



Effects of Using Facebook as a Medium for Discussions of English Grammar and Writing of Low-Intermediate EFL Students

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Abstract

The present study explored the effects of using Facebook as a medium for grammar and writing discussions of low-intermediate EFL students. The data were collected from the students' utterances asking for explanations about English grammar and writing that were posted on Facebook, their gain scores in the pre-test and post-test, and interview responses. The findings showed a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-test and the post-test ($t = 6.65$, $p = 0.00$). Most common topics of discussion involved sentence structures, followed by word meanings, parts of speech and then relative clauses. It was found that English grammar was worth promoting for discussions on Facebook because there were correlations between the gain scores in the grammar and writing parts at the significant levels ($r = 0.399$ in the pre-test and $r = 0.859$ in the post-test). The students also had positive attitudes toward using Facebook as a means of learning grammar and writing. As an alternative learning tool, Facebook provided them a convenient and attractive means to engage in discussions with the teacher and other users who had better grammatical knowledge.

1 Introduction

Facebook is a Web 2.0 application serving a large online community. It gains huge popularity and in Thailand, according to Socialbakers (2012), the number of Facebook users reached 15,948,040 in July 2012. Such a big number ranked Thailand the 16th in world rankings of the number of Facebook users. The largest group of Thai users comprised those aged between 18 and 24, who accounted for 33% of the total Facebook population in Thailand. As this age group consists mainly of students who study in the university level, Facebook is used in this study as a social networking tool to enhance the students' language competence.

It is believed that sufficient knowledge of English grammar not only helps students write paragraphs in standard English but also reduce the use of vernacular or non-standard English (i.e. using subjective pronouns in the place of objective pronouns, omission of certain prepositions, use of double negative form, mistakes in irregular verb forms, and so forth) (Valentine & Repath-Martos, 1997).

The present study addresses the useful characteristics of Facebook as a social networking community and the necessity of grammatical knowledge toward writing. Facebook is used as a medium for discussions about English grammar and writing difficulties that the low-intermediate EFL students have.

2 Facebook: A social networking community

According to Crook et al. (2008), Web 2.0 is a set of Internet services and practices that offer users a great opportunity to participate in various communities of knowledge building and knowledge sharing. With a step change from Web 1.0, Web 2.0 technologies offer a possibility for user involvement in what makes up the Internet. They allow users to upload and to be more involved in social networking communities which are different from Web 1.0 that was more a matter of downloading. Web 2.0 technologies provide communication and data management resources that actively encourage new forms of collaboration and coordination of users. Consequently, with more involvement given and the easier way to stay connected with other people, Web 2.0 technologies have been widely used as a supplementary learning tool giving students independence in learning. In other words, these technologies encourage a wider range of expressive capacity allowing students to express their interests or work collaboratively with teachers, peers, and authentic audience.

Facebook is one of the most popular social networking sites which allow users to post information, chat with others, and collaborate within the system (Stelter, 2008). When students use Facebook as a tool for their study by spending time browsing profiles, meeting new people, and exploring relationships using the English language, they have greater opportunities to collaborate with a large number of people worldwide and learn the target language at the same time (Educause Learning Initiative, 2006). Such a Facebook's property indirectly creates a community of practice – an important component of student education in Social Constructivist theories. Students can construct new knowledge after they interact with other people on Facebook. When students receive comments and suggestions, they can use the information given to improve their language skills. Apart from this, when students discuss on Facebook, they do not have to use their real names. They can avoid face-to-face interaction thus lowering the level of anxiety (Murphy, 2009). Such a learning style can reduce the Affective Filter and eventually enhance motivation and risk taking in language learning (Krashen, 1981, 1988). Other than the benefits given to students, Facebook can also provide many pedagogical advantages to teachers. It helps the teacher make a connection with students about assignments, upcoming events, useful links, and samples of work originating from both inside and outside of classrooms.

Besides its advantages as cited in the preceding section, previous studies showed that using Facebook as a medium for language learning not only effectively enhances language competence but also builds positive attitudes of students. Shih (2011) investigated the effects of using a blended teaching approach on the improvement of the ESL students' writing abilities. In the approach, Facebook and peer assessment were integrated with writing class instruction. The participants of the study were 23 first-year Taiwanese ESL students at a technological university. Before the experiment, the students were divided into three groups: low score, medium score, and high score groups; such a division was derived from the gain scores in the English subject of the 2010 National College Entrance Examination. During the experiment, the students posted their pieces of writing, assessed the quality of writing of students from other groups, and provided their peer feedback on Facebook. The findings revealed that Facebook integrated blended learning was effective for ESL students. All of the student groups had significantly higher scores in the post-test ($p < .05$). They made improvements in paragraph organization, content, vocabulary, spelling, and grammar. They had moderately to highly positive attitudes toward the instruction. The students cited that the convenience and popularity of Facebook facilitated peer assessment and motivated them to have more participation in their learning. As another piece of evidence, Al-Shehri (2011) conducted a study with 33 male university students majoring in English at King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia. In the study, the students were required to upload photos or video clips, add descrip-

tions, and post questions on Facebook. The findings showed that the students preferred to collaborate in English on Facebook when the uploaded materials from their friends were interesting and new to them. Facebook allowed them to stay connected with other networks. With such an opportunity, they could develop the abilities to synthesize ideas and facts from various sources of information.

Even though it seems that Facebook has functions that promote language learning, only a few studies have paid in-depth attention to this pedagogical issue. To rectify the lack of supporting research on this issue, the researchers decided to use a Facebook site as a means for low-intermediate EFL students to have English grammar and writing discussions.

3 Grammar instruction: A pathway to the enhancement of writing competence

Newkirk (1978) defines grammar as a combination of contents (grammatical rules and terms) and methods (the memorization of the rules and definitions as well as sentence analysis), while Bolinger (1977) defines “grammar” as the linguistic meanings representing events in the real world. In language teaching and learning, Haussamen, Benjamin, Kolln and Wheeler (2003) suggest that non-native English students need to learn the meaning of a language associated with its grammatical knowledge. This is because without grammatical knowledge, students are likely to convey their thoughts in a wrong way hence affecting the meaningfulness of their communication.

Azar (2007) points out that grammar is needed for comprehension in the nature of a language. She states that if there was no grammar in language, we would have only individual words or sounds, pictures, and gestures to convey meanings. She notes that students who experience grammar instruction usually have an advantage over the students who lack sufficient grammatical knowledge. To support this belief, in the study of Generation 1.5 university students in the United States, Azar found that the students who had poor grammatical knowledge had difficulties in academic writing even though their speaking and listening skills were described as fluent. They did not understand how a sentence was formed and how sentences were related to one another in a paragraph. On the contrary, the students with good grammatical knowledge understood meanings behind the sentences with more ease. Only a short explanation was enough for them to understand the differences in meanings between “-ing” and “-ed” adjectives as in the sentences “I was really bored” and “I was really boring” (p. 4).

Furthermore, a study carried out with 16 ESL immigrant students who came to Canada from China, Iran, Lebanon, India, Syria, Israel and Sri Lanka reported that these students credited grammatical instruction as an instrument for communication (Pazaver & Wang, 2009). Pazaver and Wang reported that the students saw a positive connection between grammar instruction and their writing abilities. They needed to apply different grammatical rules to identify the mistakes and to write properly in their writing assignments. A recent study by Akinbote and Komolafe (2010) done with 290 students from public primary schools in Ibadan, Nigeria showed that the students who received grammar instruction had higher mean scores (mean = 26.30) in the writing test, whereas the conventional group without the treatment had the lowest scores (mean = 16.82). This is because the teaching of grammatical features like tenses and linguistic elements, including capitalization, commas and other punctuation helped them write effectively. Regarding the necessity of grammatical competence for writing competence as previously mentioned, the teaching of grammar is introduced to the writing class worldwide (Hinkel, 2002, 2004; Santos, 1988).

The aforementioned information indicates that grammar instruction contributes to the enhancement of the students’ writing competence. Meanwhile, Facebook has functions (e.g. status updates, comments on others’ posts, chat, and so on) that can assist language learning. However, even though these two research variables are worth promoting, previous studies have not placed much emphasis on how Facebook can be used as a medium for English grammar and writing discussions. To address the lack of research, the present study explored the effects of using Facebook as a medium for discussions of English grammar and writing of low-intermediate EFL students toward the enhancement of their English grammatical and writing competence. In addition, to find

out whether English grammar instruction was worth promoting, the correlations of the gain scores in the grammar and writing parts of the pre-test and post-test were calculated.

4 Research questions

1. What types of grammar and writing difficulties did the low-intermediate EFL students discuss on Facebook?
2. To what extent did using Facebook as a medium for English grammar and writing discussions enhance English grammatical and writing competence of the students?
3. To what extent did the students' grammatical competence contribute to the enhancement of their writing competence?
4. What were the attitudes of the students toward the effects of using Facebook as a medium for English grammar and writing discussions?

5 Study

5.1 *Conceptual framework of the study*

The present study was constructed based on the significant role of grammatical knowledge, Krashen's Affective Filter, and Social Constructivist Theories. Grammatical knowledge is important on the basis of two reasons (Cook, 1991). Firstly, there are grammatical principles shared by all languages, such as grammatical categories (nouns, verbs, etc.). Secondly, languages hold some separate principles, such as constituent structures (the arrangement of words, phrases, and clauses in a sentence). Therefore, to learn a second language, it is necessary to discover and set the parameters of the language. Furthermore, grammatical knowledge also has a connection with three branches of linguistics (Leech, 1983). Firstly, the syntactic level relates to how to form sentences, such as negative sentences or clauses in English. Secondly, the semantic level relates to meanings behind the sentences. Lastly, the pragmatic level relates to the context in which sentences are created.

When asked about its relationship with writing competence, the researchers believe that grammatical knowledge plays a significant role toward the meaning and the quality of the written text. As is seen in the nature of language, writing is more durable and permanent than speaking. When we speak, we can get immediate feedback from the listener. The speaker knows whether the listener understands the meaning of the utterance. When we write, on the contrary, we cannot get immediate feedback. The writer needs to write carefully because the reader does not exactly stay in that place. Therefore, written language needs to be well-prepared and understandable. As one of the criteria for grading the quality of writing, the ability to use grammar was raised, and as a result, grammar has been taught widely in school throughout the world (Hinkel, 2004). This is because grammatical knowledge not only helps the writer understand the conventions of standard English but also reduces their use of vernacular or non-standard English (Haussamen et al., 2003). Grammatical errors in subject-verb agreement, subject omission, indirect questions, various forms of "other," the article "the," prepositions, word choice, and verb forms can cause big troubles in writing (Herrero, 2005). Meanwhile, conjunctions, references, and tenses not only have their own functions, but also enable a text to show some particular kinds of meanings (Schleppegrell, 1998).

Due to the significant role of grammar in writing improvement, there are both in-class and online teaching methods developed to enhance grammatical knowledge and subsequently to enhance writing abilities of students. As another choice for the study, alternative teaching methods, like social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and MySpace) are introduced and used as the media for teaching the language. Among these sites, Facebook has the largest number of users. Established by Zuckerberg in 2004, it is used by more than 600 active users worldwide (Terantino & Graf, 2011). Facebook gains more popularity than many other social networking sites because it provides more options for users to communicate with others and share innumerable quantities of information through profiles, conversation, photos, and videos (Blattner & Fiori,

2009). In terms of learning purposes, Facebook can promote the Affective Filter Hypothesis and Social Constructivist Theories. According to Krashen (1981), motivation, attitude, self-confidence, and anxiety are principle factors in second language acquisition. High motivation, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety lower the Affective Filter thus increasing the amount of comprehensible input, which eventually contributes to language learning (Krashen, 1988). In normal classroom settings, many students experience such problems as the fear of being considered as a fool, the anxiety of speaking in front of class, and many other negative feelings, all of which prevent them from participating or even cause them to get panicked (Warschauer, 1996). Meanwhile, when they study online, they study in a non-threatening environment (Beauvois & Eledge, 1996; Coniam & Wong, 2004; Kötter, 2001; Liu & Sadler, 2003). As an online synchronous tool, Facebook offers a sense of anonymous communication thus building a state of anxiety-free relaxation (Murphy, 2009). In other words, students can ask freely on Facebook without the fear of making mistakes. They experience less social pressure in learning. In this state, the Affective Filter is lowered, which enhances the amount of comprehensible input in language learning. Apart from this, Terantino and Graf (2011) reported that Facebook can promote social interaction between teachers and students through discussions, negotiations, comments, questions, and status updates. Teachers can post photos, texts, or videos on Facebook and then assign students to make comments on the postings. Students can stay connected with other people through this social networking site as well. After being given an opportunity to communicate with other people, students are likely to benefit from collaborative learning on Facebook (Dawson, 2008). At this stage, a zone of proximal development (ZPD) is constructed on Facebook. Relating to the Social Constructivist theories, in this zone, language assistants on Facebook, such as teachers, friends, or users in general, can play the role as more knowledgeable people explaining English grammar usage and giving suggestions for their writing work. This helps students move from their actual stage of development to their potential stage of development, a stage in which their grammatical and writing competence is enhanced. All in all, as presented in Figure 1, to improve writing abilities, students can use Facebook as a means for grammar and writing discussions.

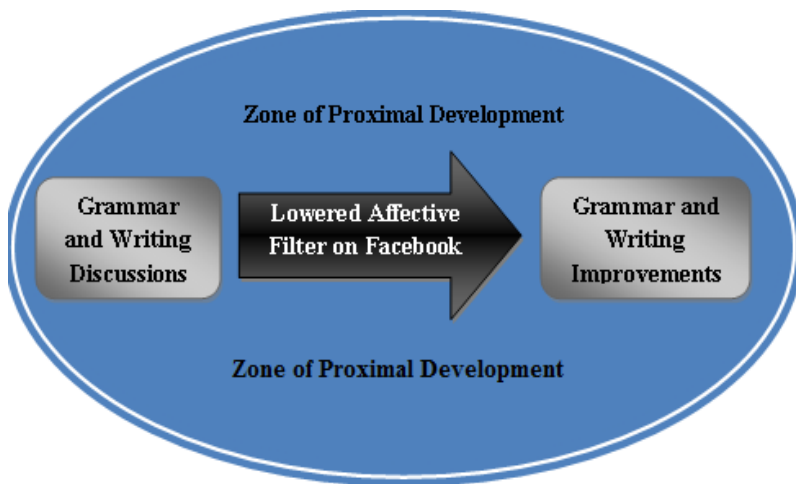


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study

5.2 Participants

The participants of the study were 83 first-year undergraduate students at a university in Nakhon Pathom Province, Thailand. Sixty-one students in this group were male and twenty-two of them were female. Their ages were between 18 and 22 years. They were considered low-intermediate EFL students and were placed in the English Level 1 course because their Ordinary

National Education Testing (O-NET) score in the English section was less than 45 points. The criteria for judging groups of students were determined by a university faculty that was in charge of English instruction. With respect to their background in Facebook use, the study found that 81 students used Facebook every day while two of them used it twice or three times a week. While 41 students used Facebook at home, 34 students visited the Internet center of the university, and eight students visited Internet cafes.

5.3 Research instruments

5.3.1 Facebook

The Facebook URL used in this study was www.facebook.com/noithani. It was open for the students from June to September 2011. The students were allowed to post questions on the main page or profile page, leave messages, or chat with the teacher and other users on Facebook. Because most of the students had limited English proficiency, to avoid miscommunication, they were allowed to use the Thai language to discuss their English grammar and writing problems. If they wanted to practice writing, they could post their pieces of writing on the teacher's profile page or even their friends' Facebook pages.

5.3.2 Pre-test and post-test

The pre-test and post-test were designed in equivalent forms (see Appendix A). The total score of each test was 100 points and each test contained two main parts: grammar and writing to be done in one hour. The grammar part was designed in the form of a cloze. The total score of the grammar part was 50 points. It consisted of 25 blanks with multiple choices (a, b, c, d) available for the students to choose. Each blank involved two points. It tested the students' grammatical knowledge in the use of parts of speech, articles and determiners, verb tenses, subject-verb agreement, and passive and active voice. All of these grammatical topics were considered necessary for writing by the nine university lecturers who were in charge of the students in this study. The writing part provided ten questions used as a clue for writing a paragraph. The total score of this part was 50 points. The writing topics were "My Favorite Sport" for the pre-test and "My Weight" for the post-test. For each of them, the students were assigned to write at least 100 words. The criteria for grading the students' writing were adapted from the university requirement, comprising 15 points on content, 10 points on punctuation, 10 points on paragraph organization and 15 points on grammar rules and usage.

5.3.3 Interview protocol

An interview was conducted to gain in-depth information about the attitudes of the students toward the effects of using Facebook as a medium for discussions of English grammar and writing. In this study, 13 volunteer participants participated in a semi-structured interview. The participants needed to answer the questions, such as "In general, to what extent do you think discussing English grammar and writing difficulties on Facebook is effective for you?" "To what extent do you think the characteristics of Facebook, like making a contact to other people by chatting, posting comments, and uploading and downloading files are appropriate and effective for your learning and contribute to the enhancement of your grammatical and writing competence?" and "To what extent do you think the suggestions and responses you received from Facebook are effective for you?" The interviewing process took 32 minutes. The data were collected with an MP3 player. Their native language, Thai, was used in the interview.

5.4 Procedure

The data were collected during the first semester of the 2011-2012 academic year. In the first week of June, the pre-test was administered to the students. The purpose of the pretest was to find out the students' background knowledge in English grammatical and writing competence before the treatment. The Facebook URL www.facebook.com/noithani was open for them to have some discussions with the teacher and other users. They were allowed to leave messages, post pieces of writing, and chat on Facebook about their English grammar and writing difficulties from the second week of June until the last week of September, 2011. Then, in the first week of October, they took the post-test. The purpose of the test was to find out to what extent the students' English grammatical and writing competence improved after having some discussions on Facebook. The interview was to gain in-depth information about how Facebook exactly promoted the enhancement of their language competence.

5.5 Data analysis

1. The students' utterances asking for some explanations in English grammar and writing shown on Facebook were analyzed using content analysis. It aimed to find out the types of English grammar and writing difficulties the students shared and discussed on Facebook.
2. The scoring data from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed by Paired-Samples T Test. It aimed to compare the students' grammatical and writing competence before and after receiving the treatment.
3. The item facilities of the multiple choice items of the pre-test and post-test were calculated in order to find out the ability of students in scanning the right answers.
4. The scoring data from the grammar and writing parts of the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using Pearson Correlation. It aimed to find out to what extent the students' grammatical competence contributed to their writing competence.
5. To ascertain the reliability of the scoring process of the tests, the writing parts of the tests were graded by two raters and then the scoring results were analyzed (inter-rater reliability co-efficient $\alpha = 0.97$ in the pre-test and $\alpha = 0.96$ in the post-test).
6. The interview data were transcribed and analyzed by content analysis. The data from the interview responses were used to support the results of the pre-test and post-test.

6 Results

6.1 English grammar and writing difficulties of low-intermediate EFL students

The students' utterances asking for some explanations in English grammar and writing were used to answer the first research question "What types of grammar and writing difficulties did the low-intermediate EFL students discuss on Facebook?" It was found that among the pathways for discussions on Facebook, 72 students chose chatting, nine posted their problems on the profile page, and two left messages for the teacher to answer. All of them used the Thai language for discussions. Most of the students had some discussions about sentence structure (40 students). For example, participant C asked,

Good morning teacher! How are you? I do not understand English grammar, especially sentence structures. Can you explain them here ...

Teacher replied,

In the English language, a complete sentence requires a subject and a predicate. The subject can be either nouns or pronouns. The predicate consists of a verb or a verb phrase, followed by an object. If it is an intransitive verb, you do not need an object as in "A frog jumps." This sentence is comprehensi-

ble to the reader with no need to add an object. However, if it is a transitive verb, you need an object as in “I ate pizza this morning.” The past tense verb “ate” is a transitive verb so you need to add an object ...

Twenty students had problems with English word meanings. For example, participant B asked,

Teacher! How can word forms and word meanings vary in context? Can you explain them here? Sometimes I cannot memorize a large number of words and their meanings. If you know how I can deal with this problem, please tell me soon. Thank you very much...

Teacher replied,

Word forms can affect both the meaning and functions of words. For example, if you add a suffix “-less” to the end of the word “worth,” it forms the word “worthless, changing the meaning into the opposite way. If you add a suffix “-ability” to the end of the word “accept,” it forms the word “acceptability,” changing a verb into a noun. Knowledge of roots, prefixes, and suffixes can help you learn new vocabulary words. For more information, you can visit this website: <http://www.uefap.com/vocab/build/building.htm> ...

Sixteen students had problems with using parts of speech. For example, participant D said,

Teacher! After the auxiliary verb “be,” besides putting an adjective, can I put a noun in that position...

Teacher replied,

You can put an adjective after the auxiliary verb “be” to modify the preceding nouns or pronouns. For example, “This necklace is priceless.” The adjective “priceless” tells the value of the necklace. You can also put a noun after the auxiliary verb “be”. For example, the sentence “I am a student.” tells who you are while the sentence “This is a cup.” tells the type of an object...

Four students asked how to use relative clauses. For example, participant A asked,

Hi teacher! Can you explain how to use relative clauses to me? How can we use them in the sentence? ...

Teacher replied,

Relative clauses tell you more about a thing, place or person that has just been mentioned in the preceding clause. You use “who” for people, “where” for places, “which” for things, and “whose” for possessive forms to begin the following clause. For example, “I love people who are generous.” The relative clause “who are generous” modifies the meaning of the word “people”...

As for writing practice, there were three students who wanted to practice their English writing skills so they posted their pieces of writing on Facebook. For example, participant E wrote,

There are three qualities of good student. First good students know function of us. That is, intended study, do homework and make exercises. Second allocate time. Etc read a book, exercise for good health, relax for fun with friends, and sleep. Third focus the goal. Coz no a plan seem no future and no change for good future. To summarize, good student know function of us, allocate time, and focus the goal for success in life.

Teacher highlighted his errors in the brackets,

There are three qualities of good student [no “s” ending]. First [no comma] good students know function [word meaning] of us [pronoun]. That is, intended [word form] study, do homework and make exercises [incomplete sentence]. Second [no comma] allocate time [incomplete sentence]. Etc read

[subject-verb agreement] a book, exercise [subject-verb agreement] for good health, relax [subject-verb agreement] for fun with friends, and sleep [subject-verb agreement]. Third [no comma] focus [word meaning] the goal. Coz [informal word] no a plan seem [subject-verb agreement] no future and no change for good future. To summarize, good student [no "s" ending] know function [word meaning] of us [pronoun], allocate time, and focus [word meaning] the goal for success in life.

This participant revised his paragraph,

There are three qualities of good students. First, good students know duties of them. That is, they have to study, do homework and exercises. Second, they have to manage the time. My friend Etc reads a book, exercises for good health, relaxes for fun with friends, and sleeps. Third, they have to set the goal because no a plan seems no future and no change for good future. To summarize, good students know duties of them, manage time, and set the goal for success in life.

From the example above, this student had problems with pronouns, subject-verb agreement, plural nouns ending with "-s", punctuation, word forms, word meanings, incomplete sentences, and using informal words in his original piece of writing. Because of these problems, he decided to post his piece of writing on the teacher's profile page so that the teacher could view, give suggestions and comments, and correct his grammatical and writing errors. This enhanced his writing ability. As shown in his edited version, he produced meaningful sentences and had fewer errors.

6.2 *Enhancement of English grammatical and writing competence of low-intermediate EFL students*

The results gained from the pre-test, the post-test and the interview responses were used to answer the second research question "To what extent did using Facebook as a medium for discussions of English grammar and writing enhance English grammatical and writing competence of the students?" As shown in Table 1, a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test was found ($t = 6.65$, $p = 0.00$). This suggests that the students improved in English grammar and writing.

Test	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-Test	83	65.05	19.07	6.65	.000
Post-Test	83	78.70	10.04		

Table 1: A comparison between the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test using paired samples t test

Not only did the mean scores of these two tests show a statistically significant difference as a whole, each of them also showed a significant difference when separated into two discrete parts: grammar and writing. As shown in Table 2 and Table 3, there were statistically significant differences of the mean scores in the grammar parts ($t = 6.64$, $p = .000$) and in the writing parts ($t = 2.98$, $p = .004$). These findings indicate that the students made significant improvement in grammar and writing after the treatment.

Test	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-Test	83	38.29	11.21	6.64	.000
Post-Test	83	46.94	5.09		

Table 2: A comparison between the mean scores in the grammar parts of the pre-test and post-test using paired samples t test

Test	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-Test	83	26.76	11.60	2.98	.004
Post-Test	83	31.76	9.86		

Table 3: A comparison between the mean scores in the writing parts of the pre-test and post-test using paired samples t test

		Pre-test	Post-test	
Items	Item facility	Grammatical features of the item tests	Item facility	Grammatical features of the item tests
1	0.58	Parts of speech	<u>1.00</u>	Subject-verb agreement
2	0.87	Determiners: Articles (a, an, the)	0.91	Parts of speech (Possessive adjectives)
3	0.62	Subject-verb agreement/ Verb tenses	0.83	Subject-verb agreement/ Passive and active voice
4	0.64	Parts of speech	0.85	Parts of speech
5	0.27	Subject-verb agreement/ Verb tenses	0.85	Parts of speech
6	0.71	Parts of speech (Possessive adjectives)	0.85	Subject-verb agreement/ Passive and active voice
7	0.60	Parts of speech	0.89	Parts of speech
8	0.78	Subject-verb agreement/ Verb tenses	0.85	Possessive adjectives
9	0.69	Determiners: Articles (a, an, the)	0.91	Determiners: Articles (a, an, the)
10	0.51	Subject-verb agreement/ Verb tenses	0.89	Subject-verb agreement/ Verb tenses
11	0.56	Subject-verb agreement/ Verb tenses	0.85	Subject-verb agreement/ Passive voice and active voice
12	0.95	Subject-verb agreement/ Verb tenses	0.89	Parts of speech
13	0.87	Parts of speech (Possessive adjectives)	0.74	Passive voice and active voice/ Verb tenses
14	0.60	Passive voice and active voice	0.96	Determiners: Articles (a, an, the)
15	0.58	Subject-verb agreement/ Verb tenses	0.91	Parts of speech
16	0.51	Subject-verb agreement/ Verb tenses	<u>0.98</u>	Subject-verb agreement/ Passive voice and active voice
17	0.87	Parts of speech	0.96	Subject-verb agreement/ Passive voice and active voice
18	0.82	Subject-verb agreement/ Verb tenses	<u>0.98</u>	Parts of speech (Possessive adjectives)
19	0.60	Determiners (this, that, these, those)	0.91	Determiners: Articles (a, an, the)
20	0.56	Parts of speech	0.89	Subject-verb agreements
21	0.87	Passive voice and active voice	0.85	Determiners: Articles (a, an, the)
22	0.45	Parts of speech	0.89	Parts of speech
23	0.89	Subject-verb agreement	0.87	Subject-verb agreement/ Passive voice and active voice
24	0.67	Parts of speech	0.83	Subject-verb agreement/ Passive voice and active voice
25	0.49	Parts of speech	0.91	Parts of speech

Table 4: Facility values in the grammar parts of the pre-test and post-test

Apart from this, in the grammar parts, the facility values showed that there were a larger number of students who chose the correct answers in the post-test. As shown in Table 4, all of the students chose the correct answer for item one of the post-test (IF = 1.00). The average values of item facility increased from 0.66 in the pre-test to 0.89 in the post-test. This does not mean that the post-test was easier than the pre-test because when these two tests had been piloted with 27 students before the research implementation, the average values of item facility were not much different. That was 0.45 in the pre-test and 0.48 in the post-test. According to these results, we summa-

alized that the increased values of item facility resulted from the enhancement of the students' grammatical competence.

With respect to the students' writing competence, besides a statistically significant difference of the mean scores ($t = 2.98$, $p = .004$) between the pre-test and post-test as shown in Table 3, it was found that the students wrote more meaningful content in a better organized paragraph in the post-test than they did in the pre-test. They used English grammatical features more skillfully and employed punctuation marks more appropriately. Table 5 and Table 6 showed the increases in average scores for the various criteria.

Writing criteria	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Content	83	15	0	15	8.48	3.71
Punctuation	83	10	0	10	5.80	3.07
Paragraph organization	83	10	0	10	5.25	3.02
Grammar rules and usage	83	15	0	15	7.29	3.61

Table 5: Descriptive statistics of the gain scores in content, punctuation, paragraph organization, and grammar rules and usage of the pre-test

Writing criteria	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Content	83	12	3	15	10.12	2.94
Punctuation	83	10	0	10	6.48	2.45
Paragraph organization	83	10	0	10	5.84	3.15
Grammar rules and usage	83	15	0	15	9.42	3.06

Table 6: Descriptive statistics of the gain scores in content, punctuation, paragraph organization, and grammar rules and usage of the post-test

To shed light on the enhancement of the students' writing competence, the following extracts of writing show how the same student progressed in her written work.

Topic 1: My Favorite Sport

My favorite sport is Tennis [capitalization] which an international sport [incomplete clause: verb missing]. I can play it in tennis court [article missing]. It is an outdoor sport. It can play [passive voice form] in single [word form] and team. If you play in single [word form], it needs two players. If you play in team [article missing], it needs four players. The rule of tennis sport [redundant word], you have to hit the ball across the net but not over than the line. If over the line [incomplete clause: subject and verb missing], it means out and needs [passive voice form] to surf again. I always play tennis. I know many famous players. This sport make [subject-verb agreement] you healthy and strong. There is also disadvantages [subject-verb agreement], tennis can make your arm become bigger because the Recket [capitalization and spelling] is very heavy.

Topic 2: My Weight

I consider myself overweight. I am 160 centimeters tall. I weigh 56 kilograms. I have a good weight loss idea which is to limit the amount of calories, but sometimes I find that it is so hard for me to manage. This is because I need to reduce the amount of my favorite junk food. Also, I am a fast eater, and I usually eat more than three meals a day. It seem [subject-verb agreement] that I tend to have fats and protein more than other food groups. I like to eat pizza, especially Hawaiian with chees [spelling]. I think it is unhealthy for me to have this type of food.

The examples above showed that this student made many errors in the first paragraph in such areas as capitalization, complete clauses, articles, passive voice, word forms, redundant words, subject-verb agreement, and spelling. Meanwhile, in her second piece of writing, she had only two minor errors of subject-verb agreement and spelling. This suggests that her grammatical and writing competence was enhanced after the treatment.

The findings of this study showed that the enhancement of English grammatical and writing competence of the low-intermediate EFL students. There were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the pre-test and the post-test. The values of item facility increased in the post-test. They got higher scores in content, punctuation marks, paragraph organization, and grammar rules and usage in the post-test. Such a success resulted from the fact that English grammar was emphasized, accompanied by writing discussions on Facebook. We assume that grammatical competence contributes to writing competence. Therefore, understanding grammar rules and usage can help students write better. To support this belief, we calculated the correlations of the gain scores in grammar and writing parts.

6.3 Correlations between English grammatical and writing competence

This part answers the third research question “To what extent did the students’ grammatical competence contribute to the enhancement of their writing competence?” The correlations of the gain scores in grammar and writing parts of the tests were calculated and analyzed in order to find out whether the students’ grammatical competence contributed to their writing competence. The results showed that the correlations of both tests were significant ($r = 0.399$ in the pre-test and $r = 0.859$ in the post-test).

Parts	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
Grammar	83	40	10	50	38.29	11.21	0.399	0.00
Writing	83	49	0	49	26.76	11.60		

Table 7: Correlations of the students’ scores in grammar and writing parts of the pre-test

Parts	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
Grammar	83	30	20	50	46.94	5.09	0.859	0.00
Writing	83	45	4	49	31.76	9.86		

Table 8: Correlations of the students’ scores in grammar and writing parts of the post-test

The statistical results as shown above suggest that the students’ grammatical competence contributed to their writing competence. In other words, English grammar can be improved through discussions on Facebook.

6.4 Attitudes of low-intermediate EFL students toward using Facebook as a medium for discussions of English grammar and writing

This part answers the last research question “What were the attitudes of the students toward the effects of using Facebook as a medium for discussions of English grammar and writing?” The interview responses showed that all of the interviewees had positive attitudes toward Facebook.

6.4.1 Effectiveness of using Facebook as a means to learn English grammar and writing

Most of the interviewees regarded Facebook as an effective means for English grammar and writing discussions. Six interviewees claimed that Facebook was not originally developed for language learning, but they could use it as a means. They mentioned that they had difficulties in using English grammar. Such a poor proficiency affected their writing abilities. However, when they were allowed to discuss with the teacher and Facebook friends, they found that their English writing was much better. They dared to ask people on Facebook more than those they met in the class-

room. After having more discussions, they understand grammatical features and know how to use them in the sentence. For example, interviewee C said,

Actually, Facebook is an online site developed to enhance convenience in making personal connections with people who live far away. It was not originally designed for language learning, but we can use it as a means because it is widely used in many regions. We have a greater chance to discuss with many people not limited to only our teachers and classmates but we can collaborate with people like native English speakers... Grammatical knowledge is very important for the quality of writing work because if we use wrong grammatical forms, miscommunication can occur. Even minor errors in grammar can show that we do not have good language proficiency... However, many Thai students do not dare to ask the teacher in the classroom. When we are allowed to ask on Facebook, we dare to ask the teacher more. Sometimes we ask our friends from other countries. After we ask them many times, we know more about English grammar. We can apply it for uses in writing. Like in my case, after I had posted my writing work on Facebook, many people came to correct my writing. I found that at first, I had made a lot of grammatical errors. However, after I had received comments from many people, I learned from my mistakes. I think my writing is much better now...

Furthermore, two interviewees responded that they dared to ask the teacher and their Facebook friends about their problems in using English grammar as much as they wanted. This is because they could use fake names on Facebook so other people would not know who they were. After they had sufficient comprehension in English grammar, their writing was improved.

In the classroom, I did not dare to ask the teacher about how to use some English grammatical features. Because of the lack of grammatical knowledge, I usually wrote meaningless paragraphs. I did not know how to arrange words to form the sentence in the right order. I think after the teacher had allowed us to ask questions on Facebook, my grammatical knowledge was better and I was able to write better than before... I dare to ask my teacher on Facebook because I use a fake name so the teacher does not know who I am. With this reason, I can ask her and many other Facebook friends as much as I want. This enhances my comprehension in using English grammar and as a result, I can easily apply my grammatical knowledge to improve my writing...

Apart from this, one interviewee responded that he preferred to ask his friend questions on Facebook because it lowered his anxiety.

Sometimes I felt embarrassed to ask the teacher again on Facebook because she had already explained that point in class, but I still missed it. It is my fault that I did not pay much attention, so I chose to ask my friend. He is my classmate. His explanations in grammar usage given on Facebook are easy to understand. I usually made incomplete sentences so he told me that the sentence comprised SVO; S is Subject, V is Verb, and O is Object... Sometimes he gave me wrong answers. Once he misused the relative clauses. I was not sure about his answer so I asked the teacher on Facebook. However, even though his grammatical knowledge is not completely right, I preferred to ask him because we are close friends. I am free of anxiety...

6.4.2 Characteristics of Facebook that aided students' learning

Most of the interviewees claimed that Facebook enhanced their communication capacity with their teacher and other users. Seven interviewees claimed that it was convenient to have discussions on Facebook. For example, interviewee A said,

Using Facebook as a medium for learning grammar and practicing writing is a very good idea because many of us usually use Facebook in everyday lives. When the teacher is online, it is like I have a personal tutor who can teach me English at home at my convenience...

Other Interviewees claimed that Facebook helped them as an alternative learning tool. In case the language learning website the teacher assigned them to visit could not be accessed or it caught a computer virus, they could use Facebook to discuss their learning problems with the teacher. If

the teacher was not online at that time, they could leave a message for her to answer or ask for help from other users. For example, interviewee B said,

I think it is convenient to study English using Facebook as a medium because I can ask for help from other Facebook users about how to use some English grammatical features. It is the best way for language learning since there are many native English speakers who use Facebook...

Apart from this, one interviewee claimed that it was easier to do the exams after he practiced writing on Facebook. He said,

It is very good for me. It helps me a lot. Facebook gives me more opportunities to practice my writing skills before taking the exams. Because I have practiced my writing beforehand, it will be easier for me to do the exams...

As for Facebook functions, like chatting, posting comments, and uploading and downloading files, all of the interviewees claimed that these functions contributed to the enhancement of their language learning. For example, interviewee D said,

For me, Facebook has a reliable system. I can download anything I want. It has useful functions that contribute to language learning. I can chat about my learning problems with the teacher through Facebook...

6.4.3 Suggestions given on Facebook

With respect to the suggestions and responses they received from Facebook, all of them said that the suggestions and responses were clear for them. For example, interviewee F said,

The suggestions and responses were easy to understand. I can use them to improve my English grammar and writing. The teacher clearly points out what is right or wrong in my piece of writing...

One interviewee also claimed that when she did not understand the suggestions given by the teacher, she could ask her Facebook friends. She said,

When I do not understand the comments and suggestions given by my teacher, I daren't to ask her directly. I usually ask my Facebook friends who have good language proficiency to clarify some grammatical matters...

With the statistical results and the interview responses, we concluded that the students' grammatical and writing competence was enhanced after using Facebook as a medium for discussions. Moreover, as proven by the correlations of scores, English grammar should be taught in association with writing since English grammatical knowledge can contribute to writing competence.

7 Discussion

From the results, Facebook, as a means for language learning, effectively enhanced the writing abilities of the EFL students. The students had a higher mean score in the post-test. Facebook also built positive attitudes of students in language learning. Grammar discussions seemed to lead to the English writing improvement.

The students' grammatical and writing competence was enhanced after the four-month period when they were given opportunities to use Facebook for discussions. A larger number of students chose the correct items in the grammar part of the post-test. They wrote better using more meaningful contents within a well-organized paragraph in the post-test. Other than such improvement, the students also had positive attitudes toward this social networking site. In their opinion, Facebook was an alternative and up-to-date learning tool which was easily accessible. It provided con-

venience and more choices for students to study the English grammar, thus developing their writing competence. They overcame their shyness and dared to ask people questions on Facebook. They could leave messages for the teacher or other Facebook users. They could practice their English writing before they took the writing test. Additionally, these findings are congruent with previous studies showing that Facebook is an effective medium for language teaching and learning (Mills, 2011; Schwartz, 2009; Solomon & Schrum, 2007). Shih (2011) reported that the students improved in paragraph organizations, content, vocabulary, spelling, and grammar after receiving Facebook integrated blended learning. The students claimed that Facebook not only facilitated peer assessment but also motivated them to participate more in their language learning. Al-Shehri (2011) found that Facebook built a positive language learning atmosphere and developed the abilities to synthesize ideas and facts from various sources of information.

The findings of the present and previous studies clarify the efficiency of Facebook as a means for language learning. In the present study, the mentioned positive effects resulted from the opportunities to have grammar and writing discussions on Facebook. The present study found that most of the students had discussions about sentence structure on Facebook, and this is possibly one of the reasons that helped them improve their writing competence. This is because sentence structure is an important part of effective writing, and it is also one of the additional criteria essential for the development of academic writing skills (Saunders & Scialfa, 2003). Moreover, accuracy in sentence structure is concerned with the abilities to develop various types of sentences (Winter, Neal, & Warner, 1996). The researchers believe that students' English grammatical competence can contribute to their writing competence, and this hypothesis has been proven true insofar as the results of the study showed the correlations of the gain scores in the grammar and writing parts at significant levels. Similar to the present study, many earlier studies reported that grammar instruction helped the students improve their writing abilities. Hulstijn and Hulstijn (1984) found that the students who received grammar instruction made fewer errors in their pieces of writing. They noted that focusing on grammatical features had a significant effect on the students' performance. Green and Hecht (1992) found that ESL students who received the most explicit grammar instruction identified the correct rule 85% of the time. Pica (1985, 1994) found that the students who received clear grammar explanations produced more accurate sentences than those without the instruction. The results of her study in 1994 showed that the instructed students produced more accurate plural -s than the uninstructed students since the latter group still kept using a strategy of attaching quantifiers instead of adding "-s" to their nouns like "three book" or "a few house" (Pica, 1994, p. 67). All of these results seem to shed light on the benefit of grammar instruction since the reduction of errors as well as the ability to identify grammatical rules can bring about better writing competence.

Based on the results of the present study, the enhancement of the students' grammatical and writing competence resulted from various functions of Facebook that allow the students to discuss, negotiate, collaborate, and share their thoughts with the teacher, their friends, or even other Facebook users. From this perspective, it can be said that such a learning process is related to Social Constructivist theory. In terms of this theory, Facebook itself can play the role of a community of practice where students can discuss their English grammar and writing difficulties with the teacher or other users. During this process, the teacher or other users can act as more knowledgeable people scaffolding the students to step from their actual stage of development (the position where they can master the task by themselves) to their potential stage of development (the position where they construct new knowledge after having some negotiation, collaboration, and assistance from more knowledgeable people) (Lambert & Walker, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978). Consequently, they can construct new knowledge. In other words, the students can enhance their grammatical and writing competence from the assistance of other people through Facebook. Apart from this, referring to Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, learning on Facebook can lower the level of Affective Filter thus increasing the comprehensible input. As evidenced by the interview responses, Facebook can promote a sense of anonymous communication. Some students used fake names when they discussed questions with the teacher on Facebook. One of them preferred to discuss with friends. All of these reduced the level of anxiety hence building a high motivation, a positive attitude, high

self-esteem, and risk taking competence. As a result, the students had more comprehension in English grammar and subsequently improved their writing abilities.

Therefore, Facebook is a Web 2.0 technology that should be promoted and used as an online community for students to discuss their English grammar and writing difficulties. Facebook gives them various options for discussions with the teacher or other users. Facebook allowed them to study at their convenience. They could chat and leave messages or even post their pieces of writing on Facebook for the teacher and other Facebook friends to check them beforehand. Concerning grammar instruction, the results of the correlation analysis revealed that the students' scores in the grammar parts were correlated with their scores in the writing parts. This suggests that their grammatical competence contributed to their writing competence. Thus grammar should be promoted in the teaching of writing.

8 Pedagogical implications

Using Facebook as a medium for language learning actively encourages a collaborative environment, builds positive attitudes, increases motivation and student participation, and sustains teacher-student relationships (Mazer, Murphy & Simonds, 2007). The teacher can promote the use of this social networking site by encouraging students to create Facebook accounts and add their teacher and classmates as friends. He or she can be updated on the assignments, upcoming events, and other pedagogical information on Facebook. Good examples of writing can be uploaded so that the students could have an opportunity to share their thoughts about the examples. Specific office hours should be given to the students so that they can contact the teacher. In case the teacher is offline, they should be allowed to post questions on the teacher's profile page and discuss them with other Facebook users.

9 Conclusion

The results can be summarized as follows:

1. Most of the students had discussions about sentence structures on Facebook. This finding suggests that the enhancement of the students' grammatical and writing competence resulted from their comprehension of English sentence structures.
2. The students gained higher scores in the post-test at a significant level ($t = 6.65$, $p = 0.00$). There were statistically significant differences between the mean scores in the grammar parts ($t = 6.64$, $p = .000$) and in the writing parts ($t = 2.98$, $p = .004$). This means that the students' grammatical and writing competence was enhanced.
3. The correlations of the gain scores in the grammar and writing parts were significant ($r = 0.399$ in the pre-test and $r = 0.859$ in the post-test). This suggests that the students' grammatical competence had a relationship with their writing competence.
4. The students had positive attitudes toward Facebook. From their thoughts, Facebook not only gave them convenience to study at their own pace but also enhanced their grammatical knowledge and subsequently enhanced writing competence after they had discussions with the teacher and Facebook friends.

10 Limitations of the study

The participants of the study were Thai EFL students majoring sports science. Therefore, the results obtained cannot be generalized to EFL students as the whole. Further studies can investigate to what extent the observations made here can apply to other EFL students.

11 Recommendations

As presented in this study, grammatical knowledge can bring about the enhancement of writing competence. For further research, researchers can explore the effects of other language skills. They can explore the effects of reading on writing improvements of students by uploading some written texts on Facebook. To check comprehension, reading quizzes should be uploaded, followed by writing assignments. The researchers can also upload video files teaching reading skills. With such a trial, they will know whether the students' reading comprehension has any influence on their writing competence.

Acknowledgment

We thank Ms. Pikul Phumchang who helped me make contact with the participants and all of the participating students for their contributions to this research. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to Ms. Pim Gengsumrong who has given me support and understanding.

Notes

¹The participants could chat with the teacher from 7 pm to 9 pm from Mondays to Fridays during the four-month period (June to September, 2011).

²The reliability coefficients of the pre-test and post-test were 0.84 and 0.83, respectively.

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Appendix A

Pre-test

Time Allotment: 1 Hour

Part 1: Grammar

A. Read the following passage and choose the best answer (a, b, c or d).

A Balanced Diet

In general, athletes have different (1)._____ needs from the rest of us. They need to be more aware of (2)._____ necessity of a well-balanced diet which (3)._____ the right amount of proteins, carbohydrates, fibers, vitamins, minerals and fats. This is because eating the right amount of food and having (4)._____ hydration before, during and after playing sports (5)._____ an effect on (6)._____ abilities in sports games. However, it doesn't mean that athletes from all (7)._____ of sports always (8)._____ the same proportion of food since (9)._____ amount of proteins, carbohydrates and fats (10)._____ on the type of sports they play. If they play sports that (11)._____ strength and power, like weight training, they (12)._____ to increase (13)._____ protein intake from good sources, such as fish, chicken, red meat, eggs and nuts. As a matter of fact, proteins (14)._____ in a wide range of sports, especially the body building fraternity. Regarding fats, people who (15)._____ in the sport that (16)._____ the right (17)._____ of athletes, like boxing, (18)._____ to reduce the amount of fats in their diet. Athletes in (19)._____ group usually eat small, regular portions and switch to low fat foods. For carbohydrate (20)._____, they have to limit the amount of sugary carbohydrates but (21)._____ eating starches from sources, like wholegrain bread, rice, etc. Apart from the mentioned food groups, vitamins and minerals from fresh (22)._____ and vegetables (23)._____ important for their (24)._____ diet since they are vital for the (25)._____ system and aid with the recovery period.

- | | | | | |
|----|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 1 | a. nutrition | b. nutrient | c. nutritionally | d. nutritional |
| 2 | a. a | b. an | c. the | d. – |
| 3 | a. comprise | b. comprises | c. comprising | d. comprised |
| 4 | a. proper | b. properly | c. propering | d. propered |
| 5 | a. have | b. has | c. having | d. had |
| 6 | a. his | b. her | c. its | d. their |
| 7 | a. type | b. types | c. typing | d. typed |
| 8 | a. need | b. needs | c. needing | d. needed |
| 9 | a. a | b. an | c. the | d. – |
| 10 | a. depend | b. depends | c. depending | d. depended |
| 11 | a. emphasize | b. emphasizes | c. emphasizing | d. emphasized |
| 12 | a. have | b. has | c. having | d. had |
| 13 | a. your | b. his | c. her | d. their |
| 14 | a. uses | b. use | c. are using | d. are used |
| 15 | a. participate | b. participates | c. participating | d. participated |
| 16 | a. require | b. requires | c. requiring | d. required |
| 17 | a. weigh | b. weight | c. weightly | d. weighting |
| 18 | a. have | b. has | c. having | d. had |
| 19 | a. this | b. that | c. these | d. those |
| 20 | a. intake | b. intakes | c. intaking | d. intaken |
| 21 | a. keep | b. keeps | c. keeping | d. kept |
| 22 | a. fruit | b. fruits | c. fruiting | d. fruited |
| 23 | a. is | b. are | c. be | d. been |
| 24 | a. well-balance | b. well-balances | c. well-balancing | d. well-balanced |
| 25 | a. immune | b. immunes | c. immunity | d. immunities |

Part 2: Paragraph Writing (My Favorite Sport)

Write a short paragraph by following the steps below. (Write at least 100 words)

1. Choose a sport of your own interest to write as a topic of your paragraph.
2. Your paragraph needs to answer the following questions.
 - a. What is the sport called in English?
 - b. Is it a local, national or international sport?
 - c. Where can you play it?
 - d. Is it an indoor or outdoor sport?

- e. Is it a single or team sport?
- f. How many players are required in a game?
- g. What are the rules for playing it?
- h. Have you ever played it? If yes, where and how often do you play it?
- i. Do you know any famous players?
- j. Does it have any health benefits for you? If yes, what are they? If no, explain why it is bad for your health.

Thank You

Post-test

Time Allotment: 1 Hour

Part 1: Grammar

A. Read the following passage and choose the best answer (a, b, c or d).

Overweight

Being overweight (1). _____ a condition of having more fats than (2). _____ the body's needs. It (3). _____ by many factors, such as eating disorders, metabolic disorders, genetic predisposition, (4). _____ imbalances, alcoholism, limited physical exercise, psychotropic (5). _____, and stress. To determine whether or not a person is overweight, it (6). _____ by body mass index (BMI) which is a measure of a person's weight taking into account his (7). _____. To calculate (8). _____ body mass index, the formula states that BMI equals your weight (mass) in kilograms divided by (9). _____ square of your height in meters. If the result of the calculation (10). _____ the BMI of 25 or more, it means that you (11). _____ to be overweight. However, the degrees of overweight by body mass index vary among (12). _____ races. In the group of Asians, they (13). _____ overweight with (14). _____ BMI results between 23 and 29.9 while (15). _____ (16). _____ the BMI of 25 or more for being overweight. To lose weight and have a BMI of less than 25, many people (17). _____ to change (18). _____ lifestyles. One of (19). _____ recommended treatments (20). _____ a controlled diet. However, it was found that such (21). _____ method can have short-term (22). _____, and a person who (23). _____ this way often gains all of the lost weight back and more in the longer term which (24). _____ yo-yo dieting or weight cycling. Thus it is necessary to have physical exercise, long-term planning and weight (25). _____ in conjunction with the controlled diet.

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|----|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 | a. be | b. is | c. are | d. being |
| 2 | a. its | b. his | c. her | d. your |
| 3 | a. cause | b. causes | c. is causing | d. is caused |
| 4 | a. hormone | b. hormones | c. hormonal | d. hormonally |
| 5 | a. medicine | b. medication | c. medical | d. medically |
| 6 | a. generally
measure | b. generally
measures | c. is generally
measuring | d. is generally
measured |
| 7 | a. high | b. height | c. heightening | d. heightened |
| 8 | a. their | b. his | c. her | d. your |
| 9 | a. a | b. an | c. the | d. - |
| 10 | a. show | b. shows | c. is showing | d. showed |
| 11 | a. consider | b. considers | c. are considering | d. are considered |
| 12 | a. differ | b. differently | c. different | d. difference |
| 13 | a. can consider | b. can be
considering | c. can be
considered | d. can have been
considered |
| 14 | a. a | b. an | c. the | d. - |
| 15 | a. Hispanic | b. Hispanics | c. Hispanical | d. Hispanically |
| 16 | a. require | b. requires | c. are requiring | d. are required |
| 17 | a. need | b. needs | c. are needing | d. are needed |
| 18 | a. their | b. his | c. her | d. your |
| 19 | a. a | b. an | c. the | d. - |
| 20 | a. be | b. is | c. are | d. being |
| 21 | a. a | b. an | c. the | d. - |

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|----|-----------|------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 22 | a. effect | b. effects | c. effective | d. effectively |
| 23 | a. prefer | b. prefers | c. is preferring | d. is preferred |
| 24 | a. call | b. calls | c. is calling | d. is called |
| 25 | a. manage | b. manages | c. managed | d. management |

Part 2: Paragraph Writing (My Weight)

Write a short paragraph by following the steps below. (Write at least 100 words)

1. Create your own paragraph title.
2. Your paragraph needs to answer the following questions.
 - a. Do you consider yourself overweight, underweight, obese or normal?
 - b. How tall are you?
 - c. How much do you weigh?
 - d. If you are overweight or obese, do you have any weight loss ideas and what are they? If you are underweight, do you have any plans to gain weight and what are they? If your weight is normal, what methods do you use to control your weight?
 - e. Do you consider yourself a fast eater, slow eater or moderate eater?
 - f. How many meals a day do you usually have?
 - g. Which food groups (proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals) do you usually have in the meals you eat?
 - h. What is your favorite food? Do you think it is healthy or unhealthy?
 - i. Do you have physical exercises, such as playing sports, working out at a gym or in a fitness center, etc.? If yes, how often do you have physical exercises and what are they? If not, what do you like to do in your free time?
 - j. In your opinion, what is the best way to control your weight?

Thank You