

Facebook Social Media: How does it Affect First-Year Students' Description Writing Skills?

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ABSTRACT

Facebook is widely claimed to have an important influence on students' writing skills, but studies on its impact on students' descriptive writing skills, especially in the first grade, are still very limited by previous researchers. Because of the scarcity of studies, this study attempts to measure the effect of social media Facebook on the descriptive writing skills of first-year students. 35 students from the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program aged between 16-18 years were involved in this study as research subjects. They were selected after taking the Indonesian Language Competency Test (UKBI) and the range of scores obtained was high (75-79.9%). Non-random sampling was used to select research subjects. This study used a one group pretest-posttest experimental design. The data in this study were obtained from pretest and posttest activities using a descriptive writing skill test instrument. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS for Windows version 25. The results of this study indicate that the average score of students before the Facebook social media intervention was 61.43 and after the intervention, the average score obtained was 83.03. Meanwhile, based on the one-sample t-test, it shows that Facebook has a significant effect on students' description writing skills. The implication of the findings of this study is that Facebook is a social media that can be an ideal and comfortable learning tool that can lead students to develop better descriptive writing skills in higher education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This study tries to analyze the effect of social media Facebook as a medium of learning on students' description writing skills. Social media Facebook is one of the online media that is quite popular in various

levels of society in Indonesia—including students as the millennial generation. This generation has a strong attachment to the use of technology such as Facebook (Al-Harrasi & Al-Badi, 2014; Bagarukayo, 2018; Lakhal, 2021). This can be proven from the many times that millennials use through social networks for various text messages in their daily communication. In Indonesia, the average time spent on social media Facebook by millennials is 8 hours 52 minutes (Budiati et al., 2018; Junawan & Laugu, 2020). The dependence of the millennial generation on the use of technology on the one hand can have a positive impact and a negative impact on the other side (Lakhal, 2021). In other words, the millennial generation tends to use Facebook social media in various ways ranging from entertainment, socializing, and seeking information.

The use of technology such as social media Facebook cannot be separated from the daily lives of students as millennials. Facebook has been used by most of the students to communicate or interact with each other. At the same time, Facebook social media can also be used by students as a means to write various text messages (Promnitz-Hayashi, 2011). Thus, there is a correlation between the use of Facebook social media with writing skills. Writing is widely recognized as a language skill that is very important in effective communication (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hyland, 2010; Wahid & Marni, 2018; Wahid, Suyitno, Suyono, & Martutik, 2020). However, this skill is very difficult and complex to master for any language user (Chetia, 2013; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Freedman, Hull, Higgs, & Booten, 2016; Karadeniz, 2017; Pham, 2021; Smirnova, 2019; Syahrin, Dawud, Suwignyo, & Priyatni, 2019; Wahid et al., 2020; Wijana, 2006), both native and non-native speakers (Adeyemi, 2017). Writing is a problem-solving activity because it involves high-level cognitive abilities (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Gustafson, 2011; Qadir, Bensen Bostanci, & Kurt, 2021), and the ability to utilize various linguistic features in written form, such as the use of cohesion and coherence devices (Ahmed, 2010; Bahaziq, 2016; Briesmaster & Etchegaray, 2017; Flowerdew & Mahlberg, 2009; Ghufuron, 2012; Guthire, 2008; Halliday & Hasan, 1976, 1985; Jabeen, Mehmood, & Iqbal, 2013; Plakans & Gebril, 2017; Setiawan & Taiman, 2021; Shabani & Goljani, 2015). This writing complexity applies to all writing genres—including writing description writing genres.

Writing descriptive text aims to describe or give something. This text contains a series of paragraphs that discuss objects or places. So that readers can see, hear, and feel what is described by the author. Description text is a type of text that describes what something is as it is or what something does as it does (Wiratno, 2018). Wiratno further explained that descriptive essays are related to the special properties of the thing described in terms of its shape, size, color, taste, and other physical properties (Wiratno, 2018). Things/topics that are usually described in paragraphs are objects, people, places, and atmosphere (Indiyastini, 2009). In the process of writing a descriptive essay, each writer needs to identify the object or event to be written. This can be done by the author by observing through the five senses and experience. Similar to writing other text genres, writing descriptive text genres also has complex characteristics. Therefore, writing descriptive text as a skill requires great attention and can be improved through social media platforms such as Facebook.

Social media is widely recognized around the world as a tool that can help students in learning activities (Lakhal, 2021). Social media can help students communicate and share their thoughts or ideas about various topics being studied (Lakhal, 2021). It also allows the creation of asynchronous and synchronous interactions between students and educators (Salas, Kosarzycki, Burke, Fiore, & Stone, 2002), due to various learning materials such as texts, videos, and audios available through online discussions (Lakhal, 2021). In addition, social media makes it possible for students to be responsible for their own learning whenever and wherever they want (self-directed learning). Social media can also pave the way for students to play an active role in teaching and learning activities. This learning mode can help students to engage in small or large activities such as speaking, writing, problem solving, reflection and so on (Ulla & Perales, 2021). Such learning, which requires collaboration, discussion, peer assessment and the like—can be done through technological aids in the form of social networks (Lakhal, 2021), including social media Facebook.

Many literatures have highlighted the influence of social media on students' language skills. (Crystal, 2001), for example, as one of the world's leading linguists claims that social media can encourage students

to read because it can lead students to focus on reading on the digital layer. He pointed out that the use of language in Short Message Service (SMS) has a positive rather than a negative effect, because it can stimulate language learners to read messages. Social media can facilitate learning and can broadly impact the nature of learning in universities like never before (Lakhal, 2021; Liccardi et al., 2007). Moreover, with the current learning model which has shifted to online learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic (Chahar & Roy, 2021; Dios & Charlo, 2021; Sofyan, Isnantyo, Fu'Adi, & Pratama, 2020). The online learning mode has become unavoidable for educators. It can be further explained that there are many researchers who have demonstrated the positive effects of using social media in language learning. (Quader, 2013) shows that social media platforms offer greater opportunities for students to expand their learning by discussing various subjects freely unlike in a formal classroom context where they may feel uncomfortable communicating their ideas and thoughts.

Other studies that have highlighted the effects of social media on students' language skills have also been carried out by (Kabilan, Ahmad, & Abidin, 2010). This researcher looks at whether Facebook supports or enhances language learning in English. The findings of this study indicate that Facebook plays an important role in increasing students' motivation, self-confidence, and attitudes towards learning English. This study also reports that 74.1% of students claim that participation in social media Facebook instills a positive attitude towards learning English. In a similar vein, (Bani-Hani, Al-Sobh, & Abu-Melhim, 2014) conducted a study in Jordan to investigate the perceptions and attitudes of EFL University students towards the use of Facebook groups in teaching writing and the role that Facebook groups play in improving writing performance levels. The researcher found that "using Facebook groups in language teaching can help in language acquisition and develop writing skills better, especially in the pre-writing phase, as well as help students to develop their vocabulary better and reduce spelling errors. Similarly, an interesting study conducted by (Mingle & Adams, 2018) on social media use and academic performance in public and private secondary schools revealed that most students use WhatsApp and Facebook more frequently and that students from private schools spend more hours online compared to their peers in public schools. Meanwhile, study (White, 2008) study concluded that Facebook contributed to positive learning outcomes on students' written assignments and their motivation to learn. Although, on the other hand, it is also claimed that Facebook has a negative effect on students' use of written language because it uses abbreviations for certain words.

Various literatures and studies have proven that Facebook can play an important role as advice in developing students' language skills. Even so, the existing literature and research have not shown strong evidence regarding the application of Facebook social media as a learning medium in learning descriptive writing skills to college students. For this reason, this study tries to fill this gap by investigating the effect of using Facebook on social media on students' writing skills. Facebook allows college students to share messages, chat, and exchange photos and videos (Bagarukayo, 2018; Botou & Marsellos, 2018; Lego Muñoz & Towner, 2010; McCarthy, 2010). Therefore, the use of Facebook as a learning medium to practice writing descriptions through groups will allow students to exchange ideas, write freely, and edit the writings of their classmates. In addition, lecturers can post topics to be discussed and share photos for visual stimuli to activate students' schemas in learning to write. Through writing descriptions in groups, students can improve the skills of their colleagues and develop their expressive abilities. Facebook can offer a more relaxed learning environment where students can not only develop their writing skills but also collaborate with each other. With that in mind, this study was directed to measure the effect of social media Facebook on the descriptive writing skills of college students.

2. METHODS

This research design uses a one group pretest-posttest design to test whether there is a causal relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The independent variable is an influential variable and the dependent variable is the variable obtained (Loewen & Plonsky, 2016). In other words, the independent variable is expected to cause variations or changes in the dependent variable. This study involved 35 first-year students as research subjects who were studying in the

Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program. They were chosen after taking the Indonesian Language Proficiency Test (UKBI). UKBI is a standardized test to determine the language skills of Indonesian speakers. This test was conducted to obtain homogeneous research subjects. Based on the UKBI test scores, 35 first-year students were selected in the high score category (75-79.9%). The subjects of this study consisted of men and women aged between 16-18 years. All study subjects were asked to sign a consent letter to participate in this study.

The data in the study were collected using a test instrument. There are two types of test instruments used: the UKBI test instrument and the descriptive writing skill test instrument. The UKBI test was used to determine and screen homogeneous participants. Meanwhile, the descriptive writing skill test was used to determine the students' ability to write descriptive essays. The descriptive essay writing test contains instructions and instructions for working on writing an essay. The time allotted for the descriptive text writing test is 120 minutes. The writing skill test instrument was used twice: once for collecting pretest data and once for collecting posttest data. It should be noted that the writing skill test used in the pre-test and posttest is the same both in terms of time and instructions and instructions for writing descriptive essays.

The writing skill test was declared valid and reliable. Validity is obtained from the analysis of the assessment of two professors who have Indonesian language expertise. Validity checks are carried out on the suitability of the content and language used for first year students. The validity value is 95%, which means that the test instrument for writing descriptive essays is valid and feasible to use. While the reliability was obtained from testing on 20 first-level students. The reliability value using Cronbach's Alpha test was obtained at 0.8, which means that the descriptive essay writing test instrument has high usage criteria.

Data analysis in this study was classified into three stages as carried out by (Andheska, Suparno, Dawud, & Suyitno, 2020) and (Sultan, Rofiuddin, Nurhadi, & Priyatni, 2017) namely data management, statistical analysis, and interpretation of results. The data management stage consists of three activities, namely grouping, coding, and assigning values. Subsequently, the data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25 statistics. This section examines the similarity of several parts of the sample. This test aims to determine whether the sample under study has the same variance or not. Then, the normality of the data was checked using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test. Normality test is a method used to determine whether the data collected is normally distributed. The decision making in this test is if a significance ≥ 0.05 is obtained, then the sample is concluded from a normally distributed population. Conversely, if the significance value obtained is < 0.05 , then the sample is concluded from a population that is not normally distributed. After going through the two tests, an independent t-test was then carried out. The criteria used in this test are, H_a is accepted, and H_0 is rejected if $t_{\text{count}} > t_{\text{table}}$. On the other hand, H_a is rejected, and H_0 is accepted if $t_{\text{count}} < t_{\text{table}}$ uses a significant level ($\alpha=0.05$). In this study, the interpretation of the results is carried out using the confirmation of theory, the findings of previous related studies, and the researcher's arguments are also included in this section.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The presentation of the results in this section consists of three parts, namely (1) presentation of the results of data analysis of descriptive writing skills of research subjects before the intervention (pretest) using Facebook social media as a learning medium, (2) presenting the results of data analysis of students' descriptive writing skills after the intervention (posttest) with the use of social media facebook as a medium of learning, and (3) exposure to the results of inferential analysis. The three sections are described below.

3.1. Ability to Write Description of Research Subjects before Intervention

From the data analysis conducted on the ability to write descriptions of research subjects before the intervention (pretest) with the use of Facebook as a learning medium, the statistical value of the ability to write descriptions of students was obtained as shown in the following figure.

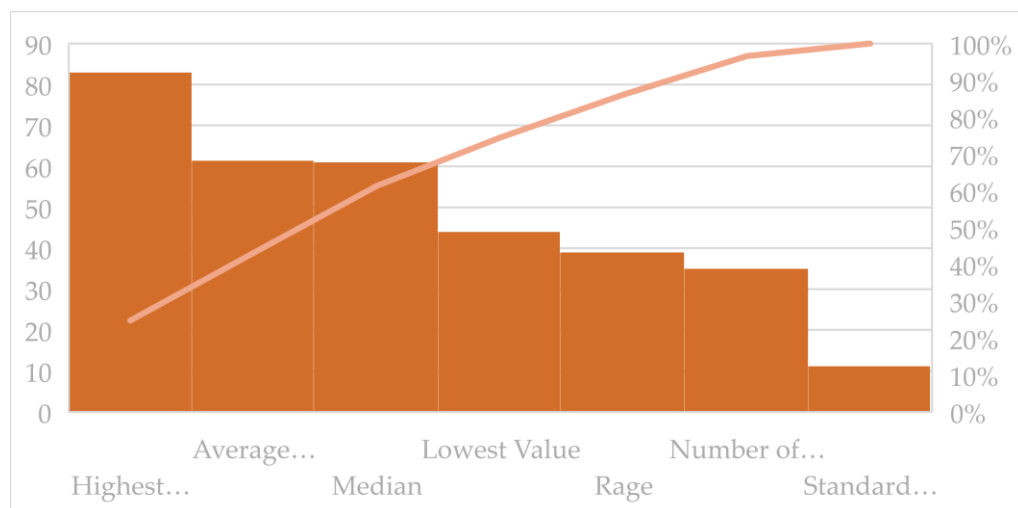


Figure 1. Statistical value of writing skill description of research subjects before intervention

Based on the picture, it shows the acquisition value of the research subject's ability to write descriptive text before the intervention by utilizing social media Facebook as a medium for learning to write. From the picture it appears that the average value obtained is 61.43 of 35 research subjects. Meanwhile, the highest score obtained by the research subject was 83, the lowest score obtained was 44, range 39 and standard deviation 11, 163. If the acquisition value of research subjects in learning descriptive writing skills was categorized into five categories, the results obtained were in the following Figure.

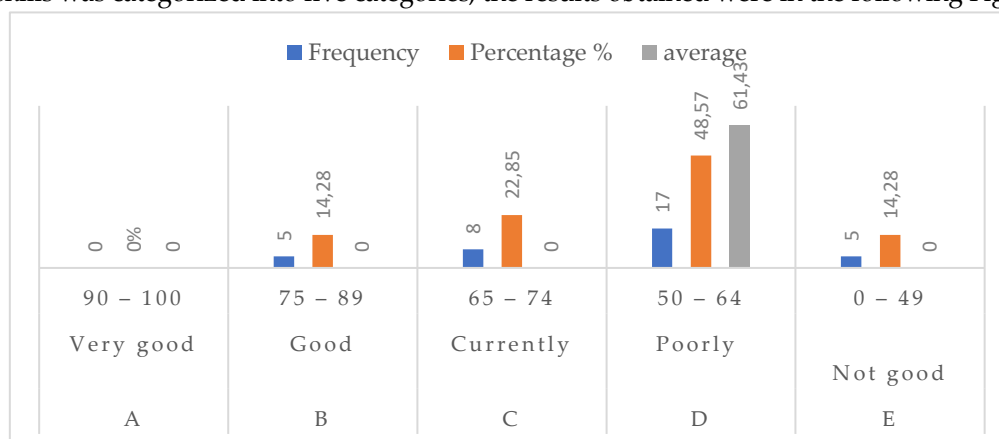


Figure 2. Category value of writing skill description of research subjects before intervention

Figure 2 above shows that the writing skills of the research subject before the intervention using Facebook social media as a learning medium, namely the bad category was obtained by 5 students, or with a percentage of 14.28, the poorly was obtained by 17 students, or with a percentage of 48.57, the currently category was obtained by 8 students, or with a percentage of 22.85, the good category was obtained by 5 students, or with a percentage of 14.28. Meanwhile, there were no students who scored very good (0%). Furthermore, it can be explained that there are more students who score in the poorly category than those in the good category. Of the 35 students who were involved as research subjects, there were 17

students who were in poorly. Thus, it can be concluded that the students' writing skills prior to the use of social media facebook as a learning medium were not maximal enough because there were no students who were able to score in the very good category, with the interval between 90-100.

3.2. Writing Skills of Research Subject Description After Intervention

Based on the post-test data analysis, the research subject's ability to write descriptions after applying Facebook social media as a learning medium was obtained statistical values of the research subjects' ability to write descriptions as shown in the following figure.

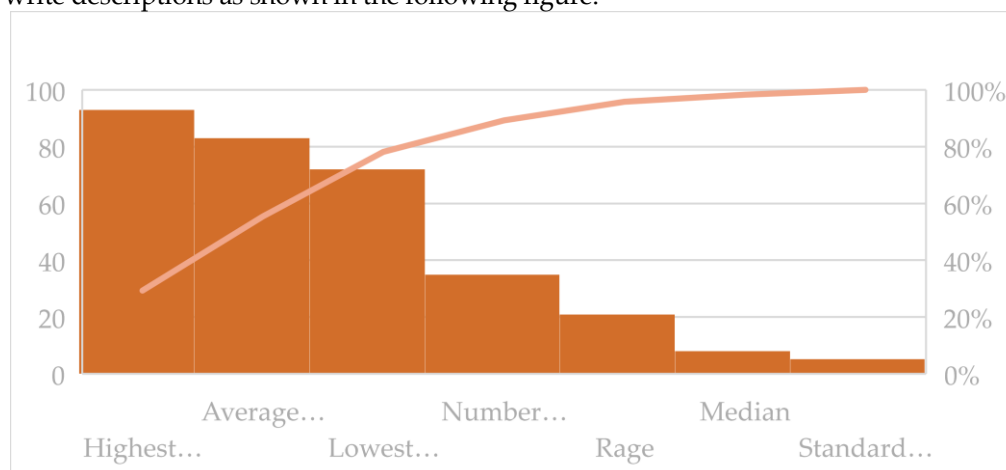


Figure 3. Statistical value of writing skill description of research subjects after intervention

Based on Figure 3 above, it is known that the research subject's ability to write a description after the intervention by using social media Facebook as a learning medium, that is, the average value obtained by the research subject is 83.03 and the median is 8.00. Meanwhile, the highest score obtained by the research subjects was 93 and the lowest value obtained was 72. The rage obtained was 21 and the standard deviation was 5.255. Obtaining the statistical value, if it is categorized into five categories, then the results are obtained as shown in the following figure.

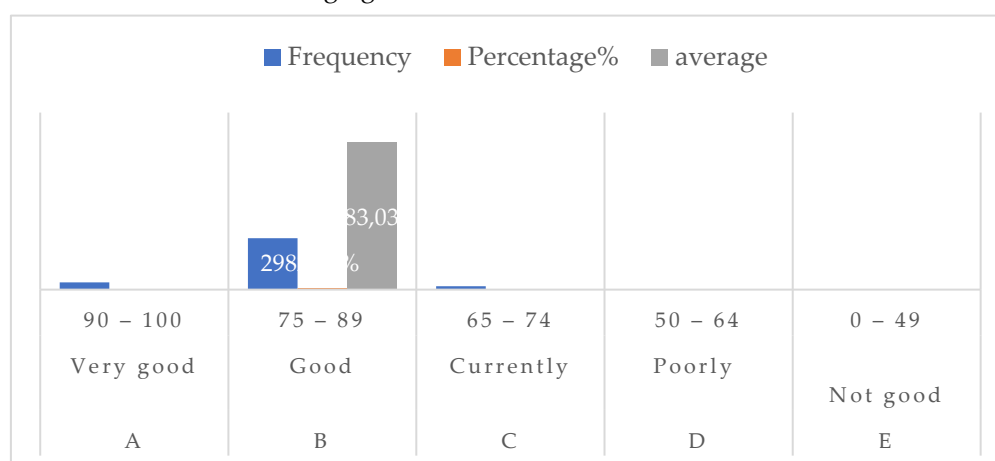


Figure 4. Category of writing skills description of the research subject after the intervention

The picture above shows the value of the ability to write a description of the research subject after the intervention using social media facebook as a learning medium. From the picture it can be seen that there are 4 or 11.42% of research subjects who are in the 'very good' category, 29 or 82.85% of research subjects are in the 'good' category. Furthermore, there are 2 or 5.71% of research subjects who are in the

'currently' category. Interestingly, here there are no more research subjects or 0% of students who are in the 'poorly' and 'not good' categories. The interesting thing is, the average score obtained by students is 83.03, or there are 29 students out of 35 students who get good grades. This shows that there is a significant increase in the acquisition of learning outcomes in the writing skills of the research subjects after receiving an intervention using Facebook social media in learning to write.

3.3. Display of Inferential Statistical Analysis Results

The data obtained from the pretest and posttest writing skill descriptions of research subjects in this study were analyzed using inferential statistical analysis. This analysis is intended to answer the research hypothesis that has been formulated previously, namely to measure the effect of using Facebook as a learning medium in learning writing skills. This analysis was carried out using a t-test type One-Sample Test. However, before the results of the One-Sample Test t-test are presented, the results of the data normality test are presented first. The normality test of the data was carried out to find out the data about the students' writing skills learning outcomes obtained from the pretest and posttest—whether they came from a normally distributed population or not. Thus, in this section, two presentations of the results of inferential statistical analysis are presented: firstly the presentation of the results of the analysis of the data normality test, and secondly the presentation of the results of the t-test. The two sections are presented in succession, as follows.

Table 1. Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test on pretest and posttest

	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	,089	35	,200*	,958	35	,198
Posttest	,064	35	,200*	,986	35	,933

The level of significance of the posttest on research subjects, which is given the symbol $p = ,200$. This means that $p > = 0.05$, which means that the data taken follows a normal distribution.

Table 2. Normality test of gain

	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
GAIN	,131	34	,152	,929	34	,029

From table 2 above, it can be seen that $g .152$. This shows that the N-gain is included in the high category. Thus, it can be concluded that the data is normally distributed.

Table 3. The results of the t-test one-sample test

	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
GAIN	20,971	34	,000	21,600	19,51	23,69

From the table above, it can be seen that the tcount is 20.971 at the .000 level. Because $p < = 0.05$, it can be interpreted that the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the first hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between writing descriptions before using Facebook social media as a learning medium and after using Facebook social media as a learning medium. In other words, Facebook social media has a significant effect on the writing skill of the research subject description.

Discussion

The results showed that students who received intervention or treatment in writing descriptions using Facebook social media had better performance in writing descriptive texts than those without using Facebook social media. This can be proven from the acquisition of the value of writing skill descriptions of research subjects before and after the intervention. The average value obtained by the research subjects before the intervention was 61.43, while after the intervention the average value was 83.03. In addition, from the one-sample test t-test, it is known that Facebook social media has a significant impact on the writing skill of the research subject description. The change in the value of the writing skills of the research subjects occurs because Facebook provides broad opportunities for research subjects to share writings, information, and produce flexibly (Bagarukayo, 2018; Khalitova, Gimaletdinova, Sadykova, & Kayumova, 2017; McCarthy, 2010; Ulla & Perales, 2021), and help improve motivation, social interaction, and language learning skills (Khalitova et al., 2017; Promnitz-Hayashi, 2011).

Facebook is a suggestion for research subjects to work collaboratively in learning writing skills. Collaborative learning, however, has been widely recognized as being able to help with the writing problems of every student and student in schools and colleges (Pham, 2021). Social media Facebook is an educational tool that removes key pitfalls such as language barriers and social barriers (McCarthy, 2010), so that research subjects in learning writing skills can participate in online discussions in a fun way and motivate them to build confidence (Lakhal, 2021). With the help of social media Facebook, research subjects in learning writing skills can form an online-based writing community so that they don't feel pressure in the writing process. This is as stated by (Choi, 2008) that the reasons behind using technology such as Facebook are because it creates a sense of audience or community in writing, emphasizes feedback and revision, reduces stress in writing and increases a sense of mutual benefit. Because of the community in online writing, learning to write has become more subject-centered and more egalitarian.

The results of this study show that Facebook social media has implications for writing descriptions of research subjects. This happens because the use of Facebook as a medium of learning in writing skills provides broad opportunities for research subjects to practice writing through groups. Through Facebook groups, for example, research subjects exchange ideas and edit the writings of their classmates (Bagarukayo, 2018; Kabilan et al., 2010; Ulla & Perales, 2021). The social media Facebook also offers a more relaxed learning atmosphere where students' research subjects not only develop their writing skills but also collaborate with each other (Lakhal, 2021). Through social media Facebook, descriptive writings produced by research subjects also have a variety of topics. In addition, the unity and coherence of students' writing seemed better than without the use of Facebook social media. With this unity and coherence, the writing of the research subject becomes easier to understand. Readers easily understand the writing of the research subject because there are no leaps of thought (Suyitno, 2012; Wahid et al., 2020).

The effectiveness of the use of social media Facebook in this study strengthens the findings of previous studies. This research can strengthen research findings such as (Lego Muñoz & Towner, 2010) who found that Facebook was an effective learning tool for students and a convenient means for informal learning rather than formal learning. This research also supports the argument (Kabilan et al., 2010), who found that Facebook played an important role in increasing students' motivation, confidence, and attitudes towards learning English. This also strengthens the findings (Bani-Hani et al., 2014), who found that Facebook could improve students' writing performance levels. Meanwhile, the findings of this study contrast with research findings (Botou & Marsellos, 2018), who claimed that the use of social media such as Facebook resulted in a decline in language where students unconsciously used to use abbreviations when writing. As well as, (Selwyn, 2009) found that online communication through social media platforms negatively affected students' writing due to the fact that students were

accustomed to informal writing structures. This research contrasts with research (Botou & Marsellos, 2018) and (Selwyn, 2009) because the research subjects involved in this study were students. In terms of language and thinking skills, students are already at the formal operational stage, which is characterized by the capacity to think, including being able to think abstractly (Schunk, 2012). In addition, at the formal operational stage, language awareness has also been built in students, so they are able to recognize grammatical forms of language that play an important role in conveying certain messages (Yulianto, 2016).

4. CONCLUSION

Online-based learning offers learning opportunities that are open to students as millennials who are required to develop various skills. Facebook as a social media platform can help strengthen students' writing skills and talents in college. This study shows that social media Facebook contributes positively to the writing skills of college students. The use of social media Facebook provides an opportunity for students to connect with each other, be actively involved in various current issues that can become their writing material. In addition, Facebook is more flexible to be used by students in the learning process. Another interesting thing, from the findings of this study, is that students are more enthusiastic or play an active role in the writing process, starting from looking for ideas, developing ideas, compiling ideas, and revising the ideas they produce. Thus, the use of social media Facebook as a medium of learning in learning writing skills can be taken into consideration in the process of learning to write in college.

This study does not highlight student responses related to the use of social media Facebook as a learning medium. Therefore, further research can complement this by measuring student responses in learning to write using social media Facebook. This study also has limitations on the research design used. Here, the researcher does not use other methods or strategies that are used as comparison material. Even so, this study provides important implications for the use of writing learning strategies in universities using social media Facebook. Facebook can be implemented as a means of learning to write for lecturers at universities with synchronous and asynchronous patterns.

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