
34	I used the new words I learned from Facebook.	3.13	.500
37	The spell-check feature in *Facebook* reduced my spelling error.	3.44	.629
	Total Aggregated Scores	3.11	.295
	Use of *Facebook* in collaborative writing for language learners		
3	Collaborative writing made me put more effort into learning to write in English.	3.13	.619
4	Collaborative writing made me learn how to solve problems.	3.13	.500
5	Reading other peoples' writings and presentation gave me a lot of benefits.	3.31	.479

cont. **Table** 2

8	Collaborative writing helped me to communicate with my teammates as well.	2.94	.772
9	Collaborative writing enhanced the friendship between my teammates and I.	2.94	.443
10	Collaborative writing strengthened the trust between my teammates and I.	2.75	.557
28	I considered the suggestions and comments given by peers when revising my own writing.	3.19	.403
	Total Aggregated Scores	3.00	.395

	Use of *Facebook* in collaborative writing for language learners		
2	The Comment feature in *Facebook* allows me to give feedback to me and my friends' writing effectively.	2.87	342
11	*Facebook* made me actively assess others' work and share the writing outcome with other teammates.	3.19	.403
14	I learned more vocabulary and spelling through a peer comment on *Facebook*.	3.13	.619
15	I learned English grammar and structure through a peer comment on *Facebook*.	3.13	.719
16	I learned to write organization through a peer comment on *Facebook*.	3.06	.443
17	I improved the content of my writing through brainstorming sessions on *Facebook*.	3.25	.447
19	The combination of *Facebook* and collaborative writing motivated me to write in English writing.	3.06	.443
25	The comments by peers on *Facebook* were useful in improving my writing in English.	3.19	.544
27	Reading my peers' writing on *Facebook* increased my learning experience.	3.19	.403
36	The brainstorming sessions held through *Facebook* helped me to organise my thoughts before writing.	3.19	.403
38	Online writing through *Facebook* gave me ample time to organise my idea before writing.	3.19	.544
	Total Aggregated Scores	3.07	.311

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	Total Aggregated Scores	3.07	.311

	Effects of *Facebook* usage in collaborative writing for language learners		
18	The use of *Facebook* in collaborative writing enhanced my English writing skill.	3.13	.500
6	I was motivated to learn writing in English through *Facebook*.	2.69	.602
7	In general, I am satisfied with the usage of *Facebook* to improve my writing in English.	3.00	.730
12	I was more serious towards my learning when learning writing through *Facebook*.	2.81	.544
20	I am more confident to write in English after using this approach.	2.87	.619
21	I am more confident to speak in English after doing collaborative writing through *Facebook*.	2.81	.750
22	Peer comment on *Facebook* really helped me improve my writing in English.	3.38	.885
23	I felt comfortable having my peers read my writing in English through *Facebook*.	3.06	.574
24	I felt comfortable giving feedback to my peers on their writing in English using *Facebook*.	2.94	.443
26	I felt comfortable posting ideas or opinions on *Facebook*.	3.25	.447
35	I inculcated a more positive attitude towards learning English as a second language after using *Facebook*.	3.31	.479
39	I found it easy to complete essays after using *Facebook* for my writing.	2.88	.719

cont. **Table** 2

40	I was distracted by the other features in *Facebook* when using *Facebook* for writing.	2.69	1.014
41	I felt encouraged when friends 'like' my post or comment on *Facebook*.	3.25	.775
42	I prefer writing on *Facebook* group than writing in classroom discussion context because it saves my time.	2.50	.894
	Total Aggregated Scores	3.18	.325

Students' Perceptions on the Use of *Facebook* as Digital Learning Platform

Based on the findings, it was found that a majority of the students agreed that *Facebook* had successfully assisted language learning in an online environment. This shows that *Facebook* can be incorporated in language learning because some students stated that they reviewed their writing before posting on the wall. This finding is in line with Shih's (2011) study who found in his where majority students were in the same consensus that the use of *Facebook* in writings could highly enhance their learning. Besides, via *Facebook,* learners become more responsible for their own learning thus increased their motivation to learn English and allowed learner autonomy. This finding is similar with Kim (2009) who stated many educational technology experts believe that multimedia technologies without a doubt can motivate students to learn languages better. Additionally, the use of social software tools as digital learning platform has allowed the development of self-regulated learning where students themselves take their own initiatives to learn, manage and evaluate their learning while maintaining a high motivation level (Biggs, 1987; Zimmerman & Schunk, 1989; Simon, 1992). On top of that, with *Facebook* prevalent features such as the spell-check and comment application, the participants were given opportunities to learn new words by searching the meanings on the Internet and also reduced spelling errors. With this advanced feature in social networking like *Facebook*, the same advantage was gained with any word-based tools

that could assist learning better. This finding is similar with Shih's (2011) study who proved that *Facebook* had effectively assisted his students in learning English including spelling with the existence of such features. Additionally, Lave and Wenger (1991) also perceive participation in the social world as a part of learning. Therefore, it is believed that people can learn better in social settings since they are immersed with authentic and relevant social interactions. The use of *Facebook* in this study as digital language learning platform offers social online communities. For that reason, learning is improved through the networked environment and facilitates necessary interaction for that purpose (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002).

Students' Perceptions on the Use of Collaborative Writing in Language Learning

Regarding students' perceptions on the use of collaborative writing in language learning, the majority of the students displayed moderately to highly positive perceptions. In particular, students displayed high satisfaction and highly appreciated the use of collaborative writing in language learning. They asserted that through collaboration in writing, they can learn from others' writings in terms of enriching content, organising ideas, improving the language use, vocabulary as well as mechanics. These findings are similar to those found by Ede and Lunsford (1990) that their respondents thought the collaborative writing was productive. They stated that through collaborative writing, ideas were gathered, different points of views were discussed and errors such as grammatical errors were reduced via revision to a more accurate outcome. Additionally, these findings also parallel with Kessler's (2009) study in which students were able to make changes during collaboration and improved their language learning. Besides that, the participants in this study stated that they put more effort into English writing due to collaborative writing which taught them how to solve problems. These findings are parallel with Shih's (2011) study whose students had put more effort and learned how

to solve problems resulted from the integration of *Facebook* in his writing class. In addition, Gokhale (1995) and Totten, Sills, Digby and Russ (1991) also added that collaboration gives students opportunities to become more responsible for their own learning and resulted in higher achievement. Despite this, some students indicated agreement towards collaborative writing that was supposed to assist them in communication. This finding is not consistent with Shih's (2011) study most probably due to the longer time needed in collaborative writing (Ede & Lunsford, 1990) and also unreliable internet connection (Noel & Robert, 2004) that could affect the fluidity of the collaborative writing process. Besides that, some participants also agreed that collaborative writing had enhanced their trust between group members. Again, this finding is not consistent with Shih (2011) most probably due to random distribution when developing group members and also insufficient time to build a good bond throughout this study.

Students' Perceptions on the Use of *Facebook* in Collaborative Writing for Language Learners

From the questionnaire, it was found that a majority of the students agreed that the comment feature allowed them to assess others' writings and share their thoughts with the rest of the group members. As a result, they were able to learn vocabulary, improve spellings, and gain more valuable input and ideas due to the existing features available in *Facebook*. This had motivated them to engage more in English writing because they could learn useful knowledge from the comments and this had improved their learning experience simultaneously. These findings were found to be similar to a study conducted by Melor Md. Yunus et al. (2012), Wan Rusli Wan Ahmad and Nuraihan Mat Daud (2011), Shih (2011) and Wichadee and Nopakun (2012) that portrayed the integration of *Facebook* in English writing had improved students' language learning. This is because the existing tools in *Facebook* permit various and synchronous opportunities for collaboration. Previously the conventional

means were only restricted to pair work due to the limitation of face-to-face or shared document conventions. With *Facebook* more meaningful learning environment can be created and comment feature makes the learning process easier and fun. Besides that, the comment feature also makes the contents of the discussion more organised and can be responded immediately compared to the one written on a piece of paper (Wichadee & Nopakun, 2012).

Effects of *Facebook* Usage in Collaborative Writing for Language Learners

Overall, it can be said that students' writing performance was improved with the use of *Facebook* in collaborative writing. This has inculcated students with more positive attitudes towards the learning in terms of motivation, satisfaction and confidence. The same findings could be found in Kabilan et al.'s (2010) and Shih's (2011) studies where their students also displayed the same positive perceptions towards *Facebook* in the language skills. Haverback (2009) in his study also found positive observations on *Facebook* where students became more creative and participate actively in the online community. This is probably because *Facebook* allowed students to discuss with peers, give feedback and comment on the writing activities either synchronously or asynchronously. Besides, it was found that they can also share useful and related information regarding their writing activities that might be helpful in the writing process (Haverback, 2009). According to Bernard et al. (2000), in online learning, it is pivotal for collaboration to take place successfully by having learners feel valuable to their team where his or her knowledge is beneficial via the social interactions. Many studies have also consistently demonstrated the advantages of using *Facebook* in writing. With collaboration activities in *Facebook* or any other online learning application, higher achievement could be achieved and knowledge is able to be shared as opposed to the individual conventional learning (Johnson et al., 1994, p. 53).

CONCLUSION

Collaborative writing is not new in language learning. With the incorporation of web 2.0 tools like *Facebook*,its like old wine in a new bottle and hope to bring new and fresh perspective to language learning stakeholders and educational institutions. Despite its scant attention and lack of research on this type of projects, *Facebook* collaborative writing is one that should be implemented in ESL classroom teaching. From this study, students have instilled more positive attitudes towards the learning especially in terms of motivation, satisfaction and confidence. With *Facebook*, a meaningful learning environment can be created. It allows students to discuss with peers, give feedback and comment on the writing activities either synchronously or asynchronously via some available applications such as comment features, reply buttons and personal message, just to name a few. Following this, collaborative writing can enrich more complex projects compared to individuals' outcomes especially with the help of collaborative writing tools. In this study, *Facebook* had provided substantial advantages to writing activities in terms of enhancing students' commitment and resulting to more effective and efficient processes of work. As revealed in Siti Shuhaida Shukor and Nooreen Noordin's (2014) findings, writing through *Facebook* had displayed higher scores as opposed to writing in a conventional classroom. Students also felt more engaged and responsible for the outcome of the project. In a nutshell, *Facebook* group application has made collaborative writing tools easier and capable of providing better results due to students' active engagement throughout the writing process. Therefore, these findings may be beneficial for educators and language practitioners to incorporate *Facebook* in the writing classroom so that it could harness students' writing skills and simultaneously instill positive attitudes among second language learners in English writing.

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