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Facebook Group as Media of Learning Writing in ESP Context: A Case Study at Hasanuddin University

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Abstract

This research measures the effectiveness and efficiency of Facebook Group benefits as learning writing media in ESP context. One of the objectives of ESP is to design learning English in specific situations and ways if it compared to General English teaching. It is referred to as the ESP context because students use it to learn with specific objectives and allow for media training for learners in addition to what is done in the classroom. The objectives are 1) to measure student achievement in improving writing skills through Facebook Group, 2) to reveal the extent of the usefulness of Facebook Group in enhancing the ability to respond to

student writing with fellow members, and 3) to find out respondents' perception of the use of Facebook Group as Media Learning in ESP Context. This research uses a descriptive method and the data were taken through an on-line questionnaire on 120 students from Department of English Language Studies, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University, as the target group in this research. The result of the research shows that Facebook Groups can foster learners' self-confidence to interact and respond spontaneously in English, which may not be experienced in conventional classes. The implications of this study offer an alternative teaching English, especially writing through Facebook Group in ESP context.

Keywords: *Facebook Group, ESP context, writing response, writing media*

Introduction

Many ways can be done to improve English skills for non-native speakers of foreign languages, especially writing. One good method is to give learners the opportunity to interact with each other and respond in writing. In the ESP class, learners are given special lessons about many *how's*; to post status, to response a comment, to debate, to share an opinion or anything about writing short responses in a specific topic. Even though it may be intimidating to a lot of people, anyone can get used to writing with a little discipline and willingness to learn (Milne, 2017). This strategy is intended for the learners to dare to write with their own ideas and words. Accustomed to writing is a good and beneficial habit.

Writing must be accustomed, and by writing someone can share experiences, knowledge and information for others. Write is habit. Someone has to multiply exercise. In this way, someone's writing ability will increase in line with the goals to be achieved or what is presented in writing.

In line with what was stated above, to focus on teaching, one approach that can be used is English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach. Following what Hutchinson et.al (1987: 19) stated that ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning. In this context, the purpose of learning learners like this is to improve their writing skills, at least in the form of responses, comments, arguing something through Facebook media.

In other words, foreign language teachers must note that this type of class activity can be very useful, because the desired form of communication continues. Asking students to use English in their posts or any other form of entertainment activity on social networks, to let them

be free in the choice of topics, actually means doing everything as before, but usually in English (Polok & Harezak, 2018). One of the keywords here is writing in English.

Writing is a form of communication that allows a person to express their feelings and ideas on paper/screen. For this reason, knowledge and arguments are needed to convince readers through well-compiled texts. Different with printed publications, according to Bray (2019), as traditional print-based publications such as newspapers, magazines, and trade journals have move online, they now compete with blogs and social media for advertising revenue, audience attention, and influence over debates.

In line with the presence of social media technology, various groups have tried to use the media not only to interact socially, share experiences, and promote goods for example, but for learning media. Language teaching also benefits from the presence of this social media, especially reading and writing. For this study, it focuses on utilizing Facebook for writing.

To improve writing skills, one method that is applied is to provide opportunities for learners to interact responsively and reactively to something in writing, for example through comment on Facebook status or to reply to a comment (for sharing ideas). However even so, the use of Facebook in general and focusing on the general language learning (Hayashi, 2011; Razali & Khatimah, 2013).

Since the discovery of Facebook in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, it has expanded significant developments to reach billions of users. One of the most users in Asia is in Indonesia. Facebook is essentially a successful online social network site (Perez, Araiza, & Doerfer, 2013). Facebook as a network at first targeted high school and college students but it goes globally and actively gains its popularity of all people ages (Blattner & Fiori, 2009). In recent years, Facebook has been used creatively for media teaching foreign languages, especially English.

The purpose of the Facebook group is to provide specific experiences for members to interact chat in English. This is a typical way. Through the media, they will be involved in one chat communication on or topic. Giving comments to one status that is read, responding to each other among members, and from there everyone has the opportunity to express their responses, proposals, and/or objections to something, which in turn increases the ability of members to write something.

FB group (specific group for this research) was established with the aim of encouraging members to interact reactively in English. By interacting on Facebook it will automatically improve writing skills. There are at least five advantages that there are on Facebook: 1) feeling

close to the members of the reader, 2) getting feedback quickly, 3) it is easily controlled, 4) it can display text and images on the wall, 5) personal communication between people can be done in the inbox messenger, and 6) no subscription fee – it is free. Moreover, Reyes, et al. (2018) mentioned that through Facebook, members are able to easily share and post about their feeling. In their study, they found that the respondents describe a situation, object or mental state and speakers have exemplified their feeling in interjection.

Facebook's strengths can help teach writing in ESP context outside the classroom. The lesson plan model depends on the teacher/instructure with the desired feedback model. Feedback can be given through comment facilities or more personal can be done through inbox messenger. Feedback through comments can be read by all members while those through messenger inbox can only be read by those concerned. Facebook's facilities are increasing and now the messenger inbox can be used to send Word files.

According to Hayashi, 2011; Razali & Khatimah, 2013, in Facebook students can enjoy written communication freely by sharing their ideas, via Facebook status or note. They also can comment to other's posting, and or share link, and video as well. Through Facebook users increasingly have the opportunity to interact with others for free without space and time limits.

In line with advances in technology and social media, the so-called Facebook, in turn, it can be used for language teaching, in ESP context for example. Once again, social media can be used to learn English. According to Polok & Harezak (2018), learning English is, beyond any doubt, aimed at achieving the proper level of communication. This is, of course, very necessary for non-native speakers. The advancement of technology and media affecting education is also stated by Susilowati (2008); "Education is increasingly affected by the advent of new technologies and media. These are having a significant impact on second language teaching and in the process raising questions about the specific language skills required to engage in and the potential of technology to radically change the experience of learning languages." (Susilowati, 2008)

Objectives of the Research

Main objectives of this research were to investigate students' perceptions toward the use of Facebook group to facilitate learners' needs in writing comments, questions, replies, complains, suggestions, and so on which are measured in Facebook Group interacting with fellow members. Survey was conducted by November 2018. The data were taken through an

on-line questionnaire on 120 students from Department of English Language Studies, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University.

This study aims to 1) measure student achievement in improving writing skills through Facebook group, 2) find out the usefulness of Facebook group in improving the ability of student to write responses to fellow members, and 3) reveal respondent's perceptions on the usefulness of Facebook group as learning media for writing in ESP Context.

How do you personally evaluate the importance of the following of coordinated care? Responses of respondents are as follows;

Table 1. Respondents' perception on the usefulness of Facebook Group as Media of Learning for Writing in ESP Context

How important is Facebook Group helping you to write ...?	very important	important	so-so	less important	not important
comments	60	56	4	0	0
Questions	19	48	26	27	0
Replies	48	22	29	21	0
Complains	22	52	29	17	0
Suggestions	52	47	12	9	0
Refusals	47	23	31	19	0
words you pick up	24	42	51	3	0
Expressions	58	50	8	4	0
Dates	15	52	39	14	0

Table 1 above shows that respondents' perception in the category 'very important' and 'important' reach the points above 50% of 120 respondents. Obtaining numbers in a row looks as follows: 96% comments, 90% expressions, suggestion 82.5%, complains 61.6%, replies 58.3%, refusals 58.3%, questions 55.8%, dates 55.8, and words you pick up 55%.

Data of Table 1 indicated that respondents' perception is positive and they perceive Facebook group is important to help them in writing their ideas on Facebook. Even though there were also respondents who considered that Facebook was less important as learning media for writing but the amounts not significant.

Method

The target group for this research project is students of Hasanuddin University (post-graduate of English Language Studies, Faculty of Cultural Sciences). Procedures of collecting data were conducted through some steps. Each member is registered in the Forum of ELS S2 Students & Alumni - FIB UNHAS (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/463743070485848/>).

This is a close Facebook Group. This group is intended to only be accessed by registered members. The purpose of this group is that interaction and reading status can only be done by members of the group itself. In this way they feel that all chats can only be read by the members themselves.

To utilize this Facebook Group as a Media Learning Writing in ESP Context, each member must be registered legally and controlled, and the results of their interaction in English are monitored by the researcher (as an admin). The admin invites each prospective participant and checks the membership members (to notify). As such, an administrator is entitled to control and control one's membership.

Hasanuddin University ESP Class

Teaching languages in the context of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) was started around a half century ago (Tony and John, 1998). From the early 1960s, ESP has grown to become one of the most prominent areas of English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching as today. Its development is reflected in the increasing number of specific studies related to the ESP context. Today, some universities are offering ESP courses to students of English Language Studies of non-native speakers of English.

English Language Studies (ELS) of Hasanuddin University is one of the institutions as mentioned above. The ESP courses offered to train students to understand the principle of ESP course, ESP movement, and the growth of ESP over past few years. It must be clear that ESP should in specific teaching purposes, situations, specific goal, and in a different methodology from that of General English.

After 2010, the ESP course started is taught both conventionally and some are taught by blended learning. Gradually, conventional teaching began to be abandoned and new strategies in the form of blending learning and online systems began to be popular. This is not only limited to some other language skills in English but especially in writing lessons.

In line with this fact, teachers creatively utilize social media as a learning tool. One of them is Facebook Group. One reason is that Facebook is a medium of writing, expression, giving feedback, comments, suggestions and even complaints. All group members can be actively involved in interaction, even though there are those who are passively involved, but they continue to read. Thus, a positive perception of the function of Facebook Group as Media of Learning Writing in ESP Context looks very good. Of course this is in line with ESP-based

teaching which aims to maximize a learning goal to achieve maximum results effectively and efficiently.

In fact, teaching ESP classes in relation to General English classes requires different strategies in which the focus is more on certain parts of the course than on skills. The ESP class at Hasanuddin University looks quite attractive to students.

The Importance of Writing Skill for Non-Native Speaker

There are several reasons why writing is the main focus of this research. Based on the survey, which was conducted on 120 students on the difficulty level of the skills of the four macro skills, their answers looked as follows:

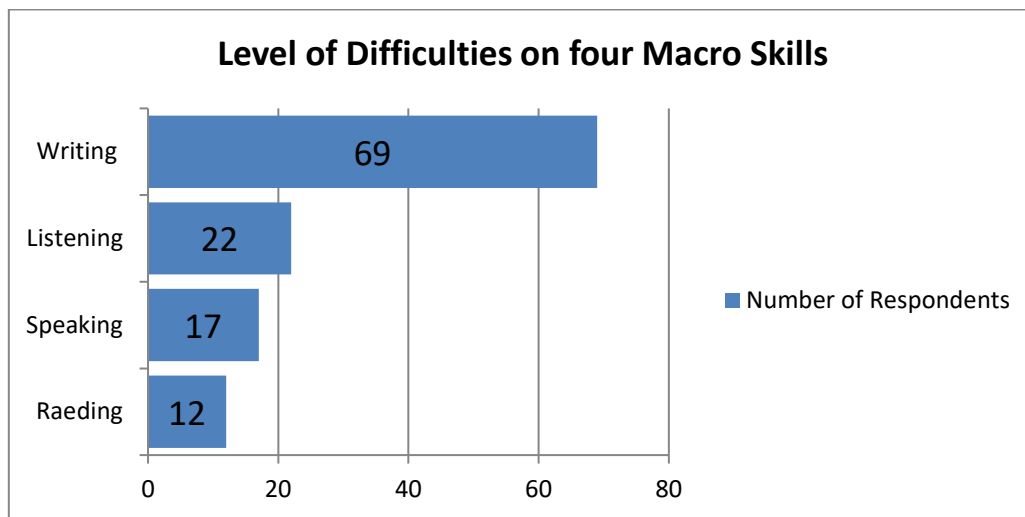


Figure 1 Level of Difficulties on four Macro Skills

Respondents' answers were 69 (58%), 22 (18%), 17 (14%), and 12 (10%) respectively. This data shows that writing is one of the most difficult skills for the respondent. This is because 1) writing as productive skills; not everyone is skilled in writing, 2) writing does not only require language skills but several other skills 3) writing is a specific skill that must be supported by one's internal knowledge. A person's internal knowledge is generally obtained from reading results. In other words writing skills are closely related to reading skills. Reading reproduction is manifested in writing ability.

This study found a number of psychological barriers so that a non-native speaker of English felt constrained in writing. These constraints can be in the form of: i) Lack of motivation, ii) Not well trained, iii) Fear of being criticized, iv) Worrying wrong, and v) Not being able to process ideas into written language. If these five factors are traced, the hardest

factor is in the first point, and success can be achieved if a learner has been able to overcome the last point in reverse which is able to process ideas into written language.

Table 2. Psychological Obstacles in Writing

No	Psychological Obstacles	Percentage
1	Lack of motivation	11%
2	Not well trained	26%
3	Fear of being criticized	24%
4	feel worried when doing wrong	21%
5	Unable to process ideas into written language	18%

In principle, writing is a language activity to move ideas in mind and pour in written language. But in reality, this is not easy, technically or anything else. There are several things related to aspects of difficulty in writing skills, namely content, form, vocabulary, grammar, language use/style, and mechanics. Based on the data, student complaints in writing are formulated in Table 3 as follows

Tabel 3. Level of Constrain

No	Aspects	Level of Constrain	Remarks
1	Content	Ability to express ideas in easy-to-understand written language (cohere and coherence)	26%
2	Form	Text types and text organization	23%
3	Grammar	Grammatical and syntax (structure, subject-verb agreement, tenses, word, etc.)	21%
4	Language Use/Style	Words choices and style of expression	18%
5	Mechanics	Punctuation, spelling, and numbering (writing organization)	12%

Characteristics of Learner Writing for Non-Native Speakers of English include;

1. Learners have difficulty expressing things in English because they interfere by ways of thinking according to the language concepts that he uses every day
2. English has a language structure that is very different from the structure of its mother tongue - that is Indonesian
3. Non-native speakers of English are generally embarrassed and hesitant to write their ideas in English, they are afraid of being wrong.
4. They have very limited opportunities to write in English

5. They are generally easier to understand English conversations than writing

Therefore, it is suggested that non-speakers of English language learners to

1. Read more English-language writings. Choosing readings can be in the form of scientific articles, news and or literary fiction.
2. Participating in the creative writing course with the English Specific Purposes (ESP) method
3. To improve the practice of writing it is recommended to increase the practice, including utilizing the Facebook Group to join other learners with the same needs

Media of Learning Writing in ESP Context

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a specific approach in the teaching and use of English for specific fields and studies that are in accordance with the needs of the field of science and the profession of English language users. The fields of science and professions are such as English for Economics, Business, Law, Medicine, Mechanical Engineering, or maritime, and so on. Robinson (1990: 5) further states that (here ESP), the purpose of which is there is no doubt." The use of Facebook media is only a strategy for creating alternatives and is likely effective for learners.



Figure 2 Concepts of English for Specific Purposes

Thus, ESP has approaches and assumptions that are different from General English (GE) for example. The aim of ESP is for students to be able to master English in the fields they study. For example, Pharmacy students, they must understand English for pharmacy, or if they are Engineering students, they must know English for Engineering, or if they work in hospitality, then they must master hospitality English, if they are maritime students, then they

must master Maritime English. This is the reason that ESP has carried out matches to the needs of learners.

ESP is generally used in teaching foreign languages for certain uses in certain fields of science and professions. This goal is generally understood as a strategy to further enhance the role of English as a communication tool both oral and written. Therefore, ESP should be seen as an approach, concept, and method that are indeed different from General English. ESP is an English language teaching approach that has different approaches, perceptions, designs, materials, evaluations, and objectives. ESP material refers to student needs (students' needs) and where English will be used. Similar things are also expressed by Donough about the definition and concept of ESP. He argues that ESP courses are those where the syllabus and materials are important (Donough, 1984: 3). The essence of ESP can be seen in the figure below:

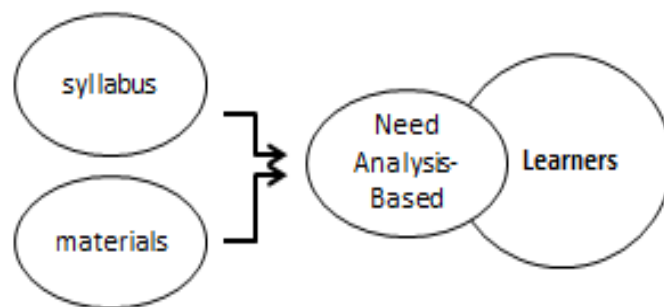


Figure 3. The Essence of English for Specific Purposes

Regarding the analysis of needs so that the substance of ESP really meets the needs of learners, then there are three things that must not be forgotten in conducting a needs analysis, namely a) instructors, b) learners, and c) stakeholders. Why all three must be a concern because in the end the instructor will lead learners to use language as needed by stakeholders.

The following figure shows the division and direction of ESP learning based on learner needs.

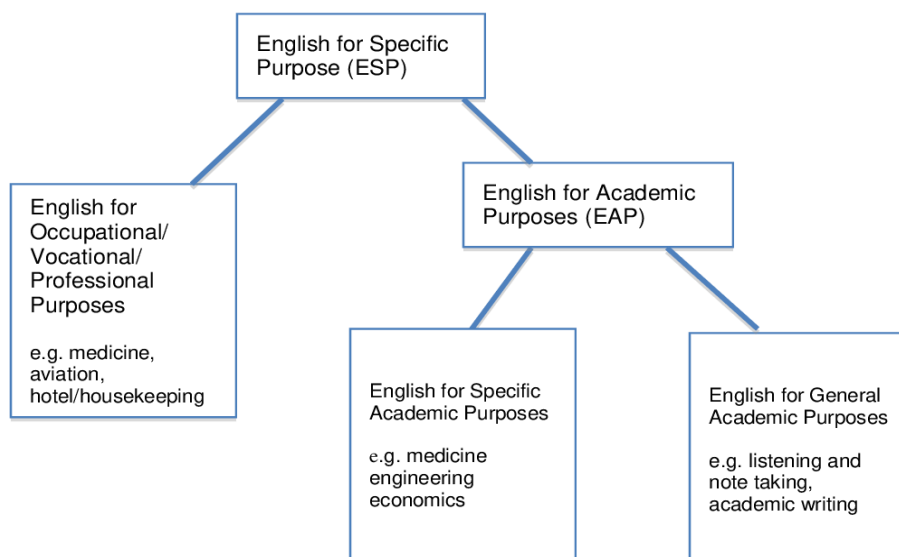


Figure 4 The Features of English for Specific Purposes

Based on the figure above, Robinson (1991: 2-3) further states that there are three main features of ESP that distinguish it from General English (GE) or English a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Mother Tongue (EMT). These three characteristics are 1) ESP is goal-oriented learning. In this context, learners learn English not for reasons of wanting to know the language as the language and culture contained in it, but ESP learning, learners are more because they have specific goals, specific and specific in academic and professional fields with one another, 2) Substance ESP is designed and developed based on the concept of need analysis. The concept of needs analysis aims to specialize and link and bring together what students need in both the academic and professional fields, and 3) ESP is more aimed at adult learners than children or adolescents. This is logical because ESP is generally taught at the middle and high academic levels.

By understanding the concept, the role of the teacher is very decisive in designing learning models, methods, and strategies and utilizing media that can improve learning effectiveness. A teacher must not hesitate to do various experiments. She/he must be creative, and understand the needs and constraints faced by learners.

Regarding the explanation above, the need for fun learning media in line with what is easy to use for learners is Facebook. In Facebook, students can enjoy written communication freely by sharing their ideas, via Facebook status or note. They also can comment to other's posting, and or share link, and video as well. However even so, she just tends to see the use of Facebook in general and focusing on the general language learning (Hayashi, 2011; Razali & Khatimah, 2013).

Results

Based on the data, 69% of respondents stated that writing became skills was difficult between other skills. There are five Psychological Obstacles in Writing for respondents, and 'Not well trained' comes to the high obstacle (26%) followed by 'Fear of being criticized' (24%), 'feel worried when doing wrong' (21%), 'Unable to process ideas into written language' (18%), and 'Lack of motivation' (11%). Regarded to respondent's writing performance, the constrain factor experienced by respondent included 5 aspects: content (26%), form (23%), grammar (21%), language use/style (18%) and mechanics (12%).

For the benefit of good teaching, ESP uses the methodology and activities that underlie the discipline it serves; ESP focuses on language (grammar, lexis, register), skills, discourse and genres that are appropriate to this activity. ESP realizes the methodology and activities in accordance with the fields of study that are targeted or studied and taught. This means that the methods and activities carried out in classroom learning must be in accordance with the fields of science, work, and profession that reflect the variety and diversity of the essence of ESP itself.

As a creative and dynamic approach the focus of ESP is typical language usage (grammar, lexis, register) as mentioned above, skills, discourse, genres that are in accordance with activity. In this case the scope of language in ESP at the level, grammar, lexical and register in certain cases is different from General English.

In fact, many students learn vocabulary and try to combine several words to make the right sentence. It is amazed, the number of words that some of the learners know, but they cannot make the correct sentence. The reason is because they do not learn sentence. When children learn languages, they learn shared words and phrases. Likewise, the must learn and learn expressions.

The results of this study reveal that it is important to understand how one acquires a foreign language, especially English. To understand how a person learns, the instructor must first identify the nature of teaching and learning before even trying to design effective teaching. As technology and social media, including Facebook, redefine our classrooms, teachers need to understand and adapt to various pedagogies to expand the classroom environment. Thus, the teacher must design teaching that meets the needs of their students.

Here are some specific implications of using social media in English classes: 1) Facebook reduces stress on teachers because the environment is friendly, conducive to learning

and student-centered. 2) A facilitator, allowing him to pay more attention to the weakest students; 3) Facebook reduces interference if there is no change or teacher (Faryadi, 2017).

Conclusion

Research relating to Facebook Group as Media of Learning Writing reveals several things 1) Facebook can be used for writing skills especially for non-native speakers of English, 2) The strength of Facebook can help teach writing in ESP context outside the classroom, 3) A person the teacher must not hesitate to do various experiments. He must be creative and understand the needs and constraints faced by learners, 4). ESP must be designed and prepared to meet the needs of goal oriented learners. To overcome the obstacles in writing, what must be done is that one must motivate himself, be confident, and get used to writing so that the constraint factor is often experienced by the respondent's understanding of content aspects, mastering the form, avoiding grammar mistakes, accustomed to using his own style and understanding about mechanics which applies in English.

Pedagogical Implication

The result of the research shows that Facebook Groups can foster learners' self-confidence to interact and respond spontaneously in English, which may not be experienced in conventional classes.

Finally, it can be concluded that ESP method is used to facilitate the teaching and learning of a foreign language for a clearly utilitarian purpose of which there is no doubt of it. The implications of this study offer an alternative teaching English, especially writing through Facebook Group in ESP context.

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