



How to Make Use of Facebook to Write Descriptive Texts?

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This study involved the junior high school students and focused on the use of Facebook through process-genre based approach to help the students solve problems related to idea development and organization in writing descriptive texts. This study used collaborative classroom action research consisting of two cycles. The findings show that the use of Facebook equipped with the descriptive scaffold through process-genre based approach could improve their skills in writing descriptive texts. The publishing on wall application also improved the student' motivation. The scores of the students' writing products in terms of content, organization, vocabulary, grammar and mechanics improved significantly from preliminary study to Cycle 1 and from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2. It is recommended that Facebook can be used to teach other kinds of text types and on different grades and levels of education.

Keywords: writing, Facebook, descriptive, classroom action research

INTRODUCTION

Among all the four language skills, writing is considered as the difficult skill to master [Widiati and Cahyono \(2006\)](#). That is because the writer ha to master a lot of aspects of writing (spelling, capitalization, word-choice, grammar), and the ability to connect the sentences to become a unified thought in a written discourse. This issue is confirmed by some previous studies related to the teaching of writing done by [Marliasari \(2006\)](#), [Dewi \(2009\)](#), [Dewi \(2008\)](#) and [Irmawati \(2010\)](#). The research findings show that the problems in writing activities deal with content, organization, and language use. This is supported by [Richards \(1990\)](#) who states that the complexity of writing lies not only on the linguistic organization of written discourse but also on the process of moving from concepts, thoughts and ideas to written texts. Nevertheless, writing plays an important role in human life since it enables the writers to communicate with others especially those who are not present. The importance of writing leads to the idea of the importance of the teaching of writing as well. In Indonesia, where English is established as a Foreign Language, writing is placed as an essential part together with the other three language skills as stated in the Competence-Based Curriculum and the School-Based Curriculum (*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan/KTSP*).

Regarding the teaching of English as a Foreign Language in the curriculum, the standard of content in the *KTSP* curriculum has been stated in the school curriculum of SMP 19 Malang as well. However, it is sad enough to know the fact that the proportion of the students' activities, primarily in Grade 8 Class C, to write various text types as one of their productive skill is considered low. In relation to descriptive texts, the students have never experienced the writing process during the writing activities.

OPEN ACCESS

ISSN 2503 3492 (online)

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Received: 22nd March 2019

Accepted: 5th April 2019

Published: 21st April 2019

Citation:

Irmawati DK (2019) How to Make Use of Facebook to Write Descriptive Texts?.

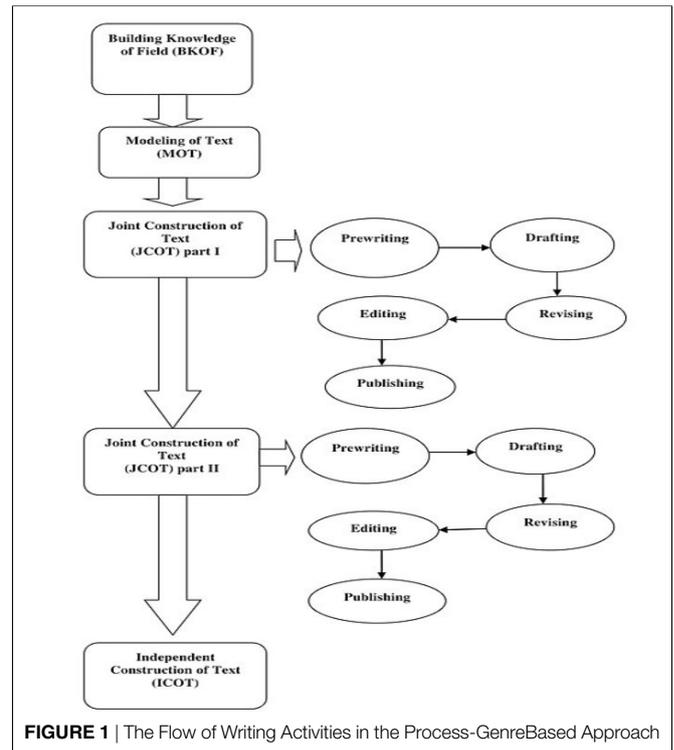
J. Eng. Educ. Society. 4:1.

doi: 10.21070/jees.v4i1.2013

Therefore, it is not surprising to find the fact that out of 34 students, there were 25 students (73.5%) who disliked writing. In addition, more than 70% of the students considered writing difficult, and they did not feel confident with their writing. Moreover, they mostly got difficulties primarily related to the content, organization, grammar and vocabulary.

It is confirmed with the result of the students' writing products in the preliminary study: there was only 1 student out of 34 students who could get the score above 70 as the minimum passing score (*KKM: Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal*). The other 33 students got the score lower than 70. Moreover, the students' mean score was only 53.75. Thus, Facebook is chosen as the interesting media to solve the problems because it has the so-called Profile Picture and Profile Information which can help the students generate and organize ideas. Meanwhile, Wall Application will make them more motivated to publish their final writing.

In this study, the use of Facebook was then implemented through process-genre based approach. The implementation of the process-genre approach requires teachers to guide learners to recognize the purpose and other aspects of the social context of the kind of text they are going to produce through the model text in BKOF (Building Knowledge of Field) and MOT (Modeling of Text) stage, such as the field (the topic), tenor (how it might attract a certain group of people), and mode (the ways in which topic is presented). Then the students will go through the writing process in producing a piece of composition collaboratively in JCOT (Joint Construction of Text). In this study, the students would two JCOT stages namely JCOT part I and JCOT part 2 with two different topics. Having practiced the writing process collaboratively, the students then independently would produce a piece of composition in the ICOT stage (Independent Construction of Text) stage. The flow of the writing activities in process-genre based approach can be seen in [Figure 1](#).



METHODS

The research design implemented in this study was Collaborative Classroom Action Research (CAR). It focused on 34 students of Grade 8C in SMP 19 Malang in the 2011/2012 academic year. In this study, the research was done collaboratively with the classroom English teacher. The researcher and the classroom teacher designed the lesson plans and set the criteria of success. The teacher acted as the observer during the teaching and learning process.

The research has begun with a preliminary study as the problem. Then, the research was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of two meetings and covered planning an action, implementing the action, observing the action, and reflecting on the observation. The instruments used to collect the data were interview guides, questionnaires, observation checklists, field notes, and the students' final writing which was assessed by two raters based on the scoring rubric adapted from [Hartfield et al. \(1985\)](#).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study cover the students' participation, writing products, and responses towards the use of Facebook in improving their writing ability.

TABLE 1 | The Students' Involvement in Cycle 1- Meeting 1

Stage	Indicators	Scale		Interpretation
		Obtained	Maximum	
BKOF	1. 1.	3	3	Good
	2. 2.	3	4	Good
MOT		4	4	Very Good
	1. 3.	3	4	Good
	2. 4.	4	4	Very good
	3. 5.	3	4	Good
	4. 6.	2	4	Fair
	5. 7. 6. 8.	4	4	Very Good
Total Scale		26	32	

TABLE 2 | The Students' Involvement in Cycle 1- Meeting 2

Stage	Indicators	Scale		Interpretation
		Obtained	Maximum	
JCOT		4	4	Very good
Part I	1. 1.	4	4	Very good
	2. 2.	4	4	Very good
	3. 3.	4	4	Very good
	4. 4.	3	4	Good
	5. 5.			
Total Scale		19	20	

Cycle 1

The students' participation in each meeting in Cycle 1 is presented as follows.

Students' Participation

The observer scored the students' involvement ranging from *very poor* to *very good* categories. If 30-34 students do the activities, the scale is 4, which is considered in the *very good* category. If many of the students do the activities (16-29), the scale is 3, which is considered in the *good* category. Meanwhile, if some of the students do the activities (8-15), the scale is 2, which is considered in the *fair* category. Next, if only few of the students do the activities (1-7), the scale is 1, which is considered in the *poor* category. Lastly, if there is no student does the activity (0 student), the scale is 0, which is considered in the *very poor* category. **Table 1** shows the description of the scale obtained in terms of measuring the students' involvement in Meeting 1.

Then the second meeting was carried out on August 6th, 2011. In this meeting, the observation focused on JCOT (Joint Construction of Text) part I activity in which the students were working in pairs. There were 5 main activities completed by the students. **Table 2** shows the description of the scale obtained in

terms of measuring the students' involvement in Meeting 2.

Next, the third meeting was conducted on August 12th, 2011. In this meeting, the observation focused on JCOT (Joint Construction of Text) part II activity. The main activities were the same as what were done in JCOT Part I, yet what made it different from JCOT Part I was the person being described. There were 5 main activities done in this meeting. See **Table 3** to know the students' involvement in Meeting 3.

Lastly, on August 19th 2011, the fourth meeting was carried out. In this meeting, the observation focused only on ICOT (Independent Construction of the Text) activity. There were 5 main activities in this meeting. **Table 4** shows the students' involvement in Meeting 4.

To sum up, the students' involvement in each meeting were 82.1 %, 95%, 100%, and 80% respectively. On the average, the students' participation in Cycle 1 was 89,3 % and it has not achieved the criteria of success yet.

Students' writing performance

The students' writing performance in Cycle 1 can be seen clearly in **Figure 2**.

TABLE 3 | The Students' Involvement in Cycle 1- Meeting 3

Stage	Indicators	Scale		Interpretation
		Obtained	Maximum	
JCOT Part II		4	4	Very good
	1. 1.	4	4	Very good
	2. 2.	4	4	Very good
	3. 3.	4	4	Very good
	4. 4.	4	4	Very good
	5. 5.	4	4	Very good
Total Scale		20	20	

TABLE 4 | The Students' Involvement in Cycle 1- Meeting 4

Stage	Indicators	Scale		Interpretation
		Obtained	Maximum	
ICOT		3	4	Good
	1. 1.	3	4	Good
	2. 2.	3	4	Good
	3. 3.	3	4	Good
	4. 4.	4	4	Very good
	5. 5.	4	4	Very good
Total Scale		16	20	

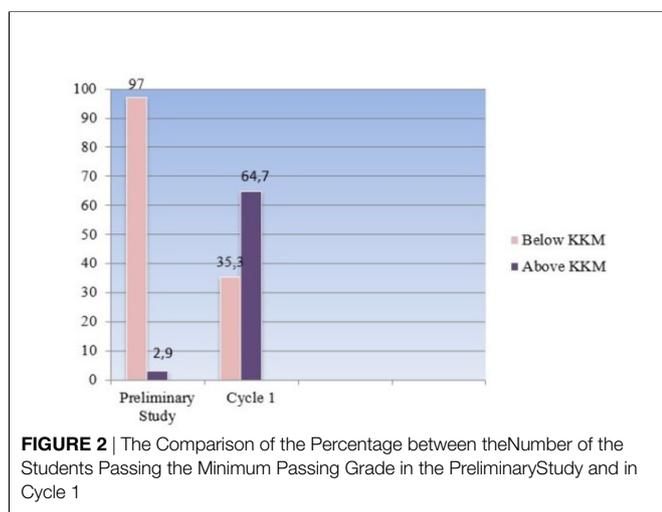
**FIGURE 2** | The Comparison of the Percentage between the Number of the Students Passing the Minimum Passing Grade in the Preliminary Study and in Cycle 1

Figure 2 shows that the criterion of success dealing with the students' writing products could not be achieved yet. It was because only 64.7% of the students got the score above 70. Therefore, Cycle 2 is needed to be done in order to help more students to be able to get the score above 70 which then results in the criteria of success achievement.

Students' responses towards the implemented strategy

Overall, all students have positive responses towards the implementation of the strategy in terms of the partiality and the

influence on their increased motivation. Thus, the criterion of success related to the students' responses towards the implementation of the strategy has already been achieved in Cycle 1.

Cycle 2

Students' Participation

Table 5 shows the description of the scale obtained in terms of measuring the students' involvement in Meeting 1.

Then the second meeting was conducted on October 15th, 2011. In this meeting, there were 5 main activities. **Table 6** shows the description of the scale obtained in terms of measuring the students' involvement in Meeting 2.

Next, **Table 7** shows the description of the scale obtained in terms of measuring the students' involvement in Meeting 3.

Then the last meeting was carried out on October 29th 2011. The observation focused on Independent Construction of Text (ICOT) activities. There were five main activities in this meeting. **Table 8** shows the description of the scale obtained in terms of measuring the students' involvement in Meeting 4.

Overall, all students (100%) had been involved in the teaching and learning process in Cycle 2. Thus, the first criterion of success related to the students' involvement has been successfully achieved.

TABLE 5 | The Students' Involvement in Cycle 2- Meeting 1

Stage	Indicators	Scale Obtained	Maximum	Interpretation
BKOF	1. 1.	4	4	Very good
	1. 2.	4	4	Very Good
MOT	how to describe through the use of model picture of Olga, a famous Indonesian comedian and presenter.			
	1. 3.	4	4	Very Good
	2. 4.	4	4	Very Good
	3. 5.	4	4	Very good
	4. 6.	4	4	Very Good
	5. 7.	4	4	Very Good
	6. 8.	4	4	Very Good
7. 9.				
Total Scale		36	36	

TABLE 6 | The Students' Involvement in Cycle 2- Meeting 2

Stage	Indicators	Scale Obtained	Maximum	Interpretation
JCOT		4	4	Very Good
	1. 1.	4	4	Very Good
	2. 2.	4	4	Very Good
	3. 3.	4	4	Very Good
	4. 4.	4	4	Good
5. 5.				
Total Scale		20	20	

TABLE 7 | The Students' Involvement in Cycle 2- Meeting 3

Stage	Indicators	Scale Obtained	Maximum	Interpretation
Semi-ICOT		4	4	Very Good
	1. 1.	4	4	Very Good
	2. 2.	4	4	Very Good
	3. 3.	4	4	Very Good
	4. 4.	4	4	Good
5. 5.				
Total Scale		20	20	

TABLE 8 | The Students' Involvement in Cycle 2-Meeting 4

Stage	Indicators	Scale		Interpretation
		Obtained	Maximum	
ICOT		4	4	Very Good
	1. 1.	4	4	Very Good
	2. 2.	4	4	Very Good
	3. 3.	4	4	Very Good
	4. 4.	4	4	Very Good
	5. 5.	4	4	Very Good
Total Scale		20	20	

Students' Writing Performance

Overall, the number of the students obtaining the score at least 70 as the minimum passing grade in Cycle 2 increased significantly. It increased from 1 student (2.9%) in the preliminary study to 22 students (64.7%) in Cycle 1 and to 34 students (100%) in Cycle 2 (see Figure 3).

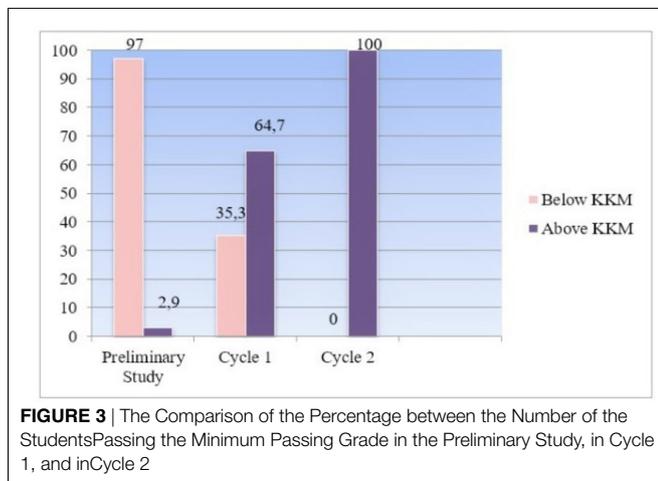


FIGURE 3 | The Comparison of the Percentage between the Number of the Students Passing the Minimum Passing Grade in the Preliminary Study, in Cycle 1, and in Cycle 2

In a nutshell, the use of Facebook features through the process of writing to help the students write a better descriptive text has achieved the second criterion of success, particularly the one related to the students' writing products. As what has been stated in the second criterion of success, all of the students were able to achieve at least 70 as the minimum passing grade. Therefore, there is no need for the researcher to go to the next cycle.

Students' responses towards the implemented strategy

Similar to the previous cycle, all students (100%) have given positive responses towards the implemented strategy in terms of the practicality of the use of Facebook and the influence of Facebook on their motivation.

To sum up, all the criteria of success have been achieved in Cycle 2: all students (100%) got involved during the teaching

and learning process, obtained the score above 70 as the minimum passing grade, and had positive responses towards the implemented strategy. Therefore, the researcher and the collaborative teacher decided to stop the action.

According to the findings above, the students' improvement on their participation in the class activities was gained through the use of Facebook as the interesting media. This is in line with [Sahdan \(2010\)](#) who says that Facebook can make the teaching and learning processes more interesting. This is also supported by [Nurliana \(2010\)](#) who also states that the fame of Facebook made the students more active in participating the learning activities. The students were very motivated to use Facebook features and to publish their final writing in the Wall Application of the class' Facebook account as well as to give comments to other students' writing because all of them have had their own Facebook account. What happened during the teaching and learning process dealing with the use of Facebook is in line with [Brown \(2007\)](#) who states that a pleasant teaching style or strategy in the classroom can increase students' motivation to learn. Students will then learn English preferably if the classroom is enjoyable and attractive.

Still in relation to the progress of students' attitude towards writing activities, the implementation of process-genre based approach as proposed by [Badger and White \(2000\)](#), [K \(2003\)](#), and [J \(2004\)](#) was able to make the students write more confidently because they experienced the writing process both cooperatively and independently.

Also, the implementation of Building Knowledge of Field (BKOF) and Modeling of Text (MOT) have made the students understand the concept of descriptive text and its characteristics. Then, in Joint Construction of Text (JCOT), they experienced a cooperative activity in which they could share ideas with a partner through the pair work. Therefore, they were more ready to write their descriptive text really independently at the ICOT stage.

Not only the students' attitude that has improved after the implementation of the strategy but also the students' writing performance. Overall, the students' writing progress was mainly because of the use of Facebook features, which were Profile Picture and Profile Information, as the suitable and interesting media to teach descriptive and the implementa-

tion of process-genre based approach equipped with the use of descriptive scaffold in the teaching and learning process.

The students' improvement on content was obtained through the use of Profile Picture to describe the physical appearance and Profile Information to generate ideas about the personal information. The use of descriptive scaffold containing the points to be described in the form of questions also helps the students to write sufficient ideas to their descriptive texts. The use of questions in the descriptive scaffold is in line with theories dealing with the advantages of using WH-Questions to generate ideas. For instance, the questions provide detail information that is needed by the readers [Edwards \(1986\)](#). This is reflected through the questions related to the personal information whose answers can be found in the Profile Information in the Facebook account. Moreover, the writer can use the questions to generate a lot of materials [Smalley and Ruetten \(2001\)](#). This is reflected through the questions related to both physical appearance and personal information in the descriptive scaffold whose answers can be found in the Facebook account.

Next, the students' progress on organization was gained through the use of descriptive scaffold containing the generic structure of the descriptive text, which consists of identification and description, completed with the questions related to the content. The questions were put based on the generic structure, so it would be helpful for the students to organize the ideas. Then the students' improvement on the vocabulary was achieved through the Profile Information, the model text and the vocabulary exercise. The Profile Information in someone's Facebook account provides some words which can be used to describe someone, such as particular kinds of activities and names of particular sports. Also, the model text plays an important role for the students to add their vocabulary items because it makes them become more familiar with particular words used to describe someone. Moreover, having discussed the exercises containing kinds of vocabulary items used to describe someone's physical appearance and personal information before experiencing writing a descriptive text, the students were able to choose appropriate words to write their ideas into a descriptive text more easily.

In addition, the students' progress on grammar was achieved through the use of descriptive scaffold and the tasks related to grammar exercises. In relation to the descriptive scaffold, the students' progress on grammar was gained through converting the answers of the guided questions into the complete sentences in present tense. Thus, it helped them to make correct descriptive sentences more easily. Furthermore, in relation to the students' progress in mechanics, it was gained through the exercises given in prior to the writing activities. In the exercises, the students were assigned to check a paragraph

and correct the wrong punctuation, spelling and capitalization. The model text also plays an important role in giving a model of how to use mechanics well.

Overall, the findings of this study support the theories dealing with the advantages of using internet-based materials and facilities as resources for learning to create joyful classroom activities as stated by [Widiati and Cahyono \(2006\)](#). In addition, the implementation of the use of Facebook features through process-genre based approach is also in line with the theories proposed by [Badger and White \(2000\)](#), [K \(2003\)](#), and [J \(2004\)](#) about the importance of process, purpose and context particularly in the teaching of writing to give the students more helpful guide during the writing activities. Furthermore, the success of this study supports the previous studies dealing with the use of Facebook to improve the students' writing ability conducted by [Aziz \(2010\)](#), [Cahyono \(2010\)](#), [Nurliana \(2010\)](#), [Sahdan \(2010\)](#), and [Cahyani \(2011\)](#).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it could be concluded that the implementation of the use of Facebook through process-genre based approach was able to help the students write a descriptive text. The use of Facebook features (Profile Picture and Profile Information) and the descriptive scaffold completed with the guided questions has helped the students generate and organize the idea. Then the implementation of process-genre based approach has given the students opportunities to produce composition both cooperatively and independently. In addition, the writing process has given them an experience to do planning, drafting, revising and editing their draft for the writing aspects (content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics), and publishing through the Wall Application of the class' Facebook account.

In implementing Facebook, it is suggested that the teachers be more selective in choosing the appropriate Facebook account which contain appropriate information for students. Then future researchers are recommended to use Facebook for different text types, and on different grades and levels of education. Research dealing with the use of other kinds of social media in English language teaching is still needed to do.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The gratitude is given to English teachers and students grade 8 at SMPN 19 Malang, East Java for their cooperation and willingness to be a part of this study.

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Conflict of Interest Statement: The author declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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