

The Contribution of Facebook Groups in Improving English as a Foreign Language Writing Skill of 9th Grade Female Students at Public Schools in Jordan

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Abstract

This paper aims at investigating the contribution of Facebook groups in improving the writing skill of 9th grade students at Al Rashedia Primary School for Girls. This experimental research included 9th grade students from Al Rashedia Primary School for Girls at the Directorate of Education in Al Karak Province for the academic year 2015/2016. The sample consisted 20 students. The sample of the study was selected randomly. The researcher used t-tests to elicit data from the respondents. The findings of this research indicated that the improvement in student writing skill can be seen clearly in all the aspects and this proved the role of using Facebook in motivating students to be more active and enthusiastic in writing performance since they can benefit from each other's ideas and thought to build their own writing. Also, the properties of correcting each other's mistakes help them write more confidently without the fear of making mistake. This research recommends further research be conducted in this area.

Keywords: 9th Grade Students, Facebook, Writing Skill, English as a Foreign Language.

1. Introduction

In recent years, social networking sites are defined as "the patterning of everyday practices of social interaction, including those that take place within family structures between friends and in neighborhoods and communities." (Merchant, 2013:6). They are used as a supplementary tools for teaching and learning after these social networking sites have gained their popularity among students. Social networking sites encourage and enhance students in their learning and make them more enthusiastic especially when it comes to difficult skills like writing. Albayrak & Yildirim (2015) explain the use of social networking sites in education like Facebook which enhances the learning process by creating a motivated environment for students to communicate with each other and share own ideas. One of the most important social networking site, is Facebook.

Hosny and Shameem (2012) state that Facebook is one of the popular social networking sites that enhances the classroom teaching, for being a good environment for teachers and students in which they can engage in the learning process more actively. Using Facebook enables them to create groups or pages to interact and exchange information and ideas, photos, video clips and any educational material. Since Jordanian students face many problems in their EFL writing skill. It is considered as difficult and complicated skill which requires students to go through a long process of planning, drafting, editing and final version. Researchers relate these weaknesses amongst EFL in their writing skill to their anxiety of making grammatical mistakes, lack of knowledge and the spelling mistakes (Rabab'ah, 2005).

Musa (2010) considers writing as a difficult skill to teach. This is because it requires a comprehensive use of grammar, grasp on spellings and punctuation, use of appropriate vocabulary, suitable style to meet the expected readers' expectations and organizational skills. According to the above mentioned, the researcher intends to explore the area of using Facebook in improving writing skill for EFL students. The researcher will use Facebook groups as a tool to create an enjoyable and interesting environment that motivates students to write effectively. Facebook groups enable students to present their ideas clearly and share it with other members of the group. They provide them with a space of discussion. The researcher monitors the students when they engage in a discussion, evaluate them, make a correction of their mistakes and provide them with suggestion for better writing.

2. The Statement of the Problem

English is the language of universe. It is used world-wide either as a first language, second language or a foreign language (Al Khotaba and Magarbeh, 2015). In Jordan, EFL learners face difficulties in writing. They have weak performance when producing a piece of writing. Alsamadani (2010) states that EFL students face many problems in writing and they are unable to produce well-connected and meaningful written text. Consequently, this research investigates the contribution of Facebook groups in improving EFL writing skill of 9th grade students at Al -Rashedia Primary School for Girls.

3. Objectives of the Study

The present research intends to achieve the following objective:

- i. To investigate the effect of using Facebook groups in improving the writing skill of 9th grade students at Al-Rashedia primary School.
- ii. To investigate the role of Facebook groups in increasing student's motivation in writing skill.

4. Research Question

In order to achieve the research objective, this study addresses the following questions:

1. What is the effect of using Facebook groups in improving the writing skill of 9th grade students at Al-Rashedia primary School?
2. What is the role of Facebook groups in increasing student's motivation in writing skill?

5. Sample of the Study

The sample of the study consists of 20 female students. All of them were 9th grade students from Al-Rashedia Primary School for Girls. The sample was divided into two groups; the control and experimental groups. The control group consisted of 10 students who were taught how to write using the traditional way.

The experimental group consisted 10 female students. All of the participants were taught how to write through using Facebook group and

6. Research Method

The researcher adopted the experimental approach by conducting pre and post test. A pre-writing test was applied for the purpose of examining the students levels of both groups while the post-writing test was applied for both groups to check the improvement after using Facebook groups. The study took place during October /11th / 2015 until November /11th / 2015.

7. Literature Review

This section of the study provides a review on some previous studies related to the research of teaching writing in English as a foreign language, the use of multimedia in classroom teaching, Facebook groups and teaching writing. In a study conducted by Simpson (2011) in Seoul University in South Korea aimed at finding out the degree of Facebook usefulness as an educational tool in English as a second language. The sample consisted of 121 students of the conversation subject, who were studying English language at the university. The results revealed that Facebook is different from other effective teaching tools and it is an excellent way to keep the boredom away from classrooms, and that a teacher has to use Facebook in teaching.

Ekoc (2012) attempted to present the use of Facebook groups as a supporting tool for language classrooms. The sample consisted of 22 students, 13 males and 9 females of foreign language preparatory school students. Data was collected from students' and instructor's posting messages and comments on the group page for a period of four months and covered sixteen teaching weeks in 2011. The findings revealed that students can feel motivated to contribute to an online community if they subsequently receive support or help. It also leads students to feel that they are being supported by a whole portion of their class community and promotes students' desire to maintain a valued relationship with others.

Similarly, Hussain and Al-Ghoul (2014) conducted a research to examine the effectiveness of using Facebook on the English language achievement of the ninth grade students in Jordan. The study was applied in Asia Secondary School for Girls in Amman in the first semester 2014/2015. The sample consisted of (68) students divided into two groups. The experimental group consisted of (33) students studied by the Facebook way and the control group consisted of (35) students studied in the traditional way. The researcher used the educational material and a comprehensive and reliable test which designed and applied as a pretest to both groups to ensure that they are equal. Also, they applied the same test after the completion of the study unit. The results showed statistically significant differences between the mean of students in the experimental group taught by the Facebook method and the mean of the control group, in favor of the experimental group. The results also showed statistically significant differences between the mean of students due to the cumulative average.

Huwari and Al-Khasawneh (2013) intended in their research to explore the reasons behind the weakness of writing among pre-year students at Taibah University. The participants of this study were 10 pre-year male students at Taibah University "Yanbu Branch" in Saudi Arabia for the academic year 2012-2013. This study is a qualitative study. The data was collected through semi-structured interview from male students only. The findings of this study revealed that grammatical weakness, knowledge and understand, less practice and educational background were the main themes discovered by the students.

Al Anazi (2013) conducted a study aimed to promote students' writing by using electronic writing (e-writing) tools. The subjects of this study were seven senior students at the English language Department who created blog sites and shared their pages through a class website on Google Sites. Students completed the

study's requirements including pre and post-surveys, self-directed informal writing exercises, and a self-reflection paper. The finding showed that using electronic writing increases students' motivation to write an informal electronic writing, promotes writing enjoyment and builds experience that foster positive self-esteem and accept formal writing tasks.

8. Research Method

The researcher used purposeful sampling to select the sample of the study out of the overall population of the 9th grade students of Al-Rashedia Primary School for Girls. The researcher divided the participants into two groups, respectively. The control group which consisted 10 female students and the experimental group which includes 10 female students. The study was conducted according to the following procedures:

- i. Taking permission from the student's parent to let them participate in this research, and permission from the headmaster of the school to conduct this research for the 9th grade students.
- ii. Preparing the research plan for doing the pre-test and post –test.
- iii. Preparing the study tool by creating Facebook group and inviting the experimental group to join it.
- iv. Analyzing data by using (SPSS) program.

To achieve the objectives of this study, the researcher used pre-test and post-test for both groups. Pre-test was applied before using Facebook group as a tool of teaching writing for the purpose of evaluating student level in writing e of both group. The post-test was conducted after practicing writing in the Facebook group, to measure the improvement of their writing. In conclusion, the data reported from the pre and post tests were analyzed statistically through using (SPSS) program, by comparing the results of the pre-test and post-test to measure the student's improvement in writing skill. After that the results were analyzed descriptively to support the result of the statistical analysis.

9. Discussion and Findings

The experimental research aimed at investigating the contribution of Facebook groups in improving English as a foreign language writing skill of 9th grade students at Al-Rashedia Primary School for Girls at Al Karak Directorate of Education. The researcher used the pre and post test to determine if students writing ability improved after using facebook group as a tool for teaching writing skill. The test measured the writing skill according to four main aspects: organization, grammar, content and spelling. The pre test was conducted on October / 11th /2015. It examined students weakness in the writing skill for the control and experimental group based on the four aspects mentioned above. The results of the pre test which were analyzed using SPSS program are depicted in figure (1) in the next section.

Figure (1): The Average of Students' Score in Each Aspect in Pre Test

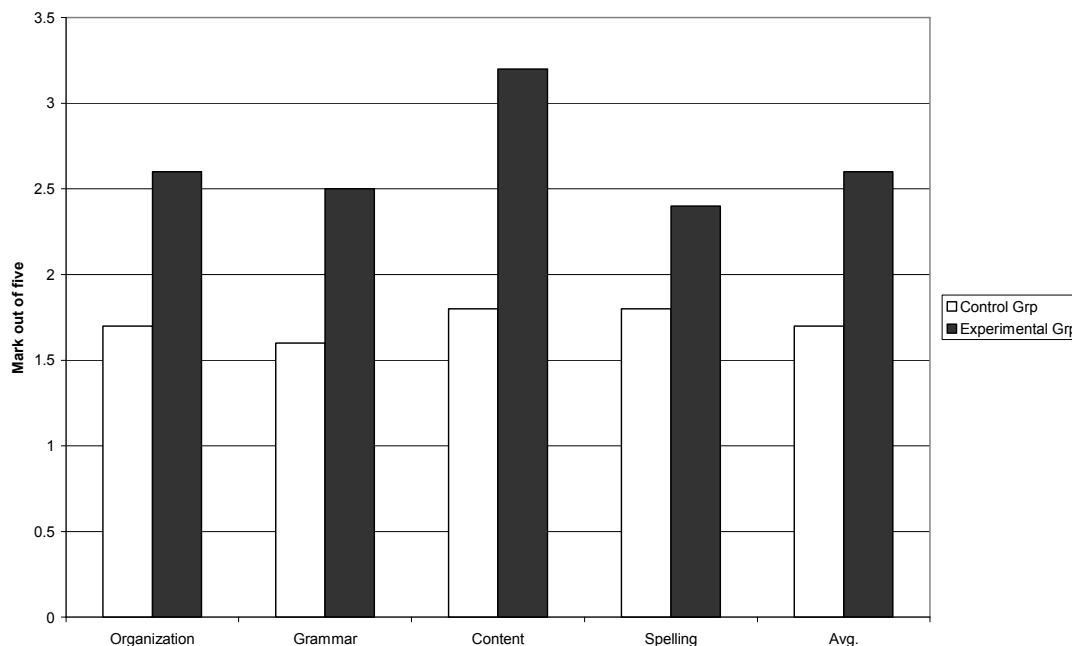


Figure (1) above presents the average of pre and post test for both groups based on the four aspects. The total average of control group was 1.7 while the total average of the pre test of the experimental group was 2.6. However, the results indicate that the average of the experimental group is higher than the average of the control group, but still there were weaknesses in the four aspects of both groups, especially in spelling and grammar.

The average of the first aspect, organization for control group was 1.7 compared to the average of the same aspect of the experimental group which was 2.6. The average of the grammar which is the second aspect was 1.6 for the control group and for the experimental group was 2.5. The result of the third aspects, content showed that the average of the control group was 1.8 while the average of the experimental group was 3.2. The last aspect is spelling which was 1.8 the average of the control group and 2.4 the average of the experimental group. Based on the above discussion, it is noted that, the results of the pre and post test for the experimental and control group were not a big difference in their writing skill taught in the traditional way. Figure (2) however indicates the average students' score in each aspect in the post-test.

Figure 2. The Average of Students' Score in Each Aspect in Post Test

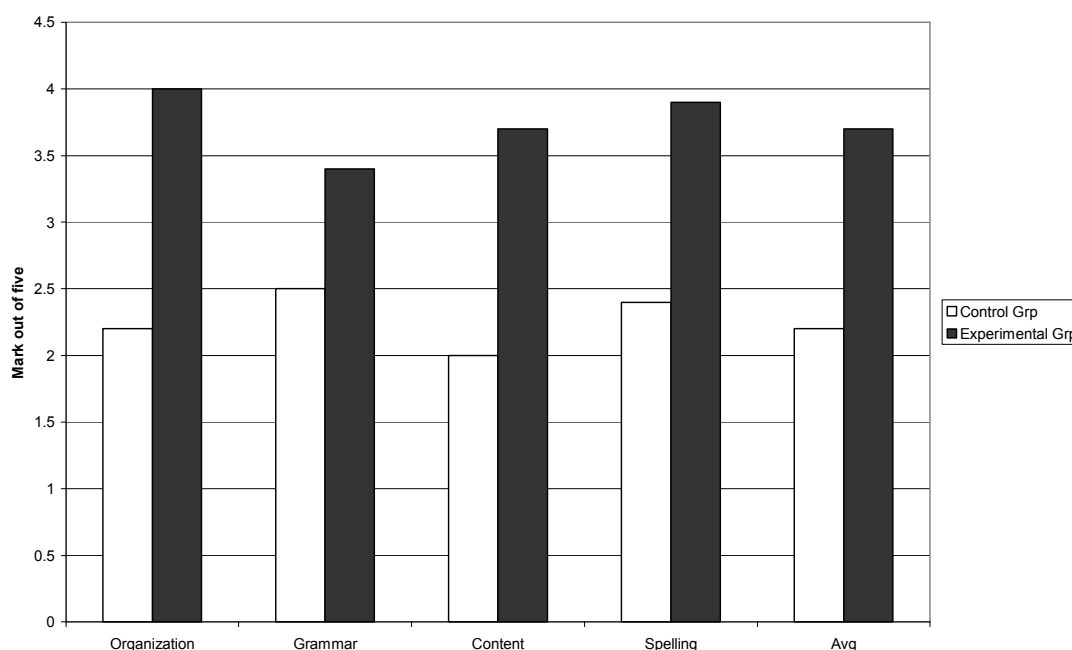


Figure (2) above table displays the result of the analysis of the post test of both group after the implementation of Facebook group as a supporting tool for teaching writing skill. The result indicates how the average of the experimental group in post test increased to be 3.7 compared with the average of the control group 2.2. The improvement in the students' writing skill can be shown clearly in each aspects. In the aspect of organization, the average of the control group was 2.2 but for the experimental group was 4. Also, in grammar aspect the average of the control group was 2.5 while it was 3.4 for the experimental group. According to the content, the average of the control group was 2 compared with the average of the same aspect in the experimental group which was 3.7. The fourth aspect was spelling in which the average of the control group was 2.4, the average of the experimental group was 3.9. Although, the finding of the pre and post test indicated that students writing skill improved in both group; the control group that was taught writing in the traditional way and the experimental group that was taught writing through Facebook group. The improvement in the students' writing skill is seen more in the experimental group. The final result proved the benefit of using Facebook group in enhancing writing skill. The result of the above table also indicated the importance of using Facebook group in motivating students to write more effectively, through sharing ideas with other students, correcting mistakes to each other. Its is regarded as relaxed environment for the students.

1.10 Conclusion

Based on the result of the research which investigates the contribution of using Facebook group in improving writing skill for 9th grade student in Al- Rashedia primary school for girls. It can be seen the benefit of using Facebook group in teaching writing from the result of the pre and post test for the experimental and control group. The average score of the experimental group increased to be 3.7 in the post test instead of 2.6 in pre –test. The improvement in student writing skill can be seen clearly in all the aspect and this proved the role of using Facebook in motivating student to be more active and enthusiastic in writing performance since they can benefit from each other ideas and thought to build their own writing, also the properties of correcting each other mistakes help them to write more confidently without the fear of making mistakes. Writing for them become as a habit not some thing boring and uninterested.

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