Facebook assisted students' peer assessment in writing descriptive text

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Abstract - The present study aims to investigate students' responses toward peer assessment of students' descriptive text writing assignments by using Facebook. The author built two research questions: (1) In what way does Facebook assist students in giving peer assessment on students' descriptive text writing? and (2) What are the students' responses toward these activities? The current study recruited seventeen students in tenth grade as the participants. Drawing on action research through interviews and observation data, qualitative findings show positive results, those are: (1) the use of students' peer assessment through Facebook had an impact on raising the students' revised drafts, (2) the students expressed an optimistic response towards using Facebook for peer assessment, and (3) the students' difficulties on peer assessment through Facebook, and (4) the students' involvement during peer assessment activities on Facebook. Furthermore, the quantitative findings of the observation checklist show that the average percentage is 88.4% (15 students of the class were actively involved in the writing activities = very good). Therefore, this present study shows the provident of the importance of peer assessment through Facebook as an assessment method to help enhance learners' English writing acquisition.

Keywords: face-book, peer assessment, descriptive text

1. Introduction

Teaching English writing is not only about teaching students how to write but also about developing their own skills and ability. English Language Teaching (ELT) in Indonesian contexts particularly teaching writing has been developed by the government of Indonesia. Genre-based approach (GBA) is one type of approach to teaching English skills, including teaching writing. The genre-based approach to the teaching of writing entails both product and process approaches (Ong, in Widodo, 2017). Hyland (2007, in Widodo, 2017) identified the main elements in genre-based pedagogy: (1) building the context; (2) modeling and deconstructing the text; (3) joint construction of the text: teachers guide learners to compose in the genre; (4) independent construction of the text; and (5) linking related texts. The independent building is the one part of the GBA in teaching writing, so that the students may compose their own texts by drafting, revising, and editing the texts (Gebhard & Harman, 2011). However, the students need some corrections and suggestions while doing the activity of revising and editing texts. In line with this, the revised and edited parts may be used as a good opportunity to conduct peer assessment for the students as a kind of writing assessment.

In this era, the teacher needs to be more creative in conducting the assessment. Nowadays teachers are familiar with using Information and Communication of Technology (ICT) for their teaching, including assessment activities. ICT is a new way of learning that the government has created. Related to this issue, Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is introduced. Miangah and Nezarat (2012) have come up with the concept that students using MALL do not often get to study a foreign language in a classroom that offers students a more comfortable atmosphere to learn English. In addition, mobile devices come with thousands of user-friendly applications that also have significant potential to be incorporated into language learning. One type of application that is now used extensively in the teaching EFL setting is the Social Networking Service (SNS), which has the primary function of communicating with others (Fithriani, 2019).

There are a lot of SNSs such as Instagram, Line, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, etc. As an online platform that has become a very popular one, Facebook is the most used social media site in this world with 2.32 billion monthly active users (Influencer Marketing Hub, last updated in December 2019). Including Indonesian which is listed as one of the top ten countries with the highest number of Facebook users. Furthermore, this is a good chance to incorporate Facebook as an online pedagogical tool to teach EFL in the Indonesian context.

However, there are still a lot of Indonesian EFL teachers who do not use Facebook in their teaching practices, especially in an EFL writing classroom. Whereas the potential of conducting Facebook as a tool in the virtual classroom platform is great, especially in giving peer assessment in EFL writing.

This research is expected to give new experience to the students in giving peer assessment on their writing descriptive text by using Facebook and to give teachers new ideas in conducting an interesting writing classroom by incorporating Facebook as an online pedagogical tool or in other words as a virtual classroom platform. Therefore, in conducting this research, the author formulates two research questions

as follows (1) In what way does Facebook assist students in giving peer assessment on students' descriptive text writing?; (2) What are the students' responses toward these activities?

There are some previous studies related to the use of Facebook as a tool in learning writing in an EFL classroom: A study investigates the perceptions and attitudes of Jordanian EFL students utilizing Facebook groups in teaching writing (Bani-Hani et al., 2018); exploring whether Facebook would be an effective learning tool for EFL student taking a writing class (Fithriani, 2019); a study showcases the brief portrait of Facebook-assisted PA in an English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom (Ramdani & Widodo, 2019); conducting Facebook comments in the Facebook group as the media to teach writing skill and as a result indicates the students are involved in reacting to the comments made on the Facebook group by their peers (Ramadhani, 2018).

Nevertheless, research investigating how Facebook as a tool is used in EFL writing classes in Indonesian secondary school has not extensively been explored Thus, to fill this gap, the author aims to apply Facebook as a tool in the online platform that the students used to give peer assessment on their own writing descriptive text. Furthermore, the author looks for the students' responses to it. The author hoped that the findings of this study might give benefits to the teaching and learning process, especially in English-writing countries.

2. Method

The qualitative approach with the design of action research is applied to conduct this present study. This study was conducted at a classroom consist of tenth-grade students at one of the vocational high school in West Java, Indonesia, due to two considerations: (1) the participants and the teacher did not have any experience yet in conducting Facebook as a virtual classroom platform to build peer assessment through Facebook comment and (2) the site of this study was near from the campus of the author. This study was conducted for ten days from the 15th of April until the 24th of April 2020. Seventeen accounting-students as participants voluntarily participated in this study due to the focus of this study was the students. Before the study commenced, the author told the students that this study was for the author's research. Then they agreed to participate in this study. In this study, the teacher explained the descriptive text so that the students have already known about descriptive text. The explanation about descriptive text has delivered briefly. It included social function, generic structure, and language features of descriptive text. Because of that reason, the teacher might give a descriptive text writing assignment directly to the students.

In conducting this research, the author conducted an interview for collecting the data. The author interviewed the students by asking them about their response to incorporating Facebook in giving peer assessment on their descriptive text writing. To get more accurate data, the author also did the observation by looking at the students' involvement during peer assessment activities on Facebook. To conduct this research, the author built some of the data instruments as follows: (1) Interview questions. There were 7 open-ended questions adapted from Katsoulas (2012); (2) The observation checklist adapted from Tompkins (1995).

The collected data in the interview form were analyzed by conducting a thematic content analysis. This data analysis technique is introduced firstly by Braun and Clarke (2006), they provided a six-phase framework to conduct the thematic content analysis. Those are: (1) become familiar with the data, (2) generate initial codes, (3) search for themes, (4) review themes, (5) define themes, (6) write-up. In order to do those phases of analysis, the author followed Bree and Gallagher's (2016) way by using Microsoft Excel.

Furthermore, the observation data were quantitatively evaluated depend on the amount of the scale tested by the author in the observation check-list. The percentage of the students doing the practices was obtained from the average of total students doing the activities divided by the entire class student number, after that multiplied by one hundred. The findings of the analysis would be interpreted next both quantitatively and qualitatively by analysing the number of percentages obtained. In addition, the results of the study were used to decide whether or not the predefined success criteria were achieved.

3. Results and Discussion

There are some general pattern findings that represent this study. These general pattern findings include (1) the use of students' peer assessment through facebook had an impact on raising the students' revised drafts, (2) the students expressed an optimistic response towards using facebook for peer assessment, and (3) the students' difficulties on peer assessment through facebook, and (4) the students' involvement during peer assessment activities on facebook. Do such themes constitute two essential research questions namely (1) In what way does facebook assist students in giving peer assessment on students' descriptive text writing? and (2) What are the students' responses toward these activities?

3.1 The detailed data of the use of students' peer assessment through Facebook had an impact on raising the students' revised drafts

The observation data showed that some students got an improvement in their revised descriptive text writing (the final draft) (Figure 1). By looking at their friends' comments and suggestions, the students revised their writing and built it better than the first draft.

Based on Figure 1, Masripah got two comments from her peers. They were Sephia and Sahrul. They gave a score and suggestions for Masripah's descriptive text writing. Masripah got them as her evaluation so that she could produce better writing on the final draft of her descriptive text writing. Moreover, it can be traced from the interview that the students mentioned some reasons for using peer assessment through Facebook. The students thought that they can improve their writing by suggestions from peers, such as what things they need to be added. The students also learn to accept suggestions. When their peers praised their writing, it can make themselves confident comes up and they feel motivated to learn more.
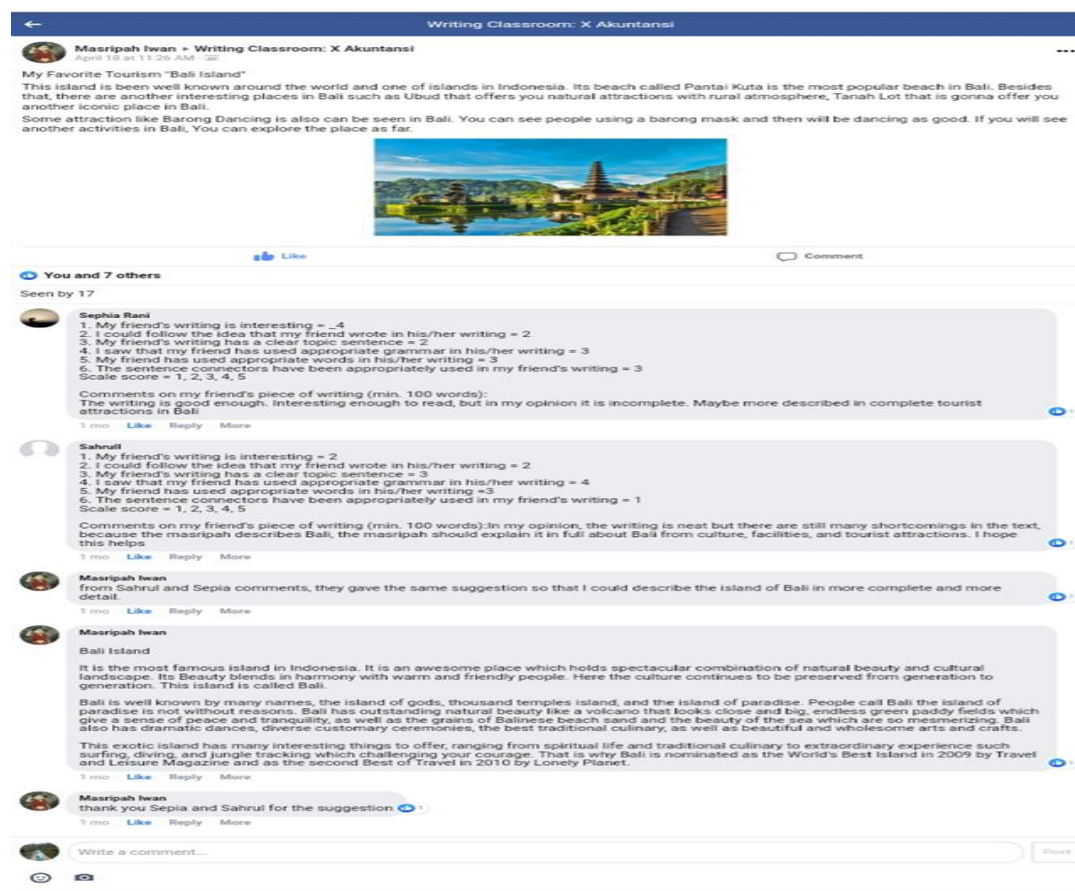
Figure 1 The students' work, 23 April 2020 (MI)

By incorporating this peer assessment, the students may know their own more or less of their text, learn from others' peer comments and be more thorough. They also can give and get scores from peers of their writing. This also allowed students to share and learn with each other how the correct way to write, give positive things and it showed friends' solidarity. The detailed interview data is presented below.

> The peer-assessment through Facebook made me prepare my work better because on Facebook we get feedback from friends who see and can provide criticism and suggestions for our writing; it can be a motivation for learning in the future, and we can share and learn the correct way to write. (SAS, FS, FR, Interview, 24 April 2020). The peer-assessment through Facebook allowed me to detect my own mistakes and learn from them because if we have a lack of text that we make, then friends will tell you what is missing from the text; we can correct erroneous writing and can learn from those mistakes, and we can fix the mistakes by looking at our friends' comments (NM, SR'ah, NKN, Interview, 24 April 2020).

> The peer feedback through Facebook sessions helped me so far in this descriptive text writing by the feedback from my friends who have helped me to find the error in the descriptive text, this is to help my friend with the same thing that helps them justify the errors contained in the text of them; and I thanked my friend because I can know where the layout when I wrote in the description of the text (GAS, DC, Interview, 24 April 2020).
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> The elements of receiving peer assessment through Facebook that I found most useful are the self-confidence, observance in seeing writing, and understanding in writing; I got advice and ratings from my friends, so I could correct the deficiencies in my writing, and Facebook is beneficial for me because it is able to make me learn from other people's comments towards me and with Facebook adding to my solidarity with my friends (DR, MI, DN, Interview, 24 April 2020).
>
> The aspects I consider positive about this peer-assessment through Facebook experience are the aspect of accepting suggestions; my friends praised my writing and they gave directions so that my writing is better than before; I can communicate via the internet precisely Facebook and see good responses from peers (DR, MW, SR, Interview, 24 April 2020).

3.2 The detail data of the students expressed an optimistic response towards using *Facebook* for peer assessment

It can be traced from the interview that the students showed an optimistic response to peer assessment through Facebook. Some students felt comfortable, happy, fun, calm, and more aware of how to use Facebook properly. They also thought that is not boring. Some of the students even thanked their friends for giving them corrections and suggestions. However, other students felt afraid of being wrong, nervously writing the text, and even rarely confused about how to do with the assignment. The detailed interview data is presented below:

> I had prior experience in school doing any type of reflection and I felt comfortable when learning; I think it is fun, and it makes us do not feel bored (DR, RW, NKN, Interview, 24 April 2020).
>
> What I initially feel about the peer feedback through Facebook exercise are I was afraid of being wrong, nervously writing the text; for me, it was difficult and confused at first; I am happy because I have never practiced through Facebook before and can be motivated when we are incomplete in filling in the descriptive text; at the beginning, I thought it was rather difficult but it turned out that after being followed it turned out to be very easy; and I have become more aware of how to use Facebook properly. (SNR, RW, MP, NS, DN, Interview, 24 April 2020).
>
> Moreover, the students have some expectations or hope from their writing learning by conducting peer assessment through Facebook. Mostly, the students hope that they can improve their descriptive text writing and also getting a very good score in writing. Some students said that they hope their friends can be clearer in giving comment and their friends can understand their writing. Once interested is, the student wants to get sharing just like this later. The detailed interview data is presented below:

> My expectations of the peer assessment through Facebook exercise are that those who read my writing understand what I mean in the writing; in the future, I can write well and correctly; and my grades can be better and get improve (SN, SAS, SR'ah, Interview, 24 April 2020).
> I hope my friends can be clearer in giving criticism and use the right language (DR, Interview, 24 April 2020).

3.3 The detail data of the students' difficulties on peer assessment through Facebook

It can be traced from the interview that the students showed an optimistic response to peer assessment through Facebook. Some students felt comfortable, happy, fun, calm, and more aware of how to use Facebook properly. They also thought that is not boring. Some of the students even thanked their friends for giving them corrections and suggestions. However, other students felt afraid of being wrong, nervously to write the text and even rare confused how to do with the assignment. The detailed interview data is presented below:

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> I hope my friends can be clearer in giving criticism and use the right language (DR, Interview, 24 April 2020).

3.3 The detail data of the students' difficulties on peer assessment through *Facebook*

It can be traced from the interview that the students found some difficulties in conducting peer assessment through Facebook. Those are the students who must prepare for internet quota data and sometimes the internet connection was poor. The students thought it was difficult to understand friends' comments and friends' writing. And also, the students feel difficult to arrange words to conduct text or giving

comments since they feel difficult to found friends' mistakes. However, there are not any frustrating elements of receiving peer assessment through Facebook.The difficulties or obstacles that I found with the peer-assessment through Facebook process is that sometimes the language my friend uses when assessment is difficult to translate, and when it has been translated there are words that I find difficult to understand (MW, Interview, 24 April 2020).

> I found two difficulties, those are 1. difficulty if the text that they create is already positioned in the text to complete and might be enough for the placement of the words; 2. in the comment on *Facebook* post that I also have to think which should be fixed and there may be some words that should be defined first (GAS, Interview, 24 April 2020).
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> The difficulties are it was barriers to cell-phone networks and stringing words; and I must prepare internet quota data and I must have a *Facebook* account (SR, MI, Interview, 24 April 2020).
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> There are not any elements of receiving peer assessment through *Facebook* that I found most frustrating. Maybe it isn't difficult for me, because we just assigned to the commented flaws in the posting text that's all, so it is not that complicated (GAS, Interview, 24 April 2020).

3.4 The detail data of the students' involvement during peer assessment activities on *Facebook*

Based on the result of analysis on the data gained from the observation checklist as shown in Table 1, the findings show that the students' involvement in the writing class during peer assessment activities on the Facebook group was categorized as very good. It was found that the average percentage of the students doing the activities was 88.4% (15 students of the class were actively involved in the writing activities). So, the result of this research met the criterion of success. It was completely stated that the criterion was well reached if the students' involvement during the implementation of the technique in the writing activities was very good (85%-100% students of the class of 15-17 students involved in the activity of teaching and learning). There were 17 students who participated in this study, and the analysis of the observation data showed there are 15 students as the average who participated actively in this study, which means the average could be categorized as very good, and because of the evidence this study reached the success criterion.

Table 1 Data result of students' involvement during PA activities on *Facebook*

Online Activity	Indicators of Students' Activities	Scale 1	2	3	4	Total Students	Percentage
Getting started	1. Pay attention to the teacher's instruction.				✓	17	100%
	2. Join in *Facebook* group of the writing class in www.facebook.com, named Writing Classroom: X Akuntansi.				✓	17	100%
				Mean 1		17	100%
Reviewing about descriptive text	3. Pay attention to the teacher's explanation about descriptive text.				✓	16	94.1%
	4. Active and contributive in every question and answer session.	✓				3	17.6%

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	5. Look at and analyze the models of descriptive text posted by the teacher.	✓	14	82.4%
	6. Participating in quizzes session given by the teacher.	✓	14	82.4%
	Mean 2		11.75	69.1%
	7. Respond to the instruction posted by teacher.		✓ 15	88.2%
Outlining	8. Choose a picture suitable with the topic given by the teacher (*My Favorite Tourism Place*).		✓ 17	100%
	9. Make outline of descriptive text on the picture related to the topic.		✓ 17	100%
	Mean 3		16.33	96.1%
	10. Respond to the instruction posted by teacher.		✓ 15	88.2%
	11. Write first draft of descriptive text based on the outline, as the caption of the picture that will be posted.		✓ 17	100%
Drafting	12. Write first draft of descriptive text following the generic structure of descriptive text (identification and description).		✓ 17	100%
	13. Post the picture with the caption (their own descriptive text) on *Facebook* group.		✓ 17	100%
	14. Finish on the deadline given by the teacher. (20 April 2020)		✓ 17	100%
	Mean 4		16.6	97.6%
	15. Respond to the instruction posted by teacher.		✓ 16	94.1%
	16. Get involved in group activities and follow the rules.		✓ 17	100%
	17. Give comments / responses / suggestions on peer's draft by following the instructions.		✓ 17	100%
	18. Give score based on the statements in the rubric given by the teacher.		✓ 17	100%
Revising through peer feedback (comment on draft)	19. Check the generic structure of descriptive text (identification and description).	✓	7	41.2%
	20. Comment on the grammar used of the text (it must be simple present tense).	✓	10	58.8%
	21. Comment on the identification part that should cover topic that will be described.		✓ 14	82.4%
	22. Comment on the description part that should be explained in detail and match with the topic.		✓ 15	88.2%
	23. Finish on the deadline given by the teacher. (22 April 2020)		✓ 17	100%
	Mean 5		14.44	84.96%
	24. Respond to the instruction posted by teacher.		✓ 16	94.1%
Editing	25. Revise and edit the first draft based on the good or useful feedback / comment / response/suggestion from peer reviewers.		✓ 12	70.6%
	26. Make changes to reflect the comments/response/suggestion from		✓ 12	70.6%

peer reviewers.			
27. Write the final writing product (the result of revising activities) by publishing it on the comment column of their posting before.	✓	15	88.2%
28. Finish on the deadline given by the teacher. (24 April 2020)	✓	15	88.2%
Mean 6		14	82.4%
Mean (1+2+3+4+5+6)		15.02	88.4%

Adapted from Tompkins & Hoskisson (1995)

Notes:
Number of students: 17
Scale and qualifications:

1 (poor): 0% up to 50% of the students do the activities (0-8 students)   ✎ fail

2 (fair): 51% up to 69% of the students do the activities (9-11 students)   ✎ fail

3 (good): 70% up to 84% of the students do the activities (12-14 students) ✎ fail

4 (very good): 85% up to 100% of the students do the activities (15-17 students)
    ✎ succeed

✎ The criterion of success is met if at least 85% -100% students do the activities or categorized as *very good* (15-17 students).

However, there are some activities that produced a low result, such as 'reviewing about descriptive text' activity which only met 69.1% with almost 12 students participated. It happened since the students did not very active in every question and answer session (17.6%). Even though, 14 students looked at and analyzed the model of descriptive text given by the teacher (82.4%). The low result can be caused by the students' internet connection which was not that good.

In 'revising through peer feedback (comment on draft) activity, all students gave score based on the statements in the rubric, adapted from Ferdiansyah (2020), given by the teacher and they gave comments as peer assessment to their friends according to the students' mapping. However, every student gave different comments and suggestions. There are only 7 students who checked the generic structure of a descriptive text (41.2%) and only 10 students who commented on the grammar used of the text (58.8%). Mostly, the students gave some corrections about the content of the text, 14 students commented on the identification part (82.4%) and 15 students commented on the description part (88.2%).

Moreover, some students did not refer their activities in writing the final product to the comments/suggestions posted by their peers (70.6%). It happened since there are some students who made the descriptive text quite appropriate so that they did not get serious comments and suggestions that made them have to revise their descriptive text. However, there are 2 students who did not post their final writing, perhaps they did not have adequate time since the time was quite limited.

In addition, this research which was conducting peer assessment activities on Facebook could be categorized as a success. It was according to the students' involvement in doing the activities was 88.4% (15 students of the class were actively

involved in the writing activities). Since it was stated that if the students' involvement was categorized as very good (85%-100% students of the class or 15-17 students did the activity) so that the criterion of success was reached. One interesting thing is that the student wants to get sharing just like this later. The detailed interview data is presented below.

> My expectations of the peer assessment through Facebook exercise are that those who read my writing understand what I mean in the writing; in the future, I can write well and correctly; and my grades can be better and get improve (SN, SAS, SR'ah, Interview, 24 April 2020).

> I hope my friends can be clearer in giving criticism and use the right language (DR, Interview, 24 April 2020).

The detail data of the students' difficulties in peer assessment through Facebook. It can be traced from the interview that the students found some difficulties in conducting peer assessment through Facebook. Those are the students who must prepare for internet quota data and sometimes the internet connection was poor. The students thought it was difficult to understand friends' comments and friends' writing. And also, the students feel difficult to arrange words to conduct text or giving comments since they feel difficult to found friends' mistakes. However, there are not any frustrating elements of receiving peer assessment through Facebook.

> The difficulties or obstacles that I found with the peer-assessment through the Facebook process is that sometimes the language my friend uses when the assessment is difficult to translate, and when it has been translated there are words that I find difficult to understand (MW, Interview, 24 April 2020).

> I found two difficulties, those are 1. difficulty if the text that they create is already positioned in the text to complete and might be enough for the placement of the words; 2. in the comment on a Facebook post that I also have to think which should be fixed and there may be some words that should be defined first (GAS, Interview, 24 April 2020).

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> There are not any elements of receiving peer assessment through Facebook that I found most frustrating. Maybe it isn't difficult for me, because we just assigned to the commented flaws in the posting text that's all, so it is not that complicated (GAS, Interview, 24 April 2020).

4. Conclusion

The researcher may conclude that this present study indicates some results that answer the research questions of this study. Those are (1) the use of students' peer assessment through Facebook had an impact on raising the students' revised drafts; (2) the students expressed an optimistic response towards using Facebook for peer assessment; (3) the students' difficulties in conducting peer assessment through Facebook; and (4) the students' involvement during peer assessment activities on the Facebook group, this present study found that almost all of the students of the class were actively involved in the writing activities. In addition, this present study could be categorized as a success

due to the criterion of success was reached if the students' involvement during the implementation of the technique in the writing activities was stated and categorized as very good.

Drawing on these findings, the present study offers three practical implications for the teaching of genre-based writing with peer assessment. Firstly, the teacher might consider the online virtual classroom platform that suitable for the teachers and the students, so that they could be comfortable learning, for example, one is Facebook. And also, the most important thing is the teacher makes sure everyone has a good signal for internet access. Secondly, the teacher needs to prepare the learning schedule and the peer assessment instructions as clear as possible, so that the students could understand the instructions clearly and do the peer assessment based on the instructions well. Finally, The English teachers are recommended to employ the appropriate instructional procedures of incorporating Facebook group in giving students' peer assessment for any genre of the texts. However, the instructional procedures need to agree with the students' characteristics and conditions. But that is not impossible for teachers to incorporate this technique for his or her students.

Moreover, the students have some expectations or hope from their writing learning by conducting peer assessment through Facebook. Mostly, the students hope that they can improve their descriptive text writing and also getting a very good score in writing. Some students said that they hope their friends can be clearer in giving comment and their friends can understand their writing.

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