Exploring the Effectiveness of WhatsApp to Support Organization and Mechanics in Descriptive Essay Writing at Tertiary Level: A Mixed Method Study

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Abstract- The study aims to investigate the effectiveness of WhatsApp as mediating tool to support learning of organization and mechanics in descriptive essay writing and foster online interaction. In this study, the mixed method approach was employed. The research included sixty students from three intact classes selected through convenience sampling. The investigation was based on a quasi-experimental design in which pre-test was administered to the participants in both the control and experimental cohort to determine the baseline knowledge. After the treatment, the participants sat in post-test followed by a semi-structured interview. The quantitative results of this mixed-method study revealed that students in the experimental group outperformed the participants in the control group in terms of descriptive essay writing. The qualitative findings demonstrated how WhatsApp could help students write better descriptive essays in terms of organization and mechanics. The main reason given for the results was WhatsApp's ability to foster an interactive and cooperative learning environment, which is beneficial for learning how to write descriptive essays, particularly with regard to organization and mechanics. However, several difficulties were mentioned, such as the deluge of SMS messages. Future research directions and writing pedagogy implications suggest that social media tools such as WhatsApp should be used as mediating tools to supplement the traditional pedagogy.

Index terms: Social media, WhatsApp, interaction, descriptive essay writing, organization and mechanics

I INTRODUCTION

Unquestionably, technology has revolutionized all facets of human effort, including education, in the present era (Bashori, 2018). It has radically changed the world and civilization, dominating almost every element of life (Avidov-Ungar & Amir, 2018 and Scherer, Siddiq, & Tondeur, 2019). As a result, more money has been spent on digital learning resources in almost every aspect of modern life (Mehta, Morris, Swinnerton, & Homer, 2019). The language learning environment has changed as a result of the rapid expansion of technology, with a rising trend towards ICT integration (Li, Sun, & Jee, 2019). Consequently, there is constant change in the way educators and students use technology (Wakefield & Frawley, 2020). To leverage the benefits of technology in language learning, educators and teachers are advised to think about more efficient ways to integrate it (Bashori, 2018). One technique to use mobile technology to improve language learning is through social media (Alsulami, 2018).

The expanding amount of research on social media technologies that is currently accessible, supports the use of these tools for teaching and learning in various geographic contexts across the world (Manca, 2020). The main factor influencing WhatsApp's acceptance in this study was its widespread use and popularity among Pakistani youth enrolled in higher education. It provides a plethora of helpful features, such as the capacity to interact, exchange, converse, and debate. WhatsApp is being used as a teaching tool due to the widespread consensus. Consequently, an extensive corpus of literature has surfaced regarding WhatsApp's potential as an educational tool. WhatsApp has been used by researchers to help students in learning English idioms (Sahan, Çoban, & Razı, 2016), increase their vocabulary, and inspire them to read English as a second language (Justina, 2016; Susanti & Tarmuji, 2016; Bensalem, 2018; Cetinkaya & Sütçü, 2018; Hashemifardnia, Namaziandost, & Rahimi Esfahani, 2018; Jafari & Chalak, 2016). Researchers have also used WhatsApp to encourage students for learning of English as a second language (Justina, 2016; Susanti & Tarmuji, 2016), help them understand English idioms (ahan, Çoban, & Razı, 2016), and expand their vocabulary.

Many other researchers such as (Ahmed, 2019; Mbukusa, 2018; Ta'amneh, 2017) have adopted it as a teaching and learning tool for reading and writing of English (Haron & Rahmat, 2020; Khalil, 2019; Muthmainnah, 2020; Sari & Putri, 2019; Wahyuni & Febianti, 2019). They also used for teaching collaborative writing (Suhaimi, Mohamad, & Yamat, 2019), narrative writing and essay writing (Songxaba & Sincuba, 2019). It has been used by a number of other researchers to teach English at the university level (Alqahtani et al., 2018), to reduce

speaking anxiety among EFL learners (Han & Keskin, 2016; Sherine, Seshagiri, & Sastry, 2020), and to consolidate students' perceptions and attitudes towards English language instruction blended with WhatsApp (Aktas & Can, 2019). Awada (2016) examined the impact of WhatsApp on proficiency in terms of critique writing and attitude towards learning; additionally, Alshammari et al. (2017), Cetinkaya (2017), Fattah (2015), Hamad (2017), Hassan & Ahmed; Sayan (2016), Yavuz (2016), and others have explored the defamiliarization of foundation year English learners with WhatsApp. Although there is a growing body of research literature in this field, particularly in the area of teaching different skills of English language (Justina, 2016; Susanti & Tarmuji, 2016), it is yet unclear how WhatsApp influences the composition of descriptive essays. Moreover, there is a dearth of evidence supporting the use of WhatsApp to enhance online contact and to foster involvement outside the scope of traditional pedagogy, which may have implications for descriptive essay writing. The current study was carried out in a Pakistani government graduate college. This Graduate College's students study a variety of writings, including argumentative, narrative, descriptive, and precis writing. However, they do not become proficient writers even after receiving two years of training in several writing genres (Bhatti & Memon, 2016; Elaish, Shuib, Ghani, & Yadegaridehkordi, 2019; Fareed, Ashraf, & Bilal, 2016; Gopang, Bughio, & Pathan, 2018). Given that Pakistan's early English teaching methodology focuses primarily on the lecture method (Imtiaz, 2014), it is antiquated and less interactive (Dayan & Bano, 2018) and allows teachers to take up the most time (81.1%), which results in minimal interaction between peers and teachers (Ahmad, Siddique, & Arshad, 2020; Inamullah & Hussain, 2008; Islam, 2019). In the pilot survey, the majority of students said they did not engage with their peers in the classroom enough.

This study looks at how WhatsApp can be employed to promote online interaction that could be useful in learning writing skill in order to fill in the aforementioned research gaps. For a few reasons, I utilised WhatsApp in this study in addition to traditional pedagogy to educate students language and content for writing descriptive essays. First, in the context of Pakistan, it's a widely used but little-studied social media tool. Second, a number of researchers such as Bensalem, 2018; Cetinkaya & Sütçü, 2018 and Jafari & Chalak, 2016 have also documented its efficacy in teaching English language. Lastly, it offers a number of affordances that might enhance the writing abilities of L2 learners (Suhaimi, Mohamad, & Yamat, 2019; Songxaba & Sincuba, 2019).

<div align="center">II THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</div>

The use of WhatsApp to facilitate online communication and improve writing abilities can theoretically be situated within the social constructivism paradigm proposed by Vygotsky (1980). He asserts that the Zone of

Proximal Development (ZPD), scaffolding, and mediation are particularly important aspects of the learning process.

Constructivism is highly favoured by educators and researchers in the current teaching landscape because it increases student engagement and enhances learning results (Saini & Abraham, 2019). Social media platforms are conceptually related to constructivism and theoretically linked to student-centered pedagogies, which acknowledge learning as an interactive process rather than a passive one that gives students the chance to construct meaning through social, interpretive, and cognitive behaviours (Spender, 1996). Since learner-centered pedagogies have long been acknowledged as important in post-secondary education (Biggs & Tang, 2003; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999), utilising technology as a means of shifting from teacher-centered to learner-centered approaches for effective outcomes. WhatsApp is utilised in this study as a mediation tool to help students and teachers communicate. Additionally, it provides content and vocabulary recommendations for essays, whether or not they are requested by the teacher or the students. It gives students fast, customised, and need-based feedback as they proceed to write essays in a collaborative setting. Furthermore, according to Vygotsky (1980), individual learning occurs inside the Zone of Proximal Development, a learning environment where a learner need support and guidance from others in order to advance to a higher performance level (Hsieh, 2020). According to Kaoropthai et al. (2019), scaffolding is a procedure in which a teacher or a peer with greater expertise helps the other person learn better or complete tasks more easily. Various tools, including language, writing instruments, books, computers, and mobile phones, are used in this mediation process. In the current study, the more knowledgeable participants—teachers or peers—are anticipated to assist the less knowledgeable participants via the WhatsApp platform with a variety of activities related to learning how to write descriptive essays.

III RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To find the effects of social media on undergraduates' descriptive essay writing in terms of organization and mechanics, the following research questions guided the current study:

RQ1: Is there any significant difference in pre-test and post-test mean scores between undergraduates in the treatment group (WhatsApp) and those in the control group?

RQ1: Is there any significant difference in pre-test and post-test mean scores between undergraduates in the treatment group (WhatsApp) and those in the control group in terms of a) organization and b) mechanics?

RQ2: How do the participants in the treatment groups experience WhatsApp as supporting tools for interaction and descriptive essay writing in terms of organization and mechanics?

RQ3: How the patterns of interaction (fostered during chat) are supportive in improving students' descriptive essay writing with respect to organization and mechanics?

The purpose of this study is to clarify how WhatsApp helps second language learners write better descriptive essays in terms of organization and mechanics in the setting of WhatsApp. Additionally, this research study intends to shed light on how social media can be methodically included in the learning process to make learning of writing skill effective.

<div align="center">IV MATERIAL AND METHOD</div>

A. Participants

In the current study, a mixed method approach that is quasi-experimental (Creswell, 2012) was employed and it involved undergraduate students from a public sector graduate college in Punjab, Pakistan. They were fourth-semester studying subjects such as computer science, botany, and mathematics. They belonged to the 19–21 age group. Sixty students from three intact courses were selected by convenience sampling, and they were divided into two groups for the intervention trial: a control group (N = 30) and a treatment group (N = 30). A pre-test was given before the intervention to determine baseline knowledge. Twelve individuals were interviewed following the post-test to validate the quantitative results. The participants have been using WhatsApp for at least three years. All students came from various L1 backgrounds (Punjabi, Saraiki, and Urdu, for example). The teacher had at least 12 years of experience in teaching English as a compulsory subject. The class teacher worked with both the control group and the intervention group to minimise pedagogical differences. Lastly, prior to the participants' involvement in the study, a consent form and its approval was acquired from the institution's head.

B. Treatment

All of the students agreed to attend a one-hour lesson via WhatsApp, so the teacher, drawing on open educational materials and practices (Borthwick & Gallagher-Brett, 2014), posted the topic on the platform at four o'clock every day to start a conversation. The teacher had already formed this group and platform by inviting students from two classes. However, it was not connected to any institution portal. Students and the teacher posted and responded to the issue on their smartphones, respectively. The teacher used questions to start

an online discussion with the pupils on the first day. As a result, in order to support peers and pupils, a conversation amongst them regarding language-related aid was promoted, utilising a partner or teacher as a resource. This was an hour-long session. The teacher provided supportive materials, customised instructional videos, and online content in the form of PDFs and Docs, and helpful links to assist students improve their descriptive essay writing skills in the same virtual space the next day. In the meantime, the instructor watched the students' reactions to see if they enjoyed the information that was presented and if they also shared any helpful links and resources. This too was an hour-long session. The instructor gave links to helpful vocabulary and several sample essays on descriptive writing on the third day. On the third day of class, the students used paper and pencil to write an essay in English on the subject that had been covered in person. They then gave their work to the teacher for comments. Throughout the treatment period, the control group received additional handouts from the teacher, such as sample essays, but the main distinction between the treatment and control classes was a WhatsApp chat activity. The control group was taught how to write descriptive essays in the classroom by the instructor using the lecture technique. The twenty-four working days of the treatment were spent.

Stage I: Pre-test

Stage II: Student training and intervention

Stage III: Post-test
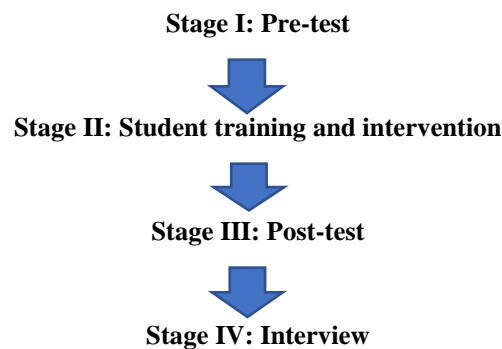
Stage IV: Interview

Fig 1: Design of the study

C. *Instruments and data collection*

Both groups experienced orientation week before the treatment started. Additionally, the intervention group received training on how to write descriptive essay using WhatsApp and receive chat-based remedial feedback from both teachers and students. It was in line with Mathar and Mahapatra (2022) who stated that learners exposed to digital tools should attend preparatory training sessions. Students in the control and treatment groups took pre- and post-tests on writing descriptive essays during the second and seventh weeks of the study, respectively, in order to respond to the first research question. In order to preserve consistency during the pre- and post-tests, the participants were given identical writing conditions such as text type, length, duration, and

environment. The students had the freedom to select a topic that piqued their interest and familiarity, taking into consideration potential interest and familiarity with the topic (Yang & Kim, 2020; Yoon, 2021). Care was taken, though, to ensure that the subjects covered in the pre-test and during the intervention did not come up again in the post-test. Students in the treatment group and control groups experienced identical in-class circumstances with regard to the lecturer, writing methods, class schedule, and course material. An interview was done to get the participants' experiences in the treatment in order to respond to the second study question. Archival data from text chats created during the course of the treatment was used to address the third study issue.

V RESULTS

To answer the research questions, both quantitative and qualitative analyses were performed. In particular, this study's quantitative component addressed research question 1, while its qualitative component focused on research questions 2 and 3.

A. Quantitative Results

Results of Research Q 1: The statistical results in terms of Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) before and after the treatment are displayed in table 1 below to answer the first study question. To examine the impact of social media (WhatsApp) on undergraduates' descriptive essay writing skills compared to the control group, a two factor ANOVA was performed. Students in the WhatsApp intervention group had mean scores of (M=9.30, SD=2.507) before and (M=12.90, SD=2.107) post treatment. Before receiving standard treatment, the mean scores of the students in the control group were (M=8.97, SD=2.076); following the treatment, this value further dropped to (M=8.73, SD=2.083). Below are the findings from the two-factor ANOVA that was performed to determine whether the variations in the test scores of students in two different settings indicated a significant difference.

TABLE 1

PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST SCORES OF CONTROL AND TREATMENT GROUP

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Scores before treatment	WhatsApp	30	9.30	2.507	.458	8.36	10.24	5	13
	Control	30	8.97	2.076	.379	8.19	9.74	6	14

	Total	60	9.07	2.161	.228	8.61	9.52	5	14
Scores after treatment	WhatsApp	30	12.90	2.107	.385	12.11	13.69	10	17
	Control	30	8.73	2.083	.380	7.96	9.51	6	14
	Total	60	11.49	2.745	.289	10.91	12.06	6	17

The results indicate that there was a significant difference in the scores of the WhatsApp group and the control group before and after the treatment; in other words, there is a significant effect of both the repeated measure factors and being in a different learning environment on scores, as indicated in the table 2, $F_{(2, 87)}$ =45.22, $p < .05$, remains productive.

TABLE 1

ANOVA RESULTS COMPARISON BETWEEN GROUPS AND WITHIN GROUPS

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

Table 3 below shows the Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) prior to the treatment and after the treatment. A two factor MANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of WhatsApp in comparison with the control group on undergraduates' descriptive essay writing skill in terms of organization.

The Mean scores of students in the treatment group (WhatsApp) were before (M=1.63; SD=.669) after treatment. Although Mean scores of the students in the control group, who received no treatment, was (M= 1.53; SD= .507) before, this value increased to (M=1.60; Sd=.525) after the treatment. However, it did not show any meaningful increase in mean scores. The results of the two-factor MANOVA that was made to see if the changes in the scores of students in two separate environments showed a meaningful difference in terms of organization are given in table 3. Since there is significant difference in mean scores of the students in the treatment group and the control group, the study retained the alternative hypothesis.

TABLE 3

PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST IN TERMS OF ORGANIZATION

	Treatment & Control	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Scores in organization before treatment	WhatsApp	1.63	.669	30
	Control	1.53	.507	30
	Total	1.61	.575	60
Scores in organization after treatment	WhatsApp	2.60	.724	30
	Control	1.60	.525	30
	Total	2.43	.654	60

Table 4 below shows Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) before and after treatment in terms of vocabulary. The Mean scores of students in the treatment group (WhatsApp) were before (M=1.73; SD=.640) after treatment. Although Mean scores of the students in the control group, who received no treatment, was (M= 1.97; SD= .490) before, this value increased to (M=2.07; Sd=.640) after the treatment. However, it did not show any meaningful increase in mean scores in comparison with the treatment scores. The results of the two-factor MANOVA that was made to find if the changes in the scores of students in two different groups showed a meaningful difference in terms of mechanics are given table 4. Since there is significant difference in mean scores of the students in the treatment group and the control group, the study retained the alternative hypothesis.

TABLE 4

PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST IN TERMS OF MECHANICS

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

Control	2.07	.640	30
Total	2.18	.572	60

The next section represents the qualitative part of the study.

B.　Qualitative results

Results of Research Q 2: To address the research question 2, a semi-structured interview of the participants from treatment group was conducted. To analyse interview data, Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis was followed. The data was analysed through an iterative process that yielded various themes, sub-themes, categories, and codes. The qualitative results revealed that the improvement in content was one of the contributions of WhatsApp. Multiple students stated that WhatsApp has the potential to improve their descriptive essay in terms of organization. For example, one respondent said:

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

The students improved their organizational skills through WhatsApp since the teacher adopted questions-in-sequence technique. This technique of engaging students through questions was the first category of coding that the researcher felt contributed to the learning of organization. One respondent from the WhatsApp platform stated:

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

The students learnt how they could write the beginning of the essay, the mid or the end of an essay through the question-in-sequence technique which proved helpful in teaching them how to organize an essay.

When inquired, a respondent said that before joining the WhatsApp group, he had no idea of the beginning, mid or end of the essay. But this platform helped him learn the organization of an essay through chat based activity. It implies that the question-answer was a better strategy to teach students how to organize an essay:

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

Chronologically was another coding category gleaned from interview data. Students stated that they organized information chronologically which helped them learn the sequence of descriptive essay writing. A respondent from WhatsApp stated that:

> *Yes, it absolutely helps me in improving my descriptive essay writing. Because, here I have to describe a writing task chronologically, such organization of a topic is helpful in improving descriptive essay writing on WhatsApp' (P 3).*

The 'sample essays' was another coding that led the researcher to infer that the sample essays shared through WhatsApp proved helpful in learning the organization component of essay writing. An interviewee from WhatsApp responded that:

> *Uh, yes sir because my teacher shared samples and he used to tell us how we can describe the topic. And he told us a way to describe things what to describe first and what to describe latter and this way makes my descriptive writing better (P 7).*

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

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

The personal views of the participants indicated that WhatsApp intervention proved useful in terms of improvement in the organization component of the essay. The teacher's particular strategy of engaging students through questions-in-sequence was productive in teaching them how to organize an essay.

Finally, WhatsApp also helped the learners in improving mechanics. Helping with mistakes of punctuation was one coding category that led the researcher to the conclusion that it helped the students in developing descriptive essay writing in terms of mechanics. One respondent said that on WhatsApp, students also helped each other in improving mechanics such as punctuation and spelling:

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

One intervention student stated that his punctuation got better while learning descriptive essay writing through WhatsApp:

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

However, we could not find multiple students' experiences to support that WhatsApp helped in improving mechanics. A justification could be provided to answer this inconsistency in this regard. For example, although the teacher shared sample essays at the end of every task, and the students had been scaffolded in terms of mechanics especially spellings during the completion of every task, they might have overlooked this aspect of

learning due to carelessness since students were habitual of text messaging style. Therefore, they might not have followed capitalization and punctuation in completing the writing task on this platform.

Results of Research Q 3: To answer the third research question, the chats data was gleaned from WhatsApp platform. The coding system for archival data is based on Golonka et al. (2017) and Alghasab et al. (2019). The chats analysis revealed that WhatsApp platform helped the learners improve their descriptive essay writing skills in terms of organization.

Text characteristics such as praising, guiding the writing steps, promoting joint construction of meaning and form, giving formative feedback, promoting individual contribution and negotiation of meaning have been named student-teacher interaction. Guiding the writing steps is defined as the teacher's assistance that he/she provides to students by telling them how to complete the writing tasks. In this study, the teacher's guidance was used as a coding category. For every writing task, the teacher posted seven to ten questions to which the participants wrote answers and developed a descriptive essay. This strategy was employed to support how to develop organization in the descriptive essay. For example, in a writing task, 'describing a piece of art' the teacher posted a question in the first chat. In chats two and three, the students contributed to the description of the painting. Again, the teacher guided the students in the last two chats. This strategy was implemented till the conclusion of the essay. Various instances from WhatsApp identified in this study include assisting partner in terms of organization help.

Through this strategy, the students were taught how to start, develop and end the descriptive essay writing task:

1. *6:46 PM - Teacher: Now give your opinion about the painting. U can use such adjectives, (Guiding the writing steps)*

2. *6:48 PM: The painting is all about hectic routine or a still life. As we could see that two companions seems mysterious or lost in some sort of life's issues... In some extent both seems egoistic. Like they do not want to share their problems with each other. That's why they are wasting their beautiful time. Beauty of nature behind the window is waiting for their attention but their pessimistic n egoistic nature depriving them from all kind of pleasures*

3. *6:48 PM: This picture belongs to a still life. Where everything is freeze no one can move or stop what they are doing. This is a portrait of husband and wife. They are sitting near a window. Husband loves pet but his wife has no interest in pets. Husband has a cat as a pet he is loving her and the cat is sitting on his leg. His wife is fighting with him to expel this cat from house but the man is ignoring her because he can't do this due to intense love with his cat. This fight is never going to be end as it belongs to a still life. Whenever we'll see this picture, they both will be fighting as now we are looking in this portrait.*

4. *6:48 PM - Teacher: Life like, Dreamlike, Confusing, Colorful, Romantic, lyrical and Impressive*

5. *6:48 PM - Teacher: Choose any word of these adjective to describe the painting, (Guiding the writing steps)*

Various instances of text chat show that WhatsApp has the potential to create a conducive environment for learning how to organize an essay. Overall, the question-answer technique adopted by the teacher proved useful in this connection.

WhatsApp also provided help in terms of spellings such as:

1. *8:02 PM: She is very sensible, <u>descent, mature</u> and supportive.*
2. *8:02 PM - Teacher: <u>Decent and mature.</u> (Formative feedback)*

The above instance of text chat shows that formative feedback was provided by the teacher as well as students in terms of spellings. This feedback contributed to the learning of mechanics. However, we could not find several instances to support our thesis that WhatsApp has the potential to support the learning of mechanics in descriptive essay writing.

VII DISCUSSION

To begin with, students who utilised WhatsApp in addition to traditional education scored better than those who did not. The results of the post hoc Tukey HSD test likewise demonstrated a statistically significant difference in post-treatment ratings between the WhatsApp and control groups. This suggested that undergraduates' descriptive essay writing was influenced by WhatsApp, and that those who used it were more likely to outperform the students in the control group.

These results are not surprising because prior research, as noted in the literature, has demonstrated the effects of the WhatsApp integrated approach to writing instruction (Bataineh et al., 2018). Similar to the findings of a study by (Noyan & Kocoglu, 2019), the study found a positive association between WhatsApp and female students' writing skills in terms of organisation when compared to their male counterparts. Researchers looked at how WhatsApp affected first-year university students' ability to write, and they found that intervention students who used WhatsApp to learn writing skills did better on the post-test than the control group. Our study's findings are corroborated by those of a few other researchers that suggest WhatsApp may help with writing abilities, (Haron et al., 2017; Khodabandeh & Naseri, 2020; Linda & Ri'aeni, 2018b; Mulyasari & Putri, 2020; Okocha et al., 2017; Suhaimi et al., 2019). It implies that WhatsApp has the potential of supporting writing skills.

WhatsApp administered to the regular classes as mediating tool provided the learners with a formal environment of learning of its own type. In this context, the results of our study are consistent with that of Alam and Mizan (2019) who concluded that there was a positive relationship between writing skills and Facebook

(social media tool) even if it was introduced in a formal environment of learning. This may be attributed to the teaching methodology adopted by the teacher, but findings also suggest that the use of WhatsApp had additive effects since the treatment group has outperformed the control group in overall performance. That is WhatsApp, in the current study, has been used in a novel way in which it not only supported writing skills but also fostered online interaction through chats that helped them improve their descriptive essay writing skills.

WhatsApp has been viewed as one of the possible instruments for helping students to improve mechanics. For example, WhatsApp was proven to be a useful tool in improving mechanics by (Bouamrani, 2019; Noyan & Kocoglu, 2019; Saleh, 2019; Verheijen & Spooren, 2021). According to Roua et al. (2019), WhatsApp has been discovered to possess the ability to positively influence the spelling of elementary school kids. In terms of mechanics, however, our study's findings differ from earlier investigations.

One could offer an explanation to address this discrepancy in this context. For instance, even though the teacher provided sample essays at the conclusion of each assignment and the students received scaffolding in mechanics, particularly spelling, during task completion, it's possible that they negligently ignored this part of the curriculum because the students were accustomed to texting. As a result, when completing the writing assignment on these platforms, students might not have observed capitalization and punctuation rules.

Through thematic analysis of interview data, the present study found that most of the participants reported that WhatsApp platform supported their learning of descriptive essay writing in terms of organization. The pupils remarked that the teacher's question-answer-sequence method helped them with their organisation as well. This method methodically enhanced how descriptive essay writing was organised. They gained knowledge about the beginning, middle, and end of a descriptive essay. They learned how to create an essay's introduction, defend their thesis statement, build the essay's body, and produce an effective conclusion thanks to the question-answer format.

Students from this platform however, showed no interest in supporting mechanics. Because it was a discussion activity with an emphasis on organisation rather than mechanics, they claimed that they did not improve mechanics. Although the teacher and several students tried to correct the spelling errors, the classroom environment was informal and spelling was disregarded.

In response to the previous study question, which examined the influence of interaction on the composition of descriptive essays, we examined text conversations and established a connection between interaction and the evolution of descriptive essay composition in terms of organization and mechanics. The

results of this study showed that characteristics of virtual interaction aided in the evolution of descriptive essay writing.

In this regard, our work builds on previous research, such as Vlachopoulos & Makri (2019), which looked at how online discussion-based interaction affects students' comprehension. It was anticipated in our study that students would gain experience in writing descriptive essays by interacting with one another on WhatsApp. Thus, our research supported the findings of (Khodabandeh & Naseri, 2020), who claimed that WhatsApp was a superior medium for fostering interaction and enhancing students' writing abilities. Similarly, Haron and Adi Kasuma (2021) corroborated our findings, demonstrating that students' writing performance improved when they were given access to a positive community setting on WhatsApp, allowing them to freely connect with both teachers and other students.

The results of the current study supported Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory by highlighting the significance of WhatsApp in mobile learning environments. Drawing on sociocultural paradigms, the examination of social media technologies broadens our understanding and provides fresh perspectives on how L2 writing knowledge is jointly built by learners collaborating through an interactive WhatsApp platform to accomplish writing assignments. Throughout the intervention, the participants engaged in a variety of WhatsApp activities that illustrated the social constructivism setting, which places a strong importance on cooperation and scaffolding.

The challenges faced by students when using WhatsApp for their writing tasks support earlier research findings as stated by Wang et al. (2013) and Li and Li (2017). L2 writing teachers would find it easier to develop interventions for more successful adoption of these strategies if they had a comprehensive view of these challenges.

VII CONCLUSION

This study examined how WhatsApp mixed learning affected L2 learners' ability to write descriptive essays, paying particular attention to mechanics and organisation. According to the overall results, students who received this type of feedback fared better than those in the control group, suggesting that WhatsApp might be used as a teaching tool in L2 writing classes. The primary reason for these outcomes was WhatsApp's capacity to provide an interactive environment for learning.

As a result, the data points to the restriction-free learning environment as the source of the improvements in the structure and mechanics of writing descriptive essays. However, several difficulties were mentioned, such the

deluge of SMS messages. Numerous conclusions can be made based on the study. The results theoretically broadened our knowledge of WhatsApp's function in L2 writing classes by illuminating the elements and advantages that are essential to the app's effectiveness as a language learning aid, especially in writing classes.

From a pedagogical perspective, the current study included details on how writing instruction may be methodically incorporated with WhatsApp. In particular, it can be applied as a supplement to conventional teaching. From a methodological standpoint, the current study adds to the validity of conclusions on the effectiveness of social media platforms, in this case WhatsApp, in promoting the composition of descriptive essays. Future studies may look at the various ways that affordances affect students' writing abilities because initial evidence indicates that learners are impacted by them in diverse ways. Future research must acknowledge and overcome some of this study's limitations. First, intact groups were utilised in the experiment, and a relatively modest sample size of 60 undergraduates was used in the investigation. Future research may include more individuals from various learning situations and choose them at random to get more broadly applicable results. Subsequent research endeavours could explore the instructional advantages of social media instruments from the viewpoint of educators. We will be able to see social media's potential as a teaching and learning tool for languages more clearly as a result.

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