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## Using Facebook Messenger to Support Organization and Mechanics within Descriptive Essay Writing at Undergraduate Level: A Mixed Method Study

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effectiveness of Messenger-based text chatting in enhancing students' organization and mechanics within descriptive essay writing. A mixed-methods approach was utilized to explore Messenger's potential as a supplementary tool to traditional pedagogical practices. Sixty students were recruited through convenience sampling for participation. The experimental group (N=30) was engaged in an online text-based chatting via Messenger, while the control group (N=30) received only conventional lecture-based instruction. The findings of this mixed-methods study indicated that participants in the intervention group demonstrated better performance in descriptive essay writing compared to their counterparts. Additionally, the treatment group exhibited a positive attitude towards using Messenger, and text chatting facilitated online interaction that supported the acquisition of descriptive essay writing skills. These pedagogical implications underscore the potential of Messenger-based text chatting environments as valuable platforms for fostering active, collaborative learning in writing.

## 1. Introduction

The widespread availability of mobile phones in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms has led to the rise of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) (Şad, Özer, Yakar, & Öztürk, 2020). While MALL is an extension of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), both are encompassed by the broader term Information Communication Technology (ICT), which refers to all technologies facilitating information exchange, especially in educational settings.

Currently, mobile technology is experiencing unprecedented growth and pervasiveness (Chavoshi & Hamidi, 2019). Technological advancements over recent years have significantly impacted various sectors, including

education, medicine, society, and the economy (Jeno, Vandvik, Eliassen, & Grytnes, 2019). Consequently, mobile devices have become indispensable for a vast number of individuals globally (Pérez-Paredes, Ordoñana Guillamón, & Aguado Jiménez, 2018). With ongoing technological progress and the decreasing cost of mobile devices, an increasing number of students now have access to smartphones and other portable devices (De Jong, Grundmeyer, & Anderson, 2018). Notably, 21st-century youth dedicate a considerable amount of time to using mobile phones (Troussas, Krouska, & Sgouropoulou, 2020).

Given the pervasive influence of technology, educators and academics are increasingly leveraging technological advancements to enhance teaching and learning of language (Crompton & Burke, 2018). This includes the use of various tools such as mobile devices, web-based tools, mobile applications, and personal computers, with mobile devices now surpassing computers in their prevalence (Troussas et al., 2020). Consequently, students are encountering novel methods of acquiring knowledge, characterized as "learning across multiple contexts, through social and content interaction, using personal electronic devices" (Jeno et al., 2019). The past two decades have witnessed remarkable progress in the mobility of communication technology, which has significantly heightened academic interest in harnessing these technologies for language learning (Wigglesworth & Harvor, 2018). Furthermore, the rapid proliferation of handheld mobile technologies has provided learners with greater flexibility in terms of learning location and time (Loewen et al., 2019).

In response to the rapid advancements in mobile technology (Hoi, 2019) and the remarkable technological surge of the 21st century, the proliferation of social media has been notable. The widespread adoption of social media platforms has prompted academics to investigate their utility as tools for teaching and learning (Awidi et al., 2019). These platforms possess the capacity to foster and sustain meaningful interactions, potentially optimizing academic performance (Datu et al., 2018). While the spectrum of social media is extensive, the current study specifically focuses on Facebook Messenger. Facebook itself has gained considerable popularity among college students, both for social and academic purposes. It serves as a crucial medium for young individuals to establish social presence and broaden their social connections (Feng et al., 2019). Although some researchers (Sarapin & Morris, 2015) express reservations regarding Facebook's use in educational contexts, its pedagogical value has been increasingly explored due to its "authentic audience, technical flexibilities, and interactive features" (Barrot, 2020).

In the Pakistani educational system, students extensively utilize Android phones, with virtually every student engaging with some form of social media for either socialization or academic purposes (Khalid, 2017b). Consistent with these shifts, students, however, require scaffolding and guidance to effectively leverage these tools for academic ends (Waqas et al., 2016; Butt & Qaisar, 2017; Zulfikar et al., 2018). More recently, the significance of social media and other technological tools for teaching has escalated considerably following the disruptive changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic across the social, health, and economic landscapes globally, including Pakistan, which experienced substantial impacts on its educational systems. Consequently, the present study focuses on Pakistani students to investigate the effects of Facebook Messenger-based text chats on their descriptive essay writing, particularly concerning organization and mechanics. This research endeavors to address the following research questions.

**RQ1:** Does a statistically significant difference exist in the pre-test and post-test mean scores for descriptive essay writing between undergraduate students in the experimental group (utilizing Facebook Messenger) and those in the control group, specifically regarding organization and mechanics?

**RQ2:** How do participants in the experimental group perceive Facebook Messenger's effectiveness as a supportive tool for fostering interaction and enhancing descriptive essay writing skills, particularly in terms of

organization and mechanics?

**RQ3:** In what ways do the interaction patterns fostered through chat contribute to the improvement of students' descriptive essay writing, with a specific focus on organization and mechanics?

## 2. Review of Related Literature

Facebook's extensive potential for developing and enhancing English language skills has positioned it as a highly popular and crucial supplementary tool to traditional face-to-face teaching methods (Alberth, 2019). In line with this, Simpson (2017) investigated Facebook's influence on students enrolled in English for Business in Thailand. The study's pre-test and post-test findings revealed a positive correlation between Facebook use and improvements in English writing proficiency. Notably, participants across all proficiency levels—low, medium, and high—demonstrated enhanced writing results following their interaction on the Facebook platform.

Al-Tamimi et al. (2018) conducted a study examining the impact of Facebook on enhancing writing skills and vocabulary acquisition among university senior students. For this purpose, they involved thirty students, dividing them into an experimental group and a control group, each comprising 15 students. The experimental group received instruction in writing skills facilitated by Facebook, while the control group learned writing skills through traditional teaching methods. The findings revealed a positive impact of Facebook on the experimental group regarding both vocabulary enrichment and writing development. The study concluded by recommending that educators consider integrating Facebook to teach writing skills and vocabulary.

In another relevant study, Altunkaya and Topuzkanamis (2018) explored Facebook's influence on writing achievement, attitude, anxiety, and self-efficacy. They utilized a pre-test, post-test quasi-experimental design, involving both an experimental and a control group. Students in the experimental group received written assignments via Facebook, whereas those in the control group were assigned traditional written homework. The study's findings indicated that Facebook exerted a positive impact on participants regarding writing achievement and attitude when compared to the control group. However, it did not demonstrate a positive effect on self-efficacy or writing anxiety.

Altunkaya and Topuzkanamis (2018) conducted a study to investigate the effectiveness of Facebook on university students' writing achievement, writing efficacy, writing attitude, and writing anxiety. The findings from this pre-test post-test quasi-experimental research demonstrated that, unlike conventional methods, incorporating Facebook into teaching practices markedly improved students' performance in terms of writing achievement and writing attitude. However, despite this positive impact, Facebook did not exert any significant influence on writing anxiety and writing self-efficacy.

Altakhaineh and Al-Jallad (2018) conducted a study to explore the comparative impact of Facebook and Twitter on students' mechanics of writing in English. The findings from this pre-test and post-test experimental research design indicated that, while the Facebook group produced fewer errors in the post-test, there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups regarding writing errors. Further insights into the comparative influence of Facebook and Twitter on writing mechanics were provided through a focus group semi-structured discussion conducted during the post-test phase.

Similarly, Alberth (2019) reported on the impact of integrating Facebook into a traditional writing class to assess four key variables: intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, writing performance, and immediate direct corrective feedback. The findings from the pre-test and post-test results indicated a significant improvement in students'

intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and writing performance. The study also revealed that students favored direct feedback. It was concluded that Facebook, when integrated into conventional teaching practices, can effectively enhance students' academic performance. Furthermore, it boosts their intrinsic motivation to study writing and their writing self-efficacy, both of which are crucial for success in foreign language learning.

Similarly, Sakkir and Dollah (2019) investigated the impact of Facebook on Indonesian students' performance in English writing ability. Twenty students from a private university were selected via purposive sampling and engaged in the treatment. The findings from this quantitative pre-experimental research paradigm demonstrated that students' writing performance improved significantly, as evidenced by a notable difference between pre-test and post-test scores. These results align with Simpson's (2017) findings, with the exception of the specific differences observed within the groups concerning writing performance.

Despite Facebook's primary function as an informal socialization platform, Alam and Mizan (2019) investigated its impact on teaching a writing course to first-semester university students within a formal educational setting. To achieve this, they selected three distinct classes of the same academic level and established three corresponding Facebook groups. These groups utilized Facebook to engage with an English language course specifically designed to enhance various writing skills, including movie reviews, book reviews, paragraph writing, and both formal and informal writing. Data gathered through questionnaires and interviews indicated that Facebook proved beneficial in supporting writing skill development, although students did encounter certain challenges. The study concluded with recommendations for implementing Facebook as an instructional tool.

More recently, Syafrizal et al. (2020) highlighted the significance of Facebook as an effective tool for teaching writing skills to senior high school students. To investigate this, they employed a quasi-experimental design, dividing the sample into a treatment group (using Facebook) and a control group. Data were collected through interviews, tests, and observations. The results indicated that both Facebook and classroom collaborative activities positively impacted the students' writing skills. While the researchers drew some insights from this study regarding Facebook's educational potential, a definitive conclusion consistent with other studies, such as those by Barrot (2020) and Al Qunayeer (2020), was not found. Nevertheless, the findings of this study are supported by other parallel research.

Barrot (2020) investigated the effectiveness of Facebook as an e-portfolio to foster the writing skills of ESL learners. The findings from this quasi-experimental research paradigm supported previous reports on Facebook's efficacy in enhancing writing abilities. Specifically, the results demonstrated that two classes in the treatment group (exposed to a Facebook-based e-portfolio) outperformed two classes in the control cohort (exposed to traditional portfolios) in terms of coherence and cohesion, lexical resource, mechanics, and accuracy. Furthermore, the qualitative results indicated that the interactive features of the Facebook e-portfolio also increased students' interest and motivation to produce better writing.

More recently, Tarihoran et al. (2022), employing a descriptive correlational research design, aimed to determine the effectiveness of Facebook as a mediating tool to support writing performance. The study's findings indicated that students perceived Facebook as a useful tool for supporting their writing performance. These results were particularly favorable during crises like COVID-19, as the study demonstrated a positive correlation between students' CALL attitude and their utilization of Facebook.

Despite the documented positive impact of Facebook on writing performance, researchers have also highlighted its negative implications for students' writing achievement. For instance, a study by Wissam (2021) found that messaging via Facebook had a detrimental impact on students' academic writing. Similarly, Bouamrani (2019)

reported that frequent Facebook chatting negatively affected university students' academic writing.

While an exhaustive review of studies concerning Facebook and other social media applications' effectiveness in teaching writing lies beyond the immediate scope of this study, it is important to acknowledge the substantial body of research that highlights Facebook's utility in supporting writing skills within educational contexts. These studies generally align with the reported benefits of integrating social media into writing instruction, with most indicating positive, supportive, and encouraging outcomes. This consistently reaffirms the potential of social media to enhance writing proficiency.

However, a critical gap exists in the literature: no studies have specifically investigated the use of Facebook Messenger to support descriptive essay writing skills and associated online interaction. Furthermore, there is a distinct lack of research on descriptive essay writing within public sector graduate colleges in southern Punjab, Pakistan. To address this identified research void, the current study adopts a mixed-methods research design. Its primary objective is to examine the impact of employing Facebook Messenger (as opposed to the broader Facebook platform) on undergraduates' descriptive essay writing performance and the nature of their online interactions that may contribute to these writing skills.

### 3. Material and Method

#### 3.1. *Participants and setting*

Participants in this study were 60 fourth-semester undergraduate students from a public sector Graduate College in Southern Punjab, Pakistan. These students, aged between 19 and 21 years, were enrolled in Mathematics and Computer Science classes. Using convenience sampling, two intact classes were selected, with students then assigned to either a control group (N=30) or a treatment group (N=30) for the intervention. Participants in the treatment group had a minimum of three years' experience with Facebook Messenger and represented diverse L1 backgrounds, including Punjabi, Saraiki, and Urdu. All participants had studied English as a compulsory subject for at least 12 years. To ensure consistency and minimize pedagogical variations, the same teacher instructed both the control and intervention groups.

#### 3.2. *Pretest and post-test descriptive essays*

To establish a baseline of participants' pre-existing writing skills, a paper-and-pencil pre-test was administered to both groups. The essay topics were consistent with the institutional syllabus, and topic questions, guided by Dabbagh and Janebi Enayat (2019), were adapted and piloted. Students were allotted forty minutes to compose a descriptive essay on one of the provided topics. Their essays were evaluated using analytical rubrics originally developed by Jacobs (1981) and subsequently revised by Polio (2013), encompassing five components: content, organization, vocabulary, language, and mechanics. A word limit of 250 to 300 words was imposed, consistent with their actual examinations. During the test, students were prohibited from collaborating or discussing with peers or teachers, and no reference materials, such as dictionaries or mobile devices, were permitted.

To measure the impact of Facebook Messenger on participants' descriptive essay writing, a paper-and-pencil post-test was subsequently administered to all students. To ensure comparability between the pre-test and post-test, both assessments were conducted under identical writing conditions, including the same text type (descriptive essay), setting (classroom), essay length (250-300 words), and test duration (40 minutes).



### **3.3. Written chats on Messenger**

During the treatment phase, participants in the experimental group generated written chats in response to the assigned topic and every question posed by both the teacher and their peers. A key advantage of utilizing this chat environment was its capacity to scaffold students in terms of organization and mechanics whenever necessary. Crucially, these chat interactions actively fostered online interaction among the participants.

### **3.4. Interview Protocol for Research Question Two**

To address Research Question Two (RQ2), a semi-structured interview was conducted after the treatment phase. This aimed to integrate students' qualitative perspectives with the quantitative findings, as suggested by Brown and Coombe (2015). Twelve participants from the intervention group were interviewed individually following the treatment, selected to represent the main characteristics of the overall participant pool (Creswell, 2014; Morgana, 2018). Interviews were scheduled at the participants' convenience and took place in a classroom on campus after the completion of the intervention.

### **3.5. Intervention Procedure and Content Delivery**

All students consented to participate in a one-hour lesson via Messenger for twenty-four working days. The teacher, leveraging open educational materials and practices (Borthwick & Gallagher-Brett, 2014), initiated daily conversations by posting a topic on the platform at 4:00 PM. This group had been previously established by inviting students from the experimental class. Both students and the teacher actively participated by posting and responding to the topic using their smartphones. On the first day, the teacher initiated an online discussion with the students through questions. This facilitated a conversation among peers regarding language-related assistance, with partners or the teacher serving as resources. This session lasted one hour.

The following day, within the same virtual space, the teacher provided supplementary materials, personalized instructional videos, and online content in PDF and Doc formats, along with helpful links, to assist students in enhancing their descriptive essay writing skills. Concurrently, the instructor monitored student engagement to ascertain their reception of the presented information and observe whether they also shared beneficial links and resources. This session also spanned one hour. On the third day, the instructor further provided links to relevant vocabulary and various sample descriptive essays. On this third day of the intervention, students composed a descriptive essay in English using paper and pencil, based on the topic discussed on the Messenger platform. They then submitted their work to the teacher for feedback.

Throughout the treatment period, the control group received additional handouts from the teacher, such as sample essays. However, the primary differentiation between the treatment and control classes was the Messenger chat activity. The control group received instruction on descriptive essay writing through traditional lecture-based methods in the classroom.

### **3.6. Research Design and Data Analysis**

The study employed a quasi-experimental mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2012). For the quantitative component, participants' pre-test and post-test scores were compared to assess the development of their descriptive essay writing skills, specifically focusing on organization and mechanics within the experimental group. A single-factor ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of social media (Facebook Messenger) in the experimental group with the control group on undergraduates' descriptive essay writing skills. Furthermore,

a two-factor MANOVA was utilized to determine if the changes in students' scores across the two environments showed a meaningful difference in terms of organization and mechanics. For the qualitative data, Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis method was applied to analyze both interview data and text chats.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Results of Research Question 1

To address the first research question, Table 1 presents the statistical results, including Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD), for both pre- and post-treatment scores. A two-factor ANOVA was conducted to examine the impact of social media (Messenger) on undergraduates' descriptive essay writing skills in comparison to the control group.

Prior to the intervention, students in the Messenger intervention group had a mean score of  $M=8.93$  ( $SD=1.911$ ). Following the treatment, their mean score increased to  $M=12.83$  ( $SD=1.599$ ). Conversely, the mean scores for students in the control group were  $M=8.97$  ( $SD=2.076$ ) before receiving standard treatment, and this value slightly decreased to  $M=8.73$  ( $SD=2.083$ ) after the treatment. The subsequent sections detail the findings from the two-factor ANOVA, which was performed to ascertain whether the observed variations in test scores across the two different settings indicated a statistically significant difference.

**Table 1**

**Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of Control and Treatment Group**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Scores before treatment	Messenger	30	8.93	1.911	.349	8.22	9.65	5	13
	Control	30	8.97	2.076	.379	8.19	9.74	6	14
	Total	60	9.07	2.161	.228	8.61	9.52	5	14
Scores after treatment	Messenger	30	12.83	1.599	.292	12.24	13.43	9	16
	Control	30	8.73	2.083	.380	7.96	9.51	6	14
	Total	60	11.49	2.745	.289	10.91	12.06	6	17

Table 2 presents a comparison between the two groups. The results demonstrate a significant difference in scores between the Messenger group and the control group both before and after the intervention. This indicates a significant effect of both the repeated measure factors and participation in a distinct learning environment on the scores. As shown in Table 2, the statistical outcome,  $F(2, 87) = 45.223$ ,  $p < .05$ , remains productive.

**Table 1****ANOVA Results Comparison between Groups and Within Groups**

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Scores before treatment	Between Groups	2.467	2	1.233	.260	.772
	Within Groups	413.133	87	4.749		
	Total	415.600	89			
Scores after treatment	Between Groups	341.756	2	170.878	45.223	.000
	Within Groups	328.733	87	3.779		
	Total	670.489	89			

Table 3 presents the Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) for organization scores both before and after the intervention. A two-factor MANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of Messenger with the control group on undergraduates' descriptive essay writing skills, specifically concerning organization.

Before treatment, the mean scores for students in the treatment group (Messenger) were  $M=1.67$  ( $SD=.547$ ). Following the treatment, these scores increased to  $M=2.70$  ( $SD=.466$ ). In contrast, the mean scores for the control group, who received no specific treatment, were  $M=1.53$  ( $SD=.507$ ) before the intervention and slightly increased to  $M=1.60$  ( $SD=.525$ ) afterwards; however, this increase was not meaningful.

The results of the two-factor MANOVA, designed to determine if score changes in the two environments showed a meaningful difference in terms of organization, are provided in Table 3. Given the significant difference in the mean scores between the treatment and control groups, the study retained the alternative hypothesis.

**Table 3****Pre-Test and Post-Test in Terms of Organization**

	Treatment & Control	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Scores in organization before treatment				
	Messenger	1.67	0.547	30
	Control	1.53	0.507	30
	Total	1.61	0.575	60
Scores in organization after treatment				
	Messenger	2.7	0.466	30
	Control	1.6	0.525	30
	Total	2.43	0.654	60

Table 4 presents the Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) for mechanics scores both before and after the intervention. The mean scores for students in the treatment group (Messenger) were  $M=1.73$  ( $SD=.640$ ) before treatment, increasing to  $M=2.20$  ( $SD=.610$ ) after the intervention. In contrast, the control group's mean scores for mechanics were  $M=1.97$  ( $SD=.490$ ) prior to treatment, slightly rising to  $M=2.07$  ( $SD=.640$ ) afterward. However, this increase in the control group's scores was not considered meaningful when compared to the treatment group.



The results of the two-factor MANOVA, conducted to determine if score changes across the two groups indicated a meaningful difference in terms of mechanics, are detailed in Table 4. Given the significant difference in mean scores between the treatment and control groups, the study again retained the alternative hypothesis.

**Table 4**

**Pre-Test and Post-Test in Terms of Mechanics**

	Treatment & Control	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Scores in mechanics before treatment	Messenger	1.73	.640	30
	Control	1.97	.490	30
	Total	1.87	.524	60
Scores in mechanics after treatment	Messenger	2.20	.610	30
	Control	2.07	.640	30
	Total	2.18	.572	60

**4.2. Results of Research Question 2**

Students also enhanced their organizational skills through Messenger, primarily due to the teacher's implementation of a questions-in-sequence technique. This method of engaging students through structured questioning emerged as the first coding category identified by the researcher as contributing to the development of organizational skills. As one respondent from the Messenger platform articulated:

*Yes, my descriptive essay writing becomes better by discussing with my teacher on Messenger, and because he inquires questions about that topic in a sequence, which is the more organized way to describe a topic (P 24).*

The question-in-sequence technique implemented through Messenger proved instrumental in teaching students how to organize an essay. Specifically, it helped them understand what content to include at the beginning, middle, and end of an essay. A student from the Messenger platform commented:

*Yes, I find it helpful to chat in the group. Our teacher shared some pictures and according to that, he asked some questions about it. He asked what we have to describe in the beginning, then what should we describe in the middle and what should we describe in the end (P6).*

When investigated, a respondent indicated that prior to joining the Messenger group, they lacked an understanding of the proper structure for an essay's beginning, middle, and conclusion. However, this platform, through its chat-based activities, facilitated their learning of essay organization. This suggests that the question-and-answer approach proved to be an effective strategy for teaching students essay organization.

*Honestly speaking before joining Messenger group activities, I did not know what the purpose of descriptive essay is actually, how its beginning is and how to end in this essay. But, the way teacher led us through questions was good strategy to learn organization (P1).*

The provision of sample essays emerged as another significant coding category, leading the researcher to

conclude that these essays, shared via Messenger, were instrumental in students' acquisition of the organization component of essay writing. An interviewee from the Messenger group stated:

*Uh, yes sir, because my teacher shared sample essays and he used to tell us how we can describe it. And he told us a way to describe things what to describe in the introduction and what to describe in the end. Thus it helped me learn organization of essay (P13).*

Moreover, the teacher shared an image first, and then raised questions in sequence to describe that image. This was also useful strategy in teaching and learning of organization of the essay:

*Yes, I find it helpful whenever I have talked to my friends in the group. Our teacher shared some pictures and according to that, he asked some questions about it. It was best way to learn the beginning, mid and end of the essay (P20).*

The personal views of the participants consistently indicated that the Messenger intervention proved beneficial for improving the organization component of their essays. Specifically, the teacher's strategy of engaging students through questions-in-sequence was effective in teaching them essay organization. However, the available data did not provide sufficient multiple student experiences to support the claim that Messenger also significantly aided in improving mechanics.

### 4.3. Results of Research Question 3

For the third research question, data derived from chats on the Messenger platform underwent analysis. The coding system for this archival data was based on methodologies from Golonka, Tare, and Bonilla (2017) and Alghasab, Hardman, and Handley (2019). The analysis of these chat logs revealed that the Messenger platform assisted learners in enhancing their descriptive essay writing skills, particularly with regard to organization.

"Guiding the writing steps" in this study refers to the teacher's assistance in directing students through the completion of writing tasks. This teacher guidance was identified as a key coding category. For each writing assignment, the teacher posted between seven and ten questions, which participants answered to collaboratively develop their descriptive essays. This strategy was specifically implemented to support the development of organization in descriptive essays and was maintained until the essay's conclusion. Through this approach, students were instructed on how to effectively start, develop, and conclude their descriptive essay writing.

For instance, on the Messenger platform, students engaged in a question-and-answer strategy designed to guide them in organizing an essay. The teacher initiated this process by posting a question for the description of a friend. Students then continued to develop their descriptive essays by responding to the subsequent questions from chats two through seven. The teacher would then post additional questions to prompt further development of the essay, a strategy consistently applied until the essay's completion.

1. Prf. 6:46:04pm How is your friend nose lips, hair, eyes, teeth, smile, stature, gait, etc. (Guiding the writing steps)
2. 6:46:43pm My friend is quite tall and kind of athletic because he is good at sport. He has short black hair and has big eyes. His eyes are dark brown. He has a small nose and a small mouth too.
3. 6:47:55pm Harry is the tallest of all in our friends, and that what he loves about himself. With light brown curly hairs he looks like a statue but his blueish eyes affect his appearance. His nose is

*thin. His cheeks are always having dimples while he smiles. Wearing traditional outfits is his love and that suits him too. In jeans or casual suits he doesn't look so good.*

4. 6:48:11pm, *He has round nose, big black hairs on head, small but beautiful eyes, white teeth and has a lovely smile on a round face.*
5. 6:48:19pm *My friend nose is round his eyes is very beautiful with brown color his teeth is yellow in color and a little bit large also his lips is pure pink in color and looks very charming and his hair is shining and silky.*
6. 6:48:26pm *Asad is a man that has normal personality and like to wears simple dress. His face color is normally black and has a big nose. His eye's color is blue. He has small height. His manner are too good that a common person also like him.*
7. 6:50:12pm *My Friend has a small nose. His eyes like an eagle. He has small teeth that's why, he looks so beautiful when whisper. He has black hair.*

8. *Prf. OK what are hobbies of your friend, (Guiding the writing steps)*

Numerous instances of text chat demonstrate Messenger's capacity to foster a conducive environment for learning essay organization. The question-and-answer technique employed by the teacher proved particularly effective in this regard.

Furthermore, Messenger also assisted learners in improving their mechanics to some extent. "Helping with mistakes of punctuation" emerged as a coding category, leading the researcher to conclude that Messenger aided students in developing their descriptive essay writing in terms of mechanics. One respondent noted that, on Messenger, students also supported each other in improving mechanical aspects such as punctuation and spelling.

*Yes, sir they highlight my mistakes and they tell me about my grammar mistakes and mistakes of my punctuation, (P 15).*

## 5. Discussion

The current study investigated the effectiveness of Messenger chats in supporting descriptive essay writing, specifically focusing on organization and mechanics, and the role of online interaction. Three research questions guided this inquiry.

The first research question examined any potential significant difference in descriptive essay writing between the experimental and control groups. The study's findings indicated that students who utilized Messenger as an additional learning tool demonstrated superior performance in descriptive essay writing compared to those who relied solely on conventional pedagogy. This was supported by the statistically significant post-treatment scores observed between the Messenger group and the control group, as determined by the post hoc Tukey HSD test. Essentially, this suggests that the use of Messenger had a positive impact on undergraduates' descriptive writing abilities, leading to higher scores compared to the control group.

These findings align with prior studies conducted by Barrot (2021) and Simpson (2017), both of which similarly suggested that Messenger chatting can enhance students' writing performance. Furthermore, the post hoc Tukey

HSD test results from the Messenger group are consistent with Barrot's (2020) research on Facebook's efficacy in improving writing skills. Although the current study specifically focused on Messenger due to a dearth of research on its direct impact on writing, it drew parallels with Facebook studies given their similar nature. In this context, Syafrizal et al. (2020) underscored Facebook's significance as an effective tool for teaching writing skills to high school students, with their study highlighting the positive impact of both Facebook and classroom collaborative activities on students' writing skills. While the current study derived insights from these findings regarding the educational potential of social media platforms like Facebook Messenger, it distinguished itself by focusing on university students rather than high school participants.

Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of research that supports using social media platforms like Messenger for educational purposes, especially for improving writing skills among university students. Our use of Messenger as a mediating tool created a unique formal learning environment that enhanced descriptive essay writing skills. These findings align with Alam and Mizan (2019), who also found a positive link between writing skills and Facebook in a formal learning setting. Additionally, several other studies (Karat et al., 2017; Altunkaya & Topuzkanamis, 2018; Al-Tamimi et al., 2018; Alberth, 2019; Sakkir & Dollah, 2019) have highlighted Facebook's potential in supporting writing skill development.

The second research question aimed to explore learners' attitudes towards Messenger as a mediating tool for supporting the learning of descriptive essay writing, specifically concerning organization and mechanics. The thematic analysis of interview data clearly indicated that students held a positive attitude towards learning descriptive essay organization through Messenger as a mediating tool. One active participant expressed:

*Yes, I find it helpful to chat in the group. Our teacher shared some pictures and according to that, he asked some questions about it. He asked what we have to describe in the beginning, then what should we describe in the middle and what should we describe in the end (P6).*

Another participant who was inspired by teacher's use of pictures and question-answer technique, expressed his perception in the following extract that this activity fostered a healthy interactive environment among the learners:

*Yes, I find it helpful whenever I have talked to my friends in the group. Our teacher shared some pictures and according to that, he asked some questions about it. It was best way to learn the beginning, mid and end of the essay through interaction (P2).*

Referring to the views of these participants, it becomes clear that learning descriptive essay writing through Messenger not only improved their essay writing skills but also became a joyful activity. However, it is notable that while there is strong support for Messenger's impact on organizational improvement, views regarding its effectiveness for mechanics learning are limited. Only one participant expressed:

*Yes, Messenger improved my descriptive essay writing. It also improved my punctuation (P 13).*

While the intervention showed clear benefits for organizational skills, we did not find extensive student experiences to support that Messenger significantly helped improve mechanics. This inconsistency might be due to several factors. Although the teacher shared sample essays after each task and provided scaffolding for mechanics, particularly spelling, students may have overlooked these aspects. This could be attributed to their habitual use of text messaging styles, which often disregard capitalization and punctuation conventions when completing writing tasks on these platforms.

It is interesting to observe the nuanced findings concerning Messenger's impact on distinct writing components, specifically organization and mechanics. This study's results align with Ahmed (2016), who similarly reported positive contributions of social media platforms like Facebook to writing in terms of grammar, content, and organization.

Finally, the third research question aimed to explore how interaction patterns fostered during text chats proved beneficial in supporting the learning of organization and mechanics in descriptive essay writing. The qualitative analysis of text chats demonstrated that Messenger cultivated an environment of online interaction among the participants. This online interaction also proved valuable in the learning of descriptive essays, with both students and the teacher mutually scaffolding each other in terms of organization and mechanics. The teacher guided the students through chats, a strategy consistently implemented until the conclusion of each essay. Through this strategy, students were instructed on how to effectively initiate, develop, and conclude their descriptive essay writing tasks:

Teacher: *Now give your opinion about the painting. U can use such adjectives as bright, vibrant and calm. (Guiding the writing steps)*

Student 1 writes: *The painting is all about hectic routine or a still life. As we could see that two companions seems mysterious or lost in some sort of life's issues... In some extent both seems egoistic, like they do not want to share their problems with each other. That's why they are wasting their beautiful time. Beauty of nature behind the window is waiting for their attention but their pessimistic n egoistic nature depriving them from all kind of pleasures*

Student 2 writes: *This picture belongs to a still life. Where everything is freeze no one can move or stop what they are doing. This is a portrait of husband and wife. They are sitting near a window. Husband loves pet but his wife has no interest in pets. Husband has a cat as a pet he is loving her and the cat is sitting on his leg. His wife is fighting with him to expel this cat from house but the man is ignoring her because he can't do this due to intense love with his cat. This fight is never going to be end as it belongs to a still life. Whenever we'll see this picture, they both will be fighting as now we are looking in this portrait.*

Teacher: *Life like, Dreamlike, Confusing, Colorful, Romantic, lyrical and Impressive*

Teacher: *Choose any word of these adjective to describe the painting,*

Referring to mechanics, a few instances were traced where the teacher provided a formative feedback in terms of spellings such as:

Student: *She is very sensible, descent, meture and supportive.*

Teacher: *Decent and mature. (Teacher rectifies spellings)*

Referring to these text chats, it is evident that technology-enhanced classes not only instill a sense of empowerment in participants but also foster interaction, which is highly beneficial for the learning process in general and for learning writing in particular. In this regard, the results of our study are consistent with Karal et al. (2017), who investigated the impact of Facebook's educational use on high school students' proper language usage. Similarly, Haron and Adi Kasuma (2021) also support our findings, demonstrating that providing a positive community environment via WhatsApp, where peers could interact freely with both peers and teachers,



improved students' writing performance.

The current study illustrated the significance of social media assisted mobile learning environments, in line with Vygotsky's (1980) sociocultural theory. The study of social media tools, which is based on sociocultural paradigms, broadens our understanding of and provides fresh perspectives on how students collaboratively create their L2 writing skills while completing writing assignments on a Messenger platform. The several Messenger activities that the participants were engaged in during the intervention demonstrated the social constructivism milieu, which places a high value on cooperation and scaffolding.

## 6. Conclusion

Guided by Vygotskian (1980) concepts such as scaffolding, mediation, and the Zone of Proximal Development, this study examined the effectiveness of Messenger-mediated lessons in supporting the learning of descriptive essay writing, specifically focusing on organization and mechanics. Overall, the findings indicated that students who used the Messenger platform performed better than those in the control group. This highlights Messenger's potential as a valuable pedagogical tool in L2 writing classrooms.

The results also showed that students had a positive perception of Messenger as a mediating tool for descriptive essay writing and online interaction. Finally, the study revealed that text-based chatting fostered an online interaction, contributing to the learning of descriptive essay writing. This allowed for more flexible learning and led to improvements in both the organization and mechanics of descriptive writing.

While the study revealed significant benefits, challenges such as text message bombardment were reported, underscoring the need for effective communication management within such platforms. The implications of this study are multifaceted. Theoretically, this research enhances our understanding of Messenger's role in L2 writing classrooms, highlighting crucial factors and affordances that contribute to its effectiveness.

Pedagogically, the study offers valuable insights into the systematic integration of Messenger into writing teaching methodologies, suggesting ways to supplement traditional approaches. Methodologically, this research contributes to clarifying the efficacy of social media tools like Messenger in enhancing descriptive essay writing skills.

Despite its contributions, the study has limitations that warrant attention in future research. These include a relatively small sample size and the use of intact groups, suggesting a need for larger and more diverse participant pools recruited through random sampling. Furthermore, future studies could explore the pedagogical affordances of social media tools from teachers' perspectives, which would offer a more comprehensive view of their potential in language teaching and learning contexts.

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