USING FACEBOOK GROUP AS A WAY TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL
(A Case Study at the Eleventh Grade of a Vocational School in Pangandaran)

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a case study that aims to investigate the progress of students' writing skills after the use of the Facebook Group as an online informal medium of learning. This research was conducted in XI grade vocational school in Pangandaran, West Java. To collect the data, the author observed the students' writing on Facebook Groups and conducted interviews. Interviews aim to validate observational data and to gain students' perceptions. The researcher found that there was a significant increase in students' writing skills after using the Facebook Group as an informal medium of learning. The results of this study showed that there is an increase in students' writing skills especially in vocabulary and grammar. In addition, the improvement of students' writing skill is also recognized by students during interviews. Unfortunately, the improvement of writing skills is only applicable to low and middle achievers only. Regarding the use of Facebook Group as a medium of learning, all participants perceived that they like and support the use of Facebook Group as a medium of learning. The students assumed the writing status in English language on Facebook Group is 'cool'. In addition, students also like the Facebook Group because Group learning makes them motivated to learn. Lastly, students love the Facebook Group as an informal medium of learning because there is no time-limits or space boundaries on its use. In conclusion, the use of Facebook Group as an informal learning media is good for improving students' writing skills especially in grammar and vocabulary and also well-liked by students to be used as a learning medium. In addition, the researcher also suggests for further research to increase the participation of teacher in Facebook Group learning so that high achiever students also get the ability enhancement.

Keywords: *Facebook, Facebook Group, Informal learning, Writing skill.*

INTRODUCTION

Along with civilization expansion and technology progression, then sought educational paradigm also has shifted particularly concerning the teacher existences in teaching and learning interaction. In the beginning period, the teacher position in the

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classroom is very vital particularly in English language course. School activity and teacher become the only resource of information or knowledge. Besides, English language as foreign language also becomes more difficult for students because they could not practice it in their living circles.

Nowadays, technology has blossomed and become a natural part of everyday life even now infiltrating the education sector (Hayashi,2011, p.309). Moreover, Greffin & McGow state that the education system must respond to this change (2012, p.1). Hence, in respond the globalization changes, the researcher in this study came to the decision to prompts technology as medium for teaching and learning. There are numerous technology tools that can be integrated with the formal learning and could be used as informal learning, such as chat, blogging, and social networking to name a few.

The writer in this study wields one of the social networking sites (SNS) that increased in popularity recent years, that is Facebook. Facebook can be a very useful tool in the teaching learning as it promotes both target language uses while also promoting learner autonomy (Hayashi, 2011, p.309). Another expert adds that finding a way to infuse technology into instruction not only helps English language learners acquire a target language, but also enhances motivation and confidence (Lacina, 2009 p.10). Based on the statements above, the writer concludes that the use of Facebook as a medium of informal learning not only could promote the target language, but also enhance students' motivation and confidence. By using Facebook, the students' prudency will fall away because they don't see each other and each expression, so that they can save their face and it can enhance their confidence.

The writer's reason of chooses Facebook as informal teaching learning media based on the rapid growth of Facebook user in Indonesia. As reported by the www.wearesocial.net (2016), Indonesia ranked the fourth of the biggest Facebook user in the world after America, India and Brazil with the active user reached 79 million. That the age group of 13 to 19 years old ranked the second number of the biggest Facebook user in Indonesia after the group age of 29 to 30 with the total active user 33%. These data shows clearly that Indonesian particularly teenagers, in this case, like Facebook. Concerning with the fact, the author believes that the use of Facebook as online informal learning media possible to be applied in Indonesia especially in high school which the age between 15 to 18.

Facebook can easily be accessed by computer, mobile devices whether it is tablet, smart phone or cellular phone. Facebook available in the forms: Facebook text,

Facebook website, Facebook application and Facebook messenger. This easy access and varieties make this social media used by almost all the internet user. Besides, Facebook also linked with other social media and give the easy way to user by just linked to Facebook account to joint other social media. These superiorities of Facebook make Facebook win out the most preferred social media in all social class of people.

According to Facebook Chief Operating Officer, Facebook users online for 46 minutes per day and spend every second to check notification and send a message (source: www.co.uk). If associated with education in Indonesia, then 46 minutes is equivalent to one hour of lesson in the school which is only 45 minutes. These 46 minutes per day that students spent on Facebook multiplied by 7 days per week means 322 minutes. This number is almost twice higher than hour of English language lessons per week which only consisted of 4 hours of lesson, or only 180 minutes per week.

Referring to the data stated above, the researcher strongly believes that Facebook could be used as an informal learning media. Facebook is well-liked by students then Facebook used as an informal learning media, it means that we engage the lesson to thing that students' interest with. The researcher believes that engaging the English language course with social media as informal learning could enhance students' capability in English language and Facebook also becomes the place of practicing English language course in informal way.

METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative approach as it involved the qualitative data collection and data analysis. Qualitative research concerned with assessing the attitudes, opinions, and human behavior subjectively (Kothari, 2005, p. 5). In qualitative research, the researcher is collecting data based on words from a small number of individuals so that the participants' views are obtained (Creswell, 2012). It uses words to describe the phenomena in research setting. The purpose of this research is to find out meaning, to examine processes, and to get insight understanding of individual, group, or situation (Nunan, 1992, p. 76).

In this research, a case study method was used by the researcher. According to Hancock and Alegozzine (2006) case study is a systematically method to gather information of person, social, event, or group to effectively understand about the operations or functions of subject. This study has characteristics of case study because it carried out in a small case and single case (Stake, 2010). In this case, the researcher

observes and analyzes the use of Facebook Group as a way to enhance students' writing skill. Based on the case study characteristics, it is appropriate for one typical case or a few typical individuals, such as some students of the school, to research, to assess, and to analyze (Wallen, and Hyun, 2012, p. 440). Later on, the data were interpreted and discussed in order to understand the whole phenomena occurred.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the researcher discusses the findings of her research. The research was conducted to find out the indicative progress of students' writing skill after using Facebook Group as an informal medium of online learning and students' perception of the use of Facebook Group as an informal medium of online learning. The method was used by researcher to answer their research. They were observation and interview. The following is the explanation.

The Indicative Progress of Students' Writing Skill after Using Facebook Group as Informal Learning Media

The research conducted over two weeks toward the eleventh-grade students of a vocational school. Six participants were involved with this research. The researcher divided the six participants into three categories. The first was low achiever was represented by two students, the second was medium achiever represented by two students and high achiever which was also represented by two students. Participants were selected using purposeful sampling consisted of three boys and three girls, but in this study the gender was not taken into account. First of all, the teacher asks students to post status on Facebook Group. This post was divided into in three stages. The first stage, students were asked to send a post on Facebook Group. There was no specificity in this post. This first post was part of prewriting stage and planning. This was done because some types of student were difficult to develop words to a form of paragraph or suddenly lose ideas when asked to write a paragraph. This was supported to Belmont & Sharkey (2011), which states that there are four main stages in the writing process. The process includes prewriting, planning, writing, revising and editing.

In the second stage, students were asked to post a paragraph that was still associated with the first post. This stage was the stage of writing, revising and editing. Students were allowed to rewrite their first status and comments from their friends then they summarized in paragraph form. In the second phase of writing, the other participants were allowed to give comment or shared sources concerning with what has

been posted about. This stage was intended as a stage of editing. The last one was the final stage. In this stage, students were asked to repost their first post in the paragraph form which has been corrected in the second stage. Whereas the researcher, in this study she was only a non-participant observer.

Afterwards, because the informal learning tool in this study used social media Facebook, the researcher also chose online observation and online interview by used Facebook Group as technique of data collection. This was supported by Theobald and Neundorfer (2010, p.135) as cited in Bíró, Botzenhardt, and Ferdinand (2014) , who states that the fields of online observation are online chats, newsgroups, online communities, blogs, wikis, video and photo sharing website. It was also agreed by Esomaar (2011, p.3-4) which states that social media data are referred to the information (photos, comments, etc.) that user generate or share while engaging in or with social media.

To analyze the indicative progress of students' writing, the researcher used cutting and pasting strategy. The researcher took screen-capture of students' writing before and after the informal learning by using Facebook Group (cutting), then put them side by side (pasting) to make the writing easier to be analyzed and compared on what element students have writing skill enhancement. This cutting and pasting strategy supported by Patton (2011, p. 25) who stated that cutting and pasting is the point where you take data extracts out of their original context and put them together with other examples of data on the same topic to start looking for patterns across the data.

To keep the validation of data, the researcher also used interview to confirm to the students directly about their writing progress. The researcher used member checking strategy to involved feeding findings of the analysis back to the participants and assessing how far they consider them to reflect the issues from their perspective. This strategy adapted from Patton (2011, p. 24-26). Besides, the researcher also validated her analysis by using triangulation strategy. The researcher triangulated the interview data with the observation data.

1.   The Indicative Progress of Students' Writing Skill Based on Online Observation

The online observation data of this study were referred to status that students wrote and post on the Facebook Group time line. The researcher used students' post as source of online observation supported by Esomaar (2011, p.3-4) which states that social media data refer to the information (photos, comments, etc.) that user generates or

shares while engaging in or with social media. The result of this observation found that there were two aspects of students' writing that have significant enhancement after the informal learning by using Facebook Group. It was grammar and vocabulary. Vocabulary and grammar are aspects of language knowledge that can influence the writing skill. As Boonpattanaporn (2007, p.77) stated, writing is influenced by several competencies such as linguistics, discourse knowledge, and knowledge of language including grammar, structure, and vocabulary.

1.1. The Indicative Progress of Students' Writing Skill in Vocabulary

Vocabulary is one of the important aspects of writing. As Milton (2010, p. 58) states that to produce a text successfully, students need to have sufficient word knowledge. It means that without the knowledge of word, the writing can't be produced successfully. In this study, the researcher analyzed the students' indicative progress of writing skills, which one of the aspects analyzed was vocabulary. The researcher analyzed the vocabulary knowledge in writing that students wrote on Facebook Group. As the result, the researcher found two aspects of vocabulary that have an enhancement. The first is enhancement in word knowledge and the second is enhancement in word choice.

a. Students' Indicative Progress in Word Knowledge

The authors compared two of student writings among before and the end of informal learning. The result of the comparison showed that before the informal learning, student writes a word that is quite taboo on the student posts on the Facebook Group and nothing to do with what she means, only because of the low of her word knowledge. Surprisingly after the informal learning, she finally is able to change it with the right words. Therefore, the researcher considered that this informal learning by using Facebook Group has improved the students' vocabulary ability. The comparison of student writings between before and after the informal learning can be seen in figure 1 and figure 2 below.

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(Figure 1. Writing Before Informal Learning)

(Figure 2. Writing After Informal Learning)

As it can be seen in figure 1 above, there is a taboo word on the status posted by the student medium achiever. The word is pointed with a red circle. Though the word has nothing to do with the sentence she wrote so that her status becomes difficult to understand, but in figure 2, it can be seen that the student can finally replace the word with the right one so that the writing can be understood. This medium achiever received a new vocabulary that she got from comments on her post. She had received lessons informally and gained knowledge of a new vocabulary and used the new vocabulary. The process of receptive vocabulary can be seen in Figure 3 below.

(Figure 3. Receptive Vocabulary Process)

In figure 3 we can see that a high achiever commented on a post written by the medium achiever. The high achiever student explained that the "beach" was written "beach" instead of "bitch". In addition, there is also a comment from their teacher who explains that the word is an inappropriate phrase to pronounce. Receptive vocabulary itself, according to Tschirner (2004), refers to word's students get from listening

or reading, whereas productive vocabulary is words that students use when they speak or write (Wesche & Paribkht, 2006). The example above clearly shows that the use of Facebook Group is quite successful in improving students' vocabulary skills especially in word knowledge.

The Facebook Group in this study served students to produce vocabulary (while they were writing) the posts on Facebook Group and at the same time also receive vocabulary (while they were read comments) of corrections from other Facebook Group members and leads students mastering vocabulary in informal way. This study shows that Facebook Group as informal learning successfully supported a progress of students in mastering vocabulary especially in word knowledge.

b. Students' Indicative Progress in Word Choice

Knowing the words is not enough to produce a good writing. As Curpins (2008, p. 355) states that there is a crucial component in using words in the writing process. It is 'word choice'. To know a word, we can be easily open up the vocabulary and easily search the word we want to know its meaning. But sometimes, the large of words we found make confuse of choosing the best word to convey our meaning. In this study,

the research found that there was an enhancement of students' word choice after they use Facebook Group as informal learning medium. The researcher compared students' writing among before and after the informal learning to analyze the enhancement. See the figure 4 and 5 below.

(Figure 4. Student's Writing Before Informal Learning)

(Figure 5. Student's Writing After Informal Learning)

In figure 4 it appears there are two words circled red. Both words are less appropriate words to be used as a representation of what the student wants to convey. This medium achiever student talks about a picture depicting a rooster, a hen, and an egg containing a sulking chick which saying it doesn't want to hatch before being given an iphone. See in the attachment in the end of this paper. But ultimately the student succeeded in choosing the right word after being told by other student on the comment. Figure 6 below shows the comment from other student who helps this medium achiever student in choosing the appropriate words.

(Figure 6. Students' Comments)

In the figure 6, a high achiever student giving an explanation that baby of chicken is "chick", "photo" used for pictures taken with the camera, and suggested to use "picture". Such comment has indirectly become a transfer of knowledge. Knowing the exact word used for of some words that have a similar meaning (word choice) is important in producing a good writing. In the figure 6, a high achiever student gave an explanation that baby of chicken is "chick", "photo" used for pictures taken with the camera, and suggested to use "picture". Such comment has indirectly become a transfer of knowledge. Knowing the exact word used for of some words that have a similar meaning (word choice) is important in produce a good writing as stated by Ferreira (2008, p. 2), the more words the students know the more precise student can express the exact meaning he/she wants to. After analyzing the students' writings above, the writer

concluded that the use of Facebook Group proved to be able to enhance students' writing skills, especially in vocabulary word choice.

1.2 The Indicative Progress of Students' Writing Skill in

Grammar

Language consists of words, but knowledge of word is not enough to produce a good writing if we don't master how to construct them. Whereas, according to Kroger (2005, p.4) grammar is deal with the structure of language. In other words, grammar is an important part in constructing words into a good writing. This study analysis the students' writing which they posted on Facebook Group and the result of the analysis shows that there were enhancements of students' grammar prosperity in using possessive noun, possessive pronoun, and also and too form. The improvement of students' grammar skills is explained in detail in points below.

a. Progress in Using Possessive Noun Form

After analyzing the indicative progress of students' posts on Facebook Group, the researcher also found that there was an enhancement of students' grammar competence in using possessive noun structure on their writing. The researcher chose two of low achiever students' writing before and after the informal learning by using Facebook Group to be compared in aims to make the progress of students' grammar easier to be analyzed.
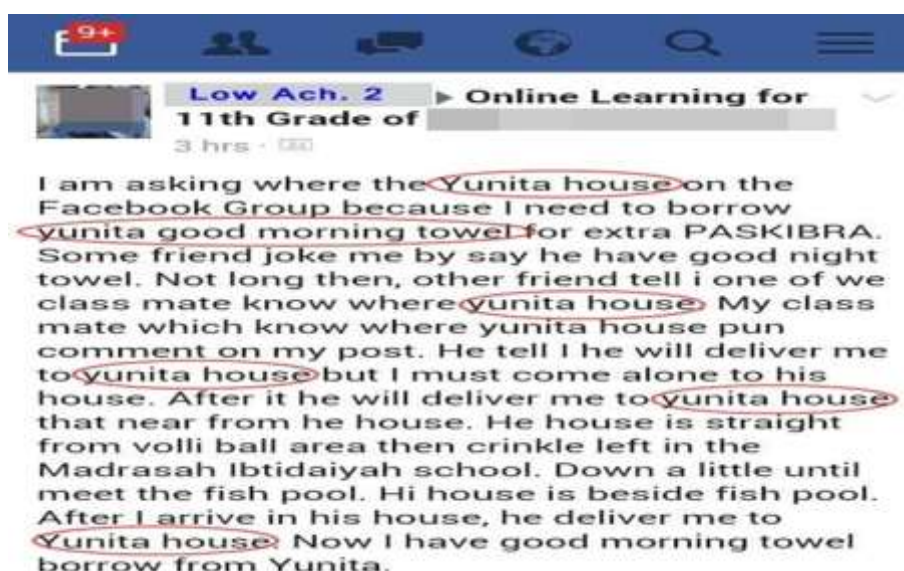
(Figure 7. Writing Before Informal Learning)

(Figure 8. Writing After Informal Learning)

Figure 7 is the screen capture of a low achiever student's writing on Facebook Group before the informal learning by using Facebook Group. Figure 7 showed that low achiever student doesn't have the ability of using possessive noun form. For example, in the circled words of the figure 7 the low achiever student many times wrote "Yunita house" while what she means was a house that belongs to Yunita. Whereas according to Jespersen (2010), "to show possession of a noun add ('s) to the singular form of the word."

Figure 8 is the screen capture of the low achiever student's writing after the informal learning by using Facebook Group. Note the circled words in the figure 7 that showed the incorrect possessive noun form. Before the informal learning, the low achiever student wrote wrong form of possessive noun as "Yunita house" and "Yunita good morning towel", and after the informal learning evidently the low achiever student could fix the error of the possessive noun form in her writing became "Yunita's house" and "Yunita's good morning towel".

After comparing both of the posts, we could see that informal learning by using Facebook Group could help students to enhance their grammar competence especially in possessive noun form. This is in line with Grosseck, Bran, & Tiru (2011) who states

that Facebook is not just at a social level, because it can be used for many different purposes connected to education. However, we may wonder how the low achiever student could conceive the way to write the possessive noun form correctly. The low achiever student got a comment from high achiever that contains an explanation about how to write possessive noun that helps the low achiever realized the mistake and rewrite it correctly.

Based on the comparison among before and after the informal learning by using Facebook Group above, we can conclude that the Facebook Group especially comment on the Group is successful in mediate the communication between one student and another which in turns could help the students in enhancing their grammar. Ekoc (2012) states that Facebook Group is one of the electronically-mediated communication spaces. Besides, Facebook Group is also successful to be used as an Informal learning media because beside the mind purpose of Facebook Group to socialize, but Facebook Group also evidently could enhance student grammar capability. This is accordance with Halliway & Beddie (2009) which stated that informal learning is learning resulting from daily work-related, family or leisure activities.

a.   The Indicative Progress of Grammar in Possessive Pronoun Form

Beside the indicative progress of students' writing skill in possessive noun, the researcher also found the students' enhancement in using possessive pronoun. According to Jespersen (2010) possessive pronoun are pronouns that show ownership. In other words, shows that something belongs to someone else. This study shows the enhancement of a medium achiever students' capability in using possessive pronoun before the informal learning by using Facebook Group and after the informal learning by using Facebook Group. The comparison can be seen in figure 9 and 10. In figure 9, the researcher found the incorrect possessive pronoun structure, whereas in figure 10, the student has changed them into the correct form. See figure 9 and figure 10 below.

(Figure 9. Student's Writing Before Informal Learning)
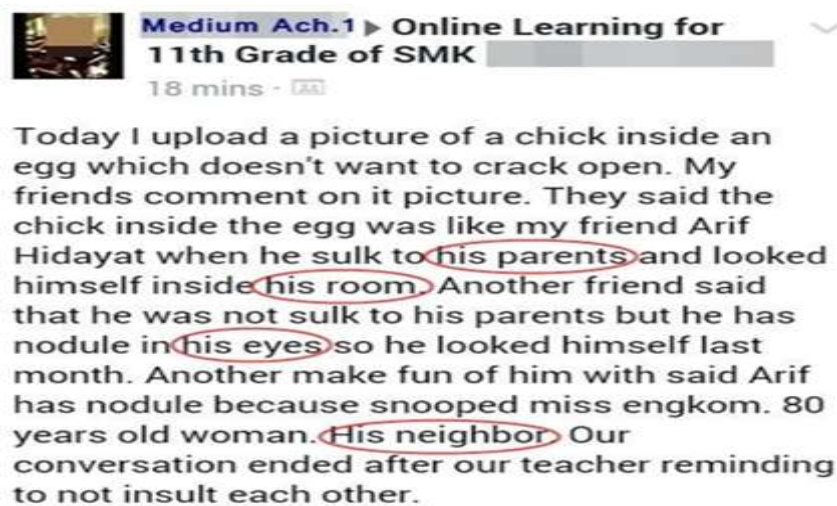
(Figure 10. Student's Writing After Informal Learning)

Figure 9 is a status posted by a medium achiever student before the informal learning by using Facebook Group. There were words marked with red circle. In the red circle were written: he mother, he room, he eyes, and he neighbor. If we read the sentence carefully, we will understand that what the student really meant was a possessive pronoun. As a sample, in line eight it was written: he is have nodule in he eyes. We can see that the "he" who have nodule, refers to someone in line four. We can conclude that "he eyes" in the sentence was eyes of he, the possessive pronoun that

should be written as "his eyes".

Now, let's take a look at figure 10. After the informal learning by using Facebook Group, the medium achiever student reposted his post with the better grammar form, especially in possessive pronoun. The possessive pronoun form in the red circle that previously written: he mother, he room, he eyes, and he neighbor became the correct possessive pronoun form as "his mother, his room, his eyes, and his neighbor. How the medium achiever masters this possessive pronoun form? Once again, that is from comments.

The medium achiever student finally could understand about how to write the possessive pronoun correctly. This shows that the comment on Facebook Group is not only to communicate but also can be used as a place to share knowledge. The comment successfully became the space of knowledge exchange that has proven was could enhance student's capability in writing possessive pronoun form. This is a kind of informal learning because it happened outside the formal education system (Richardson, 2004).

b. The Indicative Progress of Grammar in 'Also and Too' Form

Furthermore, the other indicative progress of grammar found was progress in using 'also' and 'too' form. According to Jespersen (2010) 'also' is used in positive sentences to add an agreeing thought while the 'too' has the same meaning as 'also,' but its placement within the sentence is different. Too usually comes at the end of a clause. To analysis the indicative progress of student's grammar of too and also form, let's a

look at figure 12 and.
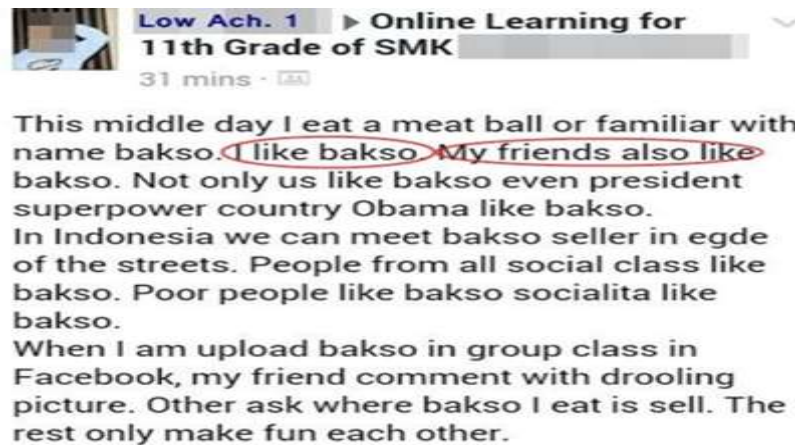

Figure 11. Writing before informal learning

Figure 12. Writing after informal learning

Figure 11 is the low achiever student posted before the informal learning. Take a look at the sentence "My friends too like bakso." The low achiever student was used 'too' but it was put not in the end of the clause, whether the rule of using 'too' is used to put in the end of the clause. It shows that the low achiever student didn't understand about how to use also and too before the informal learning. Whereas after the informal learning as shown in the figure 12, the student reposted with the correct form.

After analyzed the low achiever student's post on Facebook group, the researcher found that before the informal learning the low achiever student didn't master how to use also and too form. Only after getting the comment from other student toward his status about how to use the also form, then low achiever student could use the 'too' and 'also' correctly. In addition, the low achiever student has informally learnt from his friend about how to use 'too' and 'also' then finally mastered it. Finally, the researcher concluded that Facebook Group has enhanced the low achiever student capability in grammar particularly in using 'also and too form'.

2.   The Indicative Progress of Students' Writing Skill Based on Facebook Message Interview

After observing and analyzing the indicative progress of students' writing skill toward their writing on Facebook Group posts, the researcher also analyzed students' indicative progress of their writing through interview to get clearer and wider information. The interview used by the researcher was Facebook Message interview in type of open-ended online interview. It was conducted to all of the participants. As

result, the researcher found that there were two indicative progresses of writing that are recognized by almost all students. Two advances recognized by almost all students in the interview were an increase in students' writing ability in grammar and vocabulary especially for medium achiever students and low achiever students. To give the wider information, the interview data were also triangulated with the observation result. The results of the triangulation between interviews and observations both show that there is an increase in students' writing skills in vocabulary and grammar. Unfortunately, this writing ability improvement only occurs on medium achiever students and low achiever students only. This happens because high achievers often give corrections to low achievers and medium achievers while high achievers do not get corrections from low achievers and medium achievers.

The Students' Perspective on the Use of Facebook Group as Informal Learning Tool

Interview was conducted to know students' perspectives of the use of Facebook Group as informal learning media. This was used to measure whether Facebook Group that used to facilitate internet-based language learning was well accepted by students and fulfill the benefits of Internet-based Language Learning (IBLL) or not. The interviews were conducted on all students from all categories, namely category of low achiever students, category of medium achiever students, and category of high achiever students. The results of the interview show three main perspectives: the first is students perceive that post the status on Facebook in English language is something cool. The second students perceived that by using Facebook Group as informal learning they can easily share knowledge and being motivated to learn and the third students like Facebook as informal learning media because there is no time limit in learning on Facebook Group.

CONCLUSIONS

This research is aimed to know the indicative progress of students writing skill and to get the students' perception toward the use of Facebook Group as informal learning media. The result shows the indication of students' progress in writing skill especially for low and medium achiever students. Meanwhile, the process of analyzing the data to measure the improvement of students' writing ability was by observing the student's status in Facebook Group then analyzed by comparing the students' status before and after the informal learning.

In addition, students' writing skills that have been analyzed through their status in the Facebook Group are also confirmed directly against each student by interview. The result of this interview was the same as the observation result. The results show that both low achiever students and medium achiever students recognize their writing skills improved after online learning using the Facebook Group, while high achiever students believe that there is no significant progress in their writing skills.

From the results of the observation, researcher found that what makes the result between low achiever students and medium achiever students different with high achiever students is due to high achiever students tend guide the low achiever students and medium achievers students, so both of low achiever students and medium achiever students' writing ability increased. Meanwhile, high achiever students themselves do not get guidance from other students. This is what causes the writing skills of high achiever students did not increase.

Furthermore, the researchers also conducted an interview to find out the perceptions of students regarding the use of Facebook Group as a medium of online informal learning. Students admitted that they liked the use of Facebook Group as an online informal learning medium. This interview result shows that all of the students liked Facebook Group as learning medium not only the low achiever students and medium achiever students, but also high achiever students liked Facebook Group.

Based on what the researchers have pointed out above, the researchers concluded that the fact this study shows the Facebook Group is quite successful in improving students' writing skills and the use of Facebook Group as a medium of informal learning is also favored by the students. However, the weakness of this research is that high achiever students do not get guidance in writing so that their writing skills do not improve properly contrary with the medium and low achiever students.

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