

Task-based Meaningful Literacy for Language Learners

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Abstract

This article reflects on the concept of meaningful literacy. It offers a classroom methodology, posting on a closed Facebook Group, that manifests this approach to English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom meaningful literacy instruction. This study aims to produce empirically informed teaching materials by providing a meaningful literacy writing task for ESL/EFL educational environments. This aim is guided by the main research question: What are the genre characteristics of posting a photo and writing a caption about it in a closed Facebook Group writing task? To answer the question, multiple instruments are employed including observation of task completion, Facebook Group posts, and post-task completion face-to-face interviews. These instruments help in understanding the participants' contribution to the closed Facebook Group task. This article focuses on utilizing Facebook as a language learning tool to create meaningful experiences. It starts with a summary of empirical evidence that supports implementing the use of Facebook in ESL/EFL classes. Then, this article provides some descriptions of the practical aspects of applying it. This approach is presented as a way of focusing on the individual language learner as a center of the language learning process and as a way of facilitating the development of language learning. The findings revealed that the participants are able to create meaning easily and to express themselves better. Therefore, Facebook Groups can be extended spaces for writing tasks in educational contexts where students learn the language through bridging life experiences with school subjects.

Keywords: English as a foreign language, English as a second language, Facebook groups, meaningful literacy, personal experiences

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Introduction

The rapid expansion of technology around the world facilitates the emergence of social networking websites in educational environments. The impact of social networking websites on language learning has been growing exponentially. This growth indicates that educators and instructors need new tools and creative strategies to teach language learners and capture their interests (Godwin-Jones, 2008; 2018; Winke & Goertler, 2008). Currently, educators are increasingly using social networking websites in ESL/EFL educational settings. Through the utilization of social networking websites in educational settings, educators can help learners make their learning experiences meaningful by offering a community of practice where learners can be the center of their learning process, make sense of themselves and their surroundings, and share their life experiences with others. Educators must support learners' meaningful learning and provide lifelong educational experiences for them (Wan, Prain, & Collet, 2014). Today, Facebook is one of the social networking websites that services a large online community around the world (Blattner & Lomicka, 2012). It offers a virtual community to its users where they communicate and interact with each other. This study uses Facebook as a social networking tool to enhance meaningful literacy in ESL/EFL educational environments.

Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to investigate techniques in utilizing Facebook in ESL/EFL educational environments to develop meaningful literacy. Additionally, this study aims to find the genre characteristics of completing a task that requires posting a photo and writing a caption about it in a closed Facebook Group. This research enables educators and researchers to identify and comprehend how social networking websites, such as Facebook, can contribute to ESL/EFL language learning practices. Also, educators can have a better understanding of how ESL/EFL learners can improve their language practices, especially in writing, through social networking websites. With such knowledge, researchers and educators can develop appropriate and creative pedagogical ideas and methods to make effective use of social networking websites in ESL/EFL educational environments. To meet the study's purpose, the proposed task requires its participants to share a photo that means something to them, write why they chose it and what it means to them, and then post it on a closed Facebook Group. This task mainly focuses on each participant as an individual language learner and as the center of the learning process. To have a better understanding of the developed task and its implications, it is important to first comprehend the concept of meaningful literacy learning in ESL/EFL educational settings. It is also significant to know about the group feature on Facebook to have a better understanding of meaningful Facebook use in ESL/EFL educational pedagogies.

Meaningful Literacy Learning in ESL/EFL Educational Settings

As this article focuses on utilizing Facebook as a meaningful educational tool, this section spotlights on the meaningful literacy learning approach. It defines meaningful literacy and examines how Facebook can be used to encourage meaningful learning in ESL/EFL educational settings.

The word "meaningful" is used widely in learning settings. In language learning settings, mainly, it means making the language learning process meaningful for learners and supporting them to understand the world and make sense of the surroundings (Hanauer, 2012). One manifestation of Hanauer's meaningful literacy approach explains that the content of writing is

the student's self and life. As learning a language may be a life-changing event, it is an event that involves the learner as a human being, rather than just focusing on their intellectual abilities. As Hanauer (2012) states, "human beings are characterized by their ability to make sense of themselves and their surroundings" (p. 107). Hence, learning a language involves the learner and his/her relation to the world. Thus, to reposition and re-contextualize language learning, it has to entail a process where "the language learner's memory, experiences, feelings, beliefs, history, and social environment are the context of the language use" (Hanauer, 2012, p. 109). Also, the moment when a language learner can express thoughts and experiences in a second/foreign language is very powerful. It can change the learner's perception of the new language as a tool to reveal personal expressions, and as a language that they own and use (Hanauer, 2012).

Moreover, making the language learning process meaningful integrates one's personal history and future actions, more than just one's intellectual activities. Thus, the process of understanding and making sense of the world "... is a holistic activity that defines the self at the moment of understanding and a perspective and orientation towards the world" (Hanauer, 2012, p. 107). Learning a language has many ramifications in how learners perceive their subjectivities as a result of knowing and learning about the world of the target language (Kramsch, 2009). It involves the human being as a whole, including learners' experiences and emotions, beyond their intellectual abilities. Nevertheless, the process of learning a language in classrooms is decontextualized. Language can only be pragmatically real, and thus, meaningful if it is reconnected and bonded with the context of the same kind (Widdowson, 1998) and if it is used beyond educational environments. Therefore, it's challenging for educators to provide an environment for learners where language is contrived to be engaged with and learned from, in which learners are at the center of the language learning process, and to find a way to make learning the language personally contextualized, and thus, meaningful for learners (Widdowson, 1998; Hanauer, 2012).

All these underpinnings and suppositions shape the learner's personal experiences, history, and social contextualization, where the individual is at the center of the learning experience and more active and engaged in his/her learning process. This approach makes the learning process in the class meaningful for each language learner, both personally and socially. It also provides a sense of depth and ownership of the target language itself. The learner will be proficient in the target language to the extent that he/she can process it, make it his/her own, and bend it to his/her will.

Understanding Facebook Groups

Facebook is a social networking website that was created in 2004 as a social communication tool. Facebook is defined as "a social utility that helps people share information and communicate more efficiently with their friends, family and coworkers" (Facebook.com, n.d.). It is a website where registered users can be friends with each other, post comments, share photographs, post links to news or other interesting content on the internet, chat live, and watch videos (De Villiers, 2010). Users can share content publicly or privately among a selected group of friends or family, or with a single person.

On Facebook, there are various forms of interaction. Facebook has purely social activities, such as confirming friends and communicating with each other. However, some activities can be

more formal where a user interacts with other users without being friends, for example, joining 'Groups' (De Villiers, 2010). Facebook Groups "are dedicated spaces where [a member] can share updates, photos or documents and message other group members" (Facebook.com). Facebook users can be in groups with other users who share the same interest and click on the "to join" button to participate in the group. Group members can participate in discussions and post comments. They can also be up to date on what is happening in the group from the news feed through posts or notifications. More specifically, Facebook Groups can be private, closed groups, where only invited members can browse and participate in the group (Ekoc, 2014). Facebook users can be members of a group without being a friend of other group members. Facebook Groups are best described as forums for discussions where members initiate topics and, for each topic, conversations and debates ensue. Facebook Groups are simply designed to support discussions on defined topics between Facebook users.

Furthermore, any member can create a group that can be open for any Facebook user or can restrict its access and participation to a selected audience. Therefore, it is easy for an instructor to create a group associated with a particular course for his/her students. A group can be limited to members that have been invited by the course instructor only. Creating a closed group for a course builds a sense of community for learners and intimacy to write and share knowledge in a non-threatening, educational environment. Learners will then feel motivated then to contribute to a Facebook Group if they subsequently receive support and help from their peers.

Facebook Groups utilization in ESL/EFL educational settings helps learners to socialize with other group members, to better express themselves, and to shape their social identity (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). It leads to continuance development, and it strengthens relationships with others. Undoubtedly, being a group member enhances the sense of belonging, which is very important for language learners. Also, using Facebook in education helps learners to be active learners and more engaged in the learning process. In addition, such closed-groups offer a valuable educational experience for learners while maintaining privacy and safety (Blattner & Fiori, 2009; 2011). Thus, Facebook Groups can be commonly used as an educational tool, inside and outside classrooms, for language learning pedagogies (Ekoc, 2014; Guamán, 2012; Lantz-Andersson et al., 2013; Mazman & Usluel, 2010).

Nevertheless, although social networks, such as Facebook, are not complete learning environments, they are widely used to support learning. Social networks can be used to promote motivation, socialization, discussion, and sharing resources for language learners, as well as making learning the target language meaningful for them. Therefore, more and more instructors are implementing Facebook usage in classrooms, especially using closed Facebook Groups to facilitate lifelong learning experiences (Ekoc, 2014; Lantz-Andersson et al., 2013; Mazman & Usluel, 2010). Thus, this article argues that Facebook can act as an adequate educational tool for language learning in ESL/EFL educational settings. In this regard, a good number of empirical research studies (Ekoc, 2014; Guamán, 2012; Mitchell, 2012; Mazman & Usluel, 2010; Wang & Vásquez, 2014) examined utilizing Facebook Groups as an educational tool in ESL/EFL language learning settings, as will be discussed throughout the paper.

Meaningful Facebook Use in Educational Settings

As this article focuses on utilizing Facebook as a language learning tool for creating meaningful experiences, this section sheds light on Facebook's general usage in language learning contexts and the common practice of Facebook's Group feature, in particular. It shows that using Facebook in education can be meaningful for language learners by offering a sense of community and belonging, and a formal/informal learner-center virtual environment.

A sense of community is necessary to sustain a dynamic and meaningful educational experience for language learners. Educators must provide learners with opportunities to develop a sense of community to enhance their learning experiences (Kok, 2008; Mills, 2011). A study by Rovai (2002) states that social networking websites provide learners with a new and a strong feeling of community and belonging, which eventually increases the willingness to share their experiences, support, and encourage each other. These findings are consistent with Blattner and Fiori's study (2009), which suggests that pedagogically meaningful integration of Facebook in language learning settings can develop a sense of community, foster rapport building, and support communicative competence. Also, McBride (2009) argues that utilizing Facebook can motivate learners to complete pedagogically, meaningful language learning experiences. More specifically, if learners develop their communicative skills in the second/foreign language, this will increase their autonomy to practice various aspects of their linguistic ability. Furthermore, when learners develop a sense of community and belonging in a virtual learning environment, such as in Facebook Groups, their posts in online platforms are consistently meaningful as they have a real audience with who they communicate and share. Thus, learners become more active and eager to write, respond, discuss, and interact (Blattner & Lomicka, 2012).

Moreover, being active and engaged in a learning process enhance the meaningful educational experience for language learners. In creating a meaningful learning experience, learners need to be involved in their own learning process. The language learning experience engages learners cognitively, emotionally, and morally (Kramsch, 2009). Learning a language is an emotional experience and a cognitive process. More specifically, learning a language is embodied individually in the physical, emotional, and intellectual life of the language learner. One of the study's (Reid, 2011) explores language learning as a process of broadening ways an individual can understand, interpret, feel and express his/her personal and meaningful understanding to himself/herself in various social settings. This study reports that as learners in the closed Facebook Group expressed themselves, they drew on their diversity, identity, and culture. Also, learners' voices were heard, and their unique sense of self was illustrated. Thus, integrating a meaningful literacy learning approach in language learning classrooms forms an instructional design that is rich with meaningful interaction and learning for language learners. Overall, learner-centered educational environments, where learners are actively participating and engaging with their peers, support the notion of meaningful literacy. Nonetheless, learners' interaction in Facebook Groups differs from traditional classroom writing settings. In traditional classrooms, the learner is the writing party, and the instructor is the assisting party. In Facebook Groups, learners and their instructors can have informal interactions, besides learners' interactions with their peers. Learners can be more engaged in the learning process as active learners and collaborators. Also, the authority will be distributed between the instructor and the learners, and learners will invest more in the learning process (Ekoc, 2014).

Furthermore, one of the primary needs of language learners is to gain the opportunity to use the target language beyond the classroom environment. Educators must support learners' meaningful informal learning and provide lifelong learning experiences (Lantaz-Andersson, Vigmo, & Bowen, 2013; Wan et al., 2014; Saaty, 2015). Educators started to view Facebook as a useful tool in language pedagogy where it "has the potential to find means to link informal and recreational writing with academic writing" (Godwin-Jones, 2008, p. 7). Facebook could serve as an extended space for meaningful language learning activities when it is implemented in educational practices. A study (Lantaz-Andersson et al., 2013) investigates how learners frame their interaction and accomplish tasks on Facebook Group when used in school contexts. In the Facebook Group, the study examines the nature of the interactions and investigations to know how the learners accomplished the communication upon the social constructivist perspective. The researchers follow and log the learners' interactions in a closed Facebook Group, and they analyze their activities as social practices. The results indicate that Facebook generated an extended space for collaborative language learning activities in educational contexts, where learners combine their school subjects with their communicative use of language in their daily life. Therefore, when learners are in command and take the space as theirs, they would use the target language for more meaningful and engaging interactions beyond regular school tasks. As a result, the learners' use of language will be more personal. Learners will process the target language, bend it to their will, and make it their own.

Considering the literature above, the following research question is addressed in this article: What are the genre characteristics of posting a photo and writing a caption about it in a closed Facebook Group writing task?

Methodology

This study aims to produce empirically informed teaching materials by providing a meaningful literacy task for ESL/EFL educational environments. To answer the research question and to allow for the empirical understanding of the task to emerge, this study employs several data collection instruments: observation of task completion, Facebook Group posts, and post-task completion face-to-face interviews. These data collection instruments help in understanding the participants' contribution to the closed Facebook Group task.

Participants

In this study, participants are three graduate students (two males, one female). All three are enrolled in the same graduate program. They all volunteered to participate. They all have private Facebook accounts and they use it frequently. They are Facebook friends. The participants' first language is not English; nonetheless, they demonstrated an advanced English language proficiency level by scoring 6 or higher in the IELTS test or its TOEFL equivalent. The researcher selected these participants because of their advanced command of English, which would allow them to focus on the content and on constructing knowledge without being distracted by language issues. Table 1 provides general background information about the participants' education and Facebook use.

Table 1.
Participants' Background Information

<i>Factors</i>	Educational Background		Facebook Use Background		
	<i>Education. Program</i>	<i>English Proficiency</i>	<i>Facebook Use</i>	<i>Facebook Account Privacy</i>	<i>Facebook Group Use</i>
Rayan	M.A. in TESOL	6 IELTS	Yes	Private	Yes
Joseph	M.A. in TESOL	6.5 IELTS	Yes	Private	Yes
Nancy	M.A. in TESOL	6 IELTS	Yes	Private	No

Task

The participants in this study are required to complete a writing task in a closed Facebook Group. The Facebook Group is specially created for this study and its access is limited to the participants and the researcher. The task prompt is given to the participants on a piece of paper. The participants are first asked to choose a photo from their cellphones or laptops that interests them or reflects a special moment. Along with that, the participants are asked to write a caption stating why they chose this photo, what moment this photo reflects, and why it interests them. Then, the photo with its caption should be posted on a closed Facebook Group. Thus, the selected genre of this writing task is a Facebook-group-post (Appendix A).

Data Collection Procedure

For participants to conduct the task, the researcher met the same day with each participant, individually, in a quiet area in the university library. While participants are working on the task, the researcher made visual observations and took notes. Participants completed the task at their own pace. There was no restricted time for participants to complete the task. Then, face-to-face post-task interviews were conducted afterward, individually, with each of the participants.

Data Collection Instruments

For the study's purpose and to answer the research question, multiple data sources are employed, including observation of task completion, participants' Facebook Group posts, and post-task completion interviews (Figure 1). The study's data sources are utilized as follows:



Figure 1. Data collection instruments

Observing Task Completion

Observation is considered one of the critical instruments for collecting data in qualitative research (Cresswell, 2014). One of the major strengths of using observation is that it permits researchers to study the processes of education in naturalistic settings. Here, the collected data from the observation focuses on the frequency of specific behaviors or types of a behavior that occurred when participants conduct the task. Also, the researcher in this study uses observation to measure the duration of the task completion of each participant.

In conducting this study, the researcher adopted Creswell's (2014) observational protocol for recording observational notes. Following this protocol, the researcher used a notebook and a pen to write the field notes, which indicate "Descriptive notes" to record what happened, and "Reflective notes" to provide notes to herself about her experience and learning from what is being observed. Additionally, the researcher provided appropriate identification information such as the date, time, and place of the observation. In short, the researcher observed the participants complete the meaningful literacy task (closed Facebook Group post) and wrote notes about how each participant is conducting the task.

Facebook Group Posts

The Facebook posts are the texts the participants wrote in the closed Facebook Group, photo caption, to complete the task. For this study's purpose and time constrain, only the text (the caption of the posted photo) is used as a data source; photos are not used as a data source. Participants' posts are copied and pasted in Microsoft Word 2016 for analysis purposes. Via the Microsoft Word, information about the reading complexity of the document is provided, this includes the Flesch–Kincaid readability tests (the Flesch Reading Ease, and the Flesch–Kincaid Grade Level). The posts are first analyzed individually and then holistically as a group.

Post-task Completion Interviews

Following the completion of the task, the researcher conducted semi-structured face-to-face interviews with each of the participants individually. The choice of interviews as a primary data collection method was inspired by its potential of providing rich and vital information on qualitative studies that seek to explore the way knowledge, interactions, attitudes, and perceptions are constructed and co-constructed among members of a specific community (Fontana & Frey, 2008; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Patton, 2002; Stake, 2010).

The interviews are conducted with the participants in English. The interview protocol consists of about ten questions, and a couple of probing follow-up questions asked when needed (Appendix B). The questions asked about participants' perceptions of their Facebook Group post writing experience and its benefits and caveats. In interviewing the participants, the researcher, as the interviewer, rephrased or explained some of the questions if they needed further clarification. Also, the researcher restated and summarized the participants responses to confirm understanding their answers. Each participant's responses are digitally recorded by the researcher's cellphone. After that, interviews are consequently transcribed and coded by the researcher. The data analysis and the descriptions in the following sections refer to the participants' contribution to the task both individually and holistically.

Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis is conducted in several phases. The first phase of analysis concerned observation notes, which showed a general series of stages that each participant went through while conducting the task. The second phase of analysis involved coding post-task interviews' transcripts. Several close readings of the interviews' transcripts took place to help in the coding process. After coding the interviews' transcripts, individual and holistic descriptions of each interview was composed. Then, the analysis involved comparing the participants' codes. The third phase of analysis is focused on the Facebook Group posts, which is the text the participants wrote in the closed Facebook Group. This phase also involved analyzing each post individually and then holistically to compare participants' texts. The final phase of analysis featured triangulation across all three data sets.

Data Analysis and Results

Observation Analysis

The first stage to complete the task for Rayan was to choose the photo that he wanted to write about, and he prepared a photo before meeting with the researcher. Second, he read the task instructions once and then used the Facebook application from his cellphone. Third, he uploaded the photo and then looked at the task again, and then he started to type. He went back to read the task frequently. Fourth, after about three minutes and thirty seconds, he posted the task. However, afterward, he read through it and looked again to the task instructions, and edited the text. Lastly, Rayan then stopped typing and looked back at the task instructions, and on what he wrote, and then he nodded his head and posted it again. The total timing for Rayan to do the task was six minutes and twenty-five seconds.

The first stage to complete the task for Joseph was to read the task instructions once, and then he used the Iphotos application from his laptop to select a photo. The photo selection process took about a minute, and fifty seconds, he did not prepare a photo in advance. Then he browsed the Facebook Group to upload the photo; after, he looked at the task instructions again and started to type. Joseph also stopped for a while after writing the first sentence; then he continued typing. He went back and forth to read the task instructions every once in a while. After about seven minutes, he posted the photo along with the caption. Lastly, he read the text one more time after posting it. Joseph accomplished the task in eight minutes and thirty seconds.

The first stage to complete the task for Nancy was that she read the task instructions once. Then, she asked about the privacy setting of the Facebook Group before starting to do anything. She praised that the Facebook Group is private. Secondly, Nancy begun looking for a photo from her cellphone, and it took her about five minutes to find a photo because she did not prepare a photo in advance. When the photo was chosen, she also used the Facebook application from her cellphone and started to type. She stopped to stretch-out once and then looked back to the task instructions. As the other participants (Rayan and Joseph), she also went back to read the task instructions every so often. Lastly, she stopped writing after eight minutes, and she read it before once posting it. Nancy completed the task in ten minutes.

All participants read the task instructions once before they start typing. Nancy was the only one who asked about the privacy settings of Facebook Groups before doing anything, and it took

her more time to choose a photo compared to others. Rayan was the only one who chose the photo before meeting with the researcher to complete the task. Rayan and Nancy looked up for the photo after they were given the task. Rayan and Nancy used their cellphones to complete the task, while Joseph used his laptop. Additionally, Joseph wrote much more than the other participants. When they all started to type they were fluent, only Joseph paused after he typed the first sentence then looked at instructions. However, all participants typed fluently, yet they went back to read the task instructions every so often. After they finished writing, Joseph and Nancy revised the text, and then posted it. Only Rayan posted the text, then went back to revise and edited it and then read the text before he finally posted it again. Overall, the total timing for the task completion varied among the participants, six minutes for Rayan, eight minutes for Joseph, and ten minutes for Nancy.

Facebook Participants' Posts Analysis

The Facebook posts that participants posted in the group, as photo captions, are analyzed linguistically and rhetorically to check the writing complexity and to understand the writer's rhetorical self-positioning better. The posts are tabulated using features present in Microsoft Word 2016 to account for Flesch–Kincaid readability tests (Flesch Reading Ease and Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level), word length, level, paragraphs, sentences, and words per sentence. Therefore, the quantitative data section came from using Microsoft Word 2016, whereas the qualitative data section came from the researcher's interpretations of each post. Foremost, to understand writing complexity for the Facebook Group participants' posts, the table below (table 2) shows the linguistic analysis of the data across participants.

Table 2.

Linguistics Analysis (Writing Complexity)

Document Analysis	Rayan	Joseph	Nancy	Average
Word Length	88	315	112	171.6
Paragraph	1	2	1	1.3
Sentences	5	18	6	9.6
Words per sentence	17.6	17.5	18.6	17.9
Flesch Reading Ease	70.7	69.5	67.7	69.3
Flesch-Kncaid Grade level	7.7	7.9	8	7.8

As shown in the table above, the Facebook Group posts word length varied among participants, 88 words for Rayan, 315 for Joseph, and 112 for Nancy. The average word length for all the posts was 171.6 words. For paragraphs numbers, both Rayan and Nancy wrote one paragraph; however, Joseph wrote two paragraphs. More specifically, Rayan and Nancy, who used their cellphones to complete the task, the number of sentences was very close (Rayan five and Nancy six). Nonetheless, Joseph, who was the only one of the participants to complete the task using his laptop, wrote 18 sentences in total. Additionally, sentences in the posts were not long, and were simply structured; the average of words per sentences was 17.9. For posts readability complexity, participants' posts were simple. On average, all posts were at the 7.8 Grade Level, which means pre-intermediate reading level index, and vocabulary. Also, in the Flesch Reading

Ease test, the participants' Facebook Group posts scored close results: Rayan post scored 70.7, whereas Joseph's scored 69.5, and Nancy scored 67.7.

Furthermore, to understand each participant's language characteristics, addressed topics, and rhetorical self-positioning, table 3 illustrates the rhetorical analysis of the participants' Facebook Group posts. The characteristics of the used language were all narrative, and represent a story behind the photo with descriptions. All captions were based on real events. Addressed topics varied among the participants; however, they all wrote about personal topics that expressed their own feelings. Rayan talked about enjoyment and distressing moments, and the well-spent time with his wife. Joseph wrote about his wedding ceremony as a life-changing day in his life, and about life-reflection on his personality as he became part Chinese through marriage. Nancy wrote about a well-spent family vacation moment. Moreover, for the writer's rhetorical self-positioning, all three participants used the first person singular pronoun "I" to refer to themselves. Besides, Rayan used the first person plural pronoun "we" to refer to himself and his wife. Overall, it is noticeable that all participants wrote simple and straightforward sentences to express and reflect on a meaningful moment for them that the photo they chose helped them recall the moment and write about it easily.

Table 3.

Rhetorical Analysis (Writing Complexity)

Rhetorical Analysis	Rayan	Joseph	Nancy
Language Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative; • Represents the story behind the photo with descriptions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative; • Represents the story behind the photo with descriptions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative; • Represents the story behind the photo with descriptions.
Addressed Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings (stress-tired-feeling better-love); • Time well-spent with his wife. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings; (enjoyment; nostalgic) • wedding ceremony; life-changing days of his life; reflection on his personality; part Chinese identity; responsibility to bridge both cultures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings; (love) • Summer vacation; family gatherings; relaxed moment.
Writer's Rhetorical Self-positioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First-person singular pronoun (I); • First-person plural pronoun (we) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First-person singular pronoun (I) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First-person singular pronoun (I)

Form of Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple way of expressing his mixed feelings that were related to the photo; • Short and direct sentences; • It is meaningful to him. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple way of sharing the moment of his wedding ceremony. • He recalled all the aspects from the symbol that was in the photo. • The text was meaningful to him, and he wrote it fluently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple and straightforward way of sharing the moment that the photo reflects. • Writing the text was meaningful to her, and it revealed a lot of mixed feelings.
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Interviews Analysis

To examine this study’s participants’ perceptions of the closed Facebook Group task experience, the researcher conducted oral interviews with the three participants after the completion of the task. In their interviews, the participants covered various aspects and codes of their powerful first-time closed Facebook Group task experience. Here, for this study, the researcher focuses on the participants’ most salient perceptions and summarizes their actual experiences as reflected in their interviews. Table 4 represents interview codes for each participant, including frequency of occurrence, mean, and examples. Below, an individual interview analysis of each of the participants is provided, then a review of the participants’ common features is presented.

Table 4.

Interviews Analysis Codes

Code	Rayan	Joseph	Nancy	M	Examples	
Feelings An emotional state.	Enjoyment: express how fun and joyful was the moment or the task.	24	2	2	9.3	A lot of fun – Wow- I felt better, happy, great time
	Discomfort/Distressed: feelings that express an absence of comfort or ease.	7	6	5	6	Been very stressed- sort of stress- sort of anxiety- nostalgia
Memory: the mental capacity of retaining and reviving events, or recalling, or recognizing previous experiences.	6	-	7	6.5	Realize, thought, reminded- Evoke your memory	
Reflection: on the moment.	3	2	7	4	It put me in that place-wrote mostly about myself	

Meaningful writing: express full meaning, significance purpose, or value of the moment, photo, or task.	4	5	8	5.6	It's meaningful because I can share some of my personality, and it made me remember details-wrote mostly about myself.
Interaction/ sharing: to act upon one another action, and socializing and communicating with others.	4	5	6	5	I didn't mind sharing, to socialize, interact-Fun to share with friends-can response.
Meaningful Events: short, once in a lifetime events.	-	4	-	4	Wedding day-coming here today
Unease of choosing a photo: Readily done. Requiring an effort or planning to be performed successfully.	2	-	4	3	Difficulty choosing a specific photo-Not very easy actually
Opinion about the task: a belief or judgment that reflects on personal view about the task	2	2	4	2.6	Very helpful, really fun, too easy to write

One of the codes that appeared clearly from Rayan's interview was "feelings of enjoyment," that was related to express how fun he was having at the moment in the photo, which he wrote about. He expressed how fun it was to go back and look at the photo and point back at a joyful moment. Rayan also said that "the task was cool and fun to do, and that posting it on Facebook was fun to do," which meant he enjoyed conducting the task. Feeling "distressed" was another common code; it was related to how he felt before the photo was taken. Also, he pointed a lot about "memory;" he remembered and recalled that moment that he wrote about easily. He explained how the photo made it easy for him to reflect on the presented moment, and what he did then helped him to feel better and clear his mind. Rayan explained that the task was "meaningful" for him and that the photo helped him "relate to that moment and that something fun and meaningful happened." Also, "sharing" and "interacting" with Facebook friends made it easy to socialize and talk to each other, he said, that was important to him.

One of the salient perceptions that was clearly coded from Joseph's interview was "meaningful events." This code was related to once in a lifetime events and to things he had done that have stories behind them. Joseph's examples came from his wedding day, which he narrated through writing in his post and verbally in the interview as well. He "felt nostalgic;" he was

expressing that by referring to it while writing about the photo. As he mentioned in the interview, the photo made him reflect and remember his wedding day and imagine exactly how it feels to be there. So, Joseph felt the desire to return to that time in his life, to that home where the photo was taken, and to his wife and her family. Another code was “meaningful writing,” which represents why the task was meaningful for him, and “sharing” as another related code made the task significantly purposeful for him. Joseph said sharing interesting parts of his personality, moments, and stories from his life with his Facebook friends made “interaction meaningful.” Also, the photo helped him to reflect on that moment easily, and put him on that place and time to imagine precisely being there. Overall, the code “feelings of enjoyment” was highlighted to express happiness throughout the interview to express his emotions. He stated how “reflecting” and “sharing” this moment on Facebook made him feel happy, and took him back to that moment in time. He said that this task “reflected an affective state of consciousness which happiness was experienced and felt.”

One of the codes that was first coded for Nancy was “unease of choosing a photo.” The code was related to the difficulty she claimed for choosing a specific photo because she has “too many photos and does not know what to write about them.” Another code was “memory,” which was related to how the photo helped her evoke memories from the past and take her places, fictionally. Nancy expressed that the photo brought her a yearning desire to a wistful longing for the old days. Also, a lot of “feeling distressed” were revealed, such as feeling a strong desire to return to the past that brought her extreme anxiety. She explained that she felt the “desire to return to that time and that place, where the photo was taken.” In addition, she clearly described how she felt nostalgic through the interview. Nancy explained that the task was “meaningful” to her because she wrote about herself and that “the moment in the photo means a lot to her.” She claimed that sharing posts with close Facebook friends give these posts meaning. “Reflection” was coded because she stated that the photo made it easy and helpful for her to reflect her feelings to that moment, and to take her to places and time to imagine precisely being there. She explained “interaction” as sharing photos with and writing comments to friends on Facebook, as well as their responses to her posts. In the end, she gave her “opinion” clearly on the task and how, after choosing the photo, it was really enjoyable and easy to write. She said, “It’s just a fun way to share things with your friends your day and your personality and some images of your life.”

In the interviews, the participants shared several salient perspectives about their closed Facebook Group task experience, they all talked about “meaningful writing,” “interaction,” “reflection,” and even talked about their “feelings.” Although each participant expressed different types of feelings that the task brings, Rayan revealed feelings were more “feelings of enjoyment” when he recalled the moment in the photo, as well as “distressed” when he recalled the moment before taking the photo. While Joseph expressed that writing about that moment made him feel happy. Nancy felt “nostalgic,” missing that moment, place, and people. For “meaningful writing,” Rayan and Joseph thought that the task was meaningful for them and that writing about a moment that meant a lot to them was fun and meaningful. On the contrary, Nancy differs slightly because she focused on herself and wrote about a moment that meant a lot to her. Nancy mentioned that writing about the moment in her chosen photo was “so meaningful” to her. As all participants are Facebook users, they highlighted the importance of “interaction” with Facebook friends and how sharing and responding made whatever they post meaningful. They also appreciated the idea of

sharing in a private group; they stated that this gave them privacy and willingness to share more personal experiences. Overall, the participants enjoyed the approach of choosing a photo to write about; they said the photo helped them to remember and reflect that meaningful moment clearly, then, write about it easily.

Educational Conclusions

In this study, participants showed how they created meaning individually from their personal experiences, and this made the task meaningful for each of them. It is worthy to note that selecting a photo to recall a moment helped the participants to reflect easily on the moment. The photo tied a range of experiences and expressions to it, as the participants said, which enabled them to visualize the moment and narrate it with ease. After selecting the photo, all participants wrote the caption easily. Also, they all chose to write about personal and remarkable moments in their lives. Results stated that participants expressed themselves through their posts, which draws on their diversity and identity. Thus, the task revealed their unique sense of self; each as an individual wrote about a meaningful moment for them. They were able to make sense of themselves and their surroundings. Besides, participants drew from their memories and experiences, and that led to meaningful literacy (Hanauer, 2010). All participants used the first person singular pronoun “I” in their writings, which made it a personal narrative. Moreover, all participants mentioned that they enjoyed the task of interpreting the photo and sharing a memorable moment with their classmates, on Facebook. Since all participants are classmates, they knew each other, and they are also Facebook friends. Besides, they all were familiar with the use of Facebook, they are all members and they use it regularly; they post and respond to others’ posts every so often. Therefore, in completing this task, there was no difficulty reported using Facebook.

Contributions to ESL/EFL Writers

The study’s writing task has the potential to contribute many positive effects on ESL/EFL writers. The participants in this task are interacting through sharing what they are thinking or relating their ideas to past experiences about any photo they choose, which gives it value to them and make interaction meaningful (Hanauer, 2010). Also, participants were able to express themselves better and to communicate easily with one another. Therefore, Facebook Groups can be extended spaces for collaborative language-learning activities in educational contexts where students combine their school subjects of language learning and their communicative use of the language in their everyday life. This means that learners will be able to learn the language through bridging life experiences with school subjects. This will encourage learners to stay connected and to continue interacting with each other even after class, and this is positively affecting their social life. It will also help them build close relationships with one another by sharing and responding to posts, and students will know more about their peers. The social function of this genre is to help learners build social networks, make friends, and stay connected through Facebook. Allowing learners to communicate with each other will help them to be more confident to write, share thoughts, and grow as writers. Learners then will share the photo in a closed Facebook Group, and what they have written about it, this will give each individual a unique “voice” between their peers.

Given that research on meaningful literacy in language learning environments in its infancy, this study serves as an initial step towards developing a better understanding of the role of technology, and more specifically Facebook, in ESL/EFL education. Although technology

appears to offer valuable benefits and opportunities for educators and learners in the field of ESL/EFL education, more research is needed to establish further the effectiveness of utilizing technology in the pedagogical realm. Additionally, there is still a lack of research in the textual analysis of writing products that learners co-construct in Facebook Groups. A close examination into linguistic, rhetorical, and discourse features of learners' posts on Facebook Groups will contribute more to the research body of meaningful literacy, collaborative writing, and genre analysis, and it will be useful in designing appropriate classroom activities.

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Appendix A

Task prompt

(posting a photo along with a caption on a closed-Facebook Group)

Task Directions:

1. Take a photo by your cellphone or choose a photo from your cellphone or laptop that interests you or means something to you or captures your attention.
2. Write 1 or 2 paragraphs about the photo. Describe why you choose it. What is the story behind it? Why is it meaningful to you? Does it reflect on your personality? Does it represent your culture? Or remind you of something?
3. Post it on our Facebook Group.
4. Comment on at least one photo in the group

Appendix B

Interview protocol

Semi-Structured Interview Questions and Follow-Up Questions

1. What did you like about the task?
2. Why do you think the task is meaningful for you?
3. What difficulties did you face while conducting the task?
4. Was it easy? Why do you think it was easy?
5. How did the photo help you in writing the task?
6. Was it easy to recall and write about the moment in the photo? How? Why?
7. Talk about the emotions involved while writing the task and why do you think they appeared?
8. Is the photo old or new?
9. Did you face any difficulty using or posting on Facebook?
10. What do you think the purpose is behind commenting on Facebook group members' posts?