

An Investigation into the Impact of Facebook Group Usage on Students' Affect in Language Learning in a Thai Context

Noparat Tananuraksakul
Huachiew Chalermprakiet University

This paper reports on the way in which Facebook Group used as a learning management system can enhance Thai students' effective language learning (positive attitude and motivation) in a private university in the vicinity of Bangkok. These two variables are seen to influence learners' achievement in language learning, and they also interdependently influence one another. The qualitative outcomes deriving from ten participants revealed positive impacts of the Facebook Group usage on their attitude towards, and motivation in, learning English as a specific purpose in a Thai context because they commonly found themselves relevant to the Facebook Group as regular users of Facebook. Partly, the Facebook Group could give them senses of convenience, simplicity and relaxation and reduce cultural power distance between the instructor and them. Out of the exploratory parameter, the Facebook Group could be an online tool to facilitate English learning through error corrections. Positive results offered some insightful suggestions and implications for teachers of English as a foreign language. A specific limitation of this study is also discussed.

Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter—or social media—have been prominently used throughout the world. Recent reports in Thailand show a rapidly increasing Facebook usage (Millward, 2013; Sakawee, 2013). In the second quarter of 2013, about 18 million Thais used Facebook, which outnumbered users of Instagram and Twitter (Millward, 2013). By the third quarter, the number grew by 33 percent to 24 million Facebook users (Sakawee, 2013). This large number represents the country's social media users. Clicking "like" (7.1 billion likes posted in the nation) is the most popular activity, followed by sending private messages (5.5 billion) and posting comments (1.3 billion). These behaviors characterize Thai users of Facebook.

Facebook becomes a trendy social networking site among Thai users because of its structure, namely news feed, like, groups and pages. For example, a study showed that many university students from a middle-class background found news presentations on Facebook more interesting than the traditional papers (Rojanaphruk, 2013). Evidently, some students used it to fight hazing by creating a Facebook page where people could report on and post pictures that demonstrated any inappropriate behaviors (Lynn, 2013). Recently, thousands of people protested against the government by changing their Facebook profile pictures into a black sign with the message of *against the amnesty bill* to show their opposition to the amnesty bill (Pornwasin, 2013).

Students studying social work at a medium-sized private university in the vicinity of Bangkok also share the aforementioned phenomenon of Facebook usage. This includes ten undergraduate students in my English Reading-Writing for Professional Purposes class, which I was assigned to instruct for the first time. The course is considered English for specific purposes (ESP) and is one of the four compulsory subjects for them. In the

first session, all ten students studying and using English as a foreign language (EFL) admitted to me that they were not competent in English, commonly because they encountered difficulty to learn when they started it at a young age. They took this class before and did not pass it. They thought that they failed this course because they did not enjoy learning English and hardly attended the class. Psychologically, these aspects indicated their negative attitudes and lack of intrinsic motivation in learning ESP. Additionally, they just wanted to pass this subject so that they could further take Practical Training or graduate from the course. This aspect further showed that the students obtained some level of extrinsic motivation in learning ESP.

Past studies (e.g. Alhmali, 2007; Fakeye, 2010; Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997; Ghazali et al., 2009; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003; Padwick, 2010) confirmed that attitude towards, and motivation in, language learning are affective factors connectedly influencing learners' performance. Motivation predicts success in learning a language, while positive attitudes towards learning build up learners' motivation. On the one hand, if learners are motivated, they tend to consistently put much effort into study so that they can reach their goal of achievement. On the other hand, if they lack interest in learning, they will obtain negative attitudes and become less motivated or enthusiastic to language learning (De Bot, Lowie, & Verspoor, 2005). They are then less likely to perform well in English. Other studies also showed that these two variables can greatly influence language learners' achievement in a computer-assisted language learning environment (Doherty, 2002; Gilbert, 2001). Learners can also gain confidence if they possess positive attitudes towards their ability in speaking English regardless of how well or badly they can actually communicate (Tananuraksakul & Hall, 2011). To say the least, it is

considered vital for learners to be motivated in learning and enjoy it at the same time.

After discovering that the students were very much active on Facebook for social reasons, especially to keep in touch with their friends who live far away from them and have no other better way to communicate with them regularly, I created a Facebook Group and used it as a learning management system (LMS) in the ESP class. By means of LMS, I virtually administered interactions among students and between myself and students through putting up announcements, sharing resources and conducting online discussions (Wang et al., 2011). It is used as a teaching tool to boost their positive attitudes towards and motivation in learning ESP as Dalton (2009) suggests that young students may feel connected with people and global knowledge through technology.

While some teachers of EFL in Thailand have explored how Facebook facilitated interactions among students and their peers and between teachers and students in a writing class (Kajornboon, 2013; *Suthiwartnarueput & Wasanasomsithi, 2012*), there has been no attempt to investigate into Facebook Group usage as an LMS, a pedagogical tool to build up students' positive attitudes towards and motivation in learning ESP (although its structure of groups can enhance their learning to a certain degree). With the previously mentioned characteristics of the ten students enrolled in the ESP course, this present study primarily aims to investigate how the Facebook Group can enhance their positive attitude towards, and motivation in, learning ESP. It, however, does not examine how these two affective variables impact on their learning achievement for two reasons. First, their level of English is rather low to be improved within a semester under their learning attitudinal and motivational circumstances. Second, they do not major in English or any other foreign languages. The study asks these two key research questions:

1. How did Facebook Group promote students' positive attitudes towards learning ESP?
2. How did Facebook Group motivate students to learn ESP?

Defining Key Terms

Attitude towards and motivation in language learning are key terms that deal with feelings. Since both influence one another, many research studies into language learning are focused on these two affective variables (Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009). The former differs from the latter in that it refers to "[learners'] feelings about something, especially as shown by their behavior" (Macmillan English Dictionary, 2006, p. 76). Choy and Troudi (2006) posit that foreign language

learners' feelings and emotions affect their attitudes towards the target language. Learners who like English or have positive attitudes towards learning English tend to be motivated to learn. In this study, a Facebook Group used as an LMS is the external tool to enhance students' positive attitudes towards learning ESP.

Motivation is "a feeling of enthusiasm that makes [learners] determined to do something" (Macmillan English Dictionary, 2006, p. 925). Psychologically, it plays a vital role in the process of learning a language in that learners can succeed in their learning if they possess intrinsic goals and desires which link to their passion (Karaoglu, 2008). Motivation also fluctuates from time to time depending on external motivational factors, such as teaching and learning strategies, classroom atmosphere and use of technology. Teachers need to find ways relating to their students' passion so as to promote their intrinsic motivation and maintain it. In this study, a Facebook Group used as an LMS is the external motivational tool to boost students' intrinsic motivation to learn ESP.

Theoretical Framework

The present study is constructed on the ground that affect in learning a foreign language is interdependent with cognitive abilities or learning achievement. Past research studies (e.g., Dörnyei, 2003; Dörnyei & Clément, 2001; Krashen, 1988; Phimpirat, 2008; Supakitjumnong, 2002; Udomkit, 2003) indicate that learners can learn or perform in a foreign language better if they have both motivation and positive attitudes towards language learning, high self-confidence and low anxiety. Gardner and Lambert (1972) initiated a study of motivation in Canada and applied their efforts over a decade to studying the degree to which motivation could impact the achievement of second language acquisition. Their best-known conceptual framework of integrative (intrinsic) and instrumental (extrinsic) motivation has been widely adopted by many scholars (e.g. Atkinson & Raynor, 1974; Clément & Kruidenier, 1985; Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1994, 1998, 2001a, 2003; Fineman, 1977). Learners with integrative motivation study a language because they want to know and understand the target language group better, while instrumentally motivated learners want to succeed in life due to social, professional and/or academic purposes.

Integrative and instrumental motivation in language learning is parallel with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in social psychology that describes one's behavior as a consequence of a desire to earn something. Apparently, students in this study were not

motivated intrinsically but instrumentally or extrinsically as they aimed to pass the required ESP class. However, the level of their instrumental motivation was low since they only wanted to just pass the course or receive a D. From the qualitative data, they had learned English as an EFL since primary school but had not yet acquired the language generally due to the social context itself that does not require them to use it daily and in turn limits their chance of practice to be linguistically competent.

In the current era of globalization, Facebook is obviously used as parts of tertiary students' lives. Studies into Facebook reveal its social and academic benefits as a social networking site. For example, Mitchell (2012) qualitatively explores motivation of seven students from non-native English speaking backgrounds in an intensive English program in America for joining and utilizing Facebook. It was found that they joined this social networking site for social reasons and had opportunities to acquire English and learn about American culture. Radel (2011) found that Facebook is used and valued as a blended learning tool in tertiary institutions. Blended learning is a hybrid model that encompasses face-to-face and virtual instructions viewed as good practice because it provides interactions and prompt feedback among users (Martyn, 2003). Simpson (2012) examined if Facebook could be an effective and easy teaching tool in English tertiary classes, and the qualitative outcomes showed that it was neither effective nor easy due to some certain factors that involved the instructor's familiarity with the tool usage and students' willingness to learn or "lazy factor" (p. 46).

Omar, Embi, and Yunus (2012) explored the use of Facebook Group as a platform for information-sharing discussion among tertiary students in Malaysia. The outcomes showed that Facebook Group could promote constructive interaction among students studying English as a second language (ESL) as an alternative platform when they were assigned to discuss some issues online. Incorporation in classroom activities could also boost their confidence. Facebook Group can also be used as an LMS to promote students' learning and student-teacher relationship (Li & Pitts, 2009; Schroder & Greenbowe, 2009; Terantino & Graf, 2011). It has certain pedagogical, social, and technological affordances which satisfy adult learners in Singapore (Wang et al., 2012) and first-year undergraduate students learning EFL in Thailand (Kajornboon, 2013; Suthiwartnarueput & Wasanasomsithi, 2012). The implications are that Thai learners of EFL will be satisfied with or like the Facebook Group usage as an LMS, a teaching tool in the ESP class. The feeling of satisfaction or liking will in turn positively impact on

their attitudes towards, and intrinsic/instrumental motivation in, learning ESP.

Methodology

This study employed these qualitative research instruments for data collection: observations and interview questions. I selected this approach rather than a quantitative research approach due to two main reasons. First, it is because the study is not primarily concerned with numerical measurement or making generalized hypothesis statements, but with meaning of undergraduate students' personal experiences of a phenomenon (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006; Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Focus was on how they encountered the use of the Facebook Group as an LMS, a pedagogical tool in the ESP class. Second, the sample size characterized by the aims of the study (Charmaz, 2006) is rather small, comprising the number of ten students enrolled in the ESP course.

Participants

There were ten students who were enrolled in my ESP class and whose English competence was self-perceived as low with negative attitudes towards learning ESP and a lack of intrinsic motivation in learning ESP, and they were all recruited on a voluntary basis. Their self-perception of English ability accorded with the pre-test they took at the beginning of the semester (week one), grades of other English courses and GPA. Four were female, and six were male. Seven participants' ages ranged between 20 and 25, while two were over 25. One did not specify his age. While two were junior students, three were senior. Four were in their sixth year of study and one in her fifth year.

Exploratory Procedures

In order to fulfill the investigation, I invited all students to join the Facebook Group created in week two. Then I started teaching in the classroom according to weekly lesson plans along with virtual interactions with the students via the Facebook Group by means of putting up announcements, sharing resources, and conducting simple online discussions relevant to the subject matter as shown in Figure 1 below. The medium of virtual interaction was mostly English so as to get the students accustomed to the language and feel comfortable with it. I used Thai occasionally when some students failed to express themselves in English and kept trying in Thai. In addition, I tried to correct their English online as much as I could. Throughout the semester (sixteen weeks), I observed students' learning behaviors during the class and online. The emphasis

Figure 1
An Online Announcement and Discussion in the Facebook Group



The image shows a screenshot of a Facebook group post. At the top left is a profile picture of a group. The post title is "After-class activity 1 (week 13)". The main text of the post asks users to write a listing paragraph about a frightening situation. Below the post are three comments from different users, each with their own profile picture and interaction icons (like, comment, share).

After-class activity 1 (week 13)

Write a listing paragraph giving the reasons that you chose as the most frightening situation. Use sentence structures on page 47.

Like · Comment · 3 9 · 21 January at 13:44

Seen by everyone

like this.

There are 3 reasons to be frightened in a large shopping mall where a fire breaks out. The first is we tend to fear burned. The second is we tend to fear dead. The third is we are afraid of parish with heat.

21 January at 15:48 · Like · 2

There are three reasons to be frightened in a large shopping mall where a fire breaks out. The first is that we tend to fear our body will be burned. The second is that we are likely to fear death. The final is that we are afraid of the heat.

22 January at 11:19 · Like · 2

There are several reasons to be frightened when hurricane is approaching my area. One is we tend to fear death the others are we tend to fear injury and we tend to fear disabled.

23 January at 11:26 · Unlike · 1

There are several reasons to be frightened in a crowded football stadium, where a bomb is found. The first is we are afraid of dead. The second is we are fear of pain. The third is we are afraid did not return to see the people we love.

was on their participations both in the class and on Facebook Group.

In week fourteen, I started collecting data regarding the students' experiences in the Facebook Group usage. In order to reduce power distance between students and me that may cause any cultural and social barriers (Tananuraksakul, 2013) and concomitantly intimidate them and prevent them from sharing their real experiences with me, I asked them to voluntarily complete a survey (See Appendix) that consists of two parts: demographic profiles and views on the use of Facebook Group. The second part comprises two structured questions: "How does the use of Facebook Group help you learn English?" and, "What do you think about the use of Facebook Group in this class?" If they decided to take part in my research project, they could bring the answers back to me in the following week. I also ensured them that their final grades would not be affected whether they joined the research project or not.

After that, I transcribed the participants' views on the use of Facebook Group in the ESP class from the survey and checked if there were any questions emerging in the survey and related to the key research questions that the participants did not state in the survey. Then I listed those questions which were considered semi-structured (See Appendix). I spent two weeks interviewing the participants via Facebook Group message with the semi-structured questions so that they would not feel intimidated but feel comfortable enough to share their views with me. In fact, one of the participants mentioned in the survey that the Facebook Group usage in the ESP class helped reduce his anxiety in communicating virtually with me. The reason was that it was not a face-to-face interaction. The virtual interviews were conducted in Thai. Data garnered were then transcribed and translated into English. Thai words and phrases detecting the definitions of the two key terms were carefully translated with literal meanings, which included *stimulate*, *urge*, *kindle*, *pay attention*, *enthusiastic*, *eager*, *like*, *appreciate*, and *prefer*. These data were then analyzed and grouped into common themes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). The participants' views were kept confidential, so their real names were not disclosed.

Findings

Findings through my virtual observations explained the students' nature of learning behaviors in general that they tended to be more passive even online among their classmates or people they knew. Their passive behaviors were manifested in eight students (Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 10) who normally clicked *like* more than making comments. This

particular outcome is parallel with recent reports on behaviors of Thai Facebook users (Millward, 2013; Sakawee, 2013). Two students (Participants 5 and 9) tended to be more active as they not only clicked *like*, but also made comments in both Thai and English. Two students (Participants 5 and 6) appeared to pay closer attention to my feedback and comments on their final writing work than the rest of the students. One student (Participant 8) appeared to be too relaxed with virtual participation and assignment submission. His learning behaviors are in line with his frequent use of Facebook Group—a few times per week—but more frequent use of Facebook, which is daily. Six students (Participants 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, and 9) spent more time on Facebook than on the Facebook Group in the ESP class, which is resonant with the research findings conducted by Grosbeck, Bran, and Tiru (2011) that tertiary students were more active on Facebook for social purposes than for academic uses.

Findings through my observations inside the classroom revealed the students as digital natives (Prensky, 2001) since nine of them (Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9) used a smart phone as a part of their learning strategy. They switched it on and accessed the wireless Internet to look up and check the meanings of words they did not know when I assigned them to do group reading and writing work. Three of them were even active on the Facebook Group sometimes, as they clicked *like* when I posted something in the class.

Six participants (Participants 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, and 10) tended to arrive in the class late by ten to thirty minutes. Four of them (Participants 1, 2, 3, and 10) were in the same group and they were late because they awaited each other to go to class together. Three other students (Participants 4, 5, and 6) who were friends in the same group arrived in the class punctually and were rarely absent from the class. The class attendance behaviors of these seven students mirrored the high rank of cultural collectivism in Thailand (Hofstede, 1997), which they unconsciously practiced at school. This evidence accords with Tananuraksakul's (2011) study of power relations in pedagogy at a university in Thailand in that some Thai tertiary students tend to follow their peers when it comes to class attendance.

Nevertheless, the seven students mentioned above appeared to take my advice on unpunctual attendance to the class as they stopped arriving late after I mentioned its negative effects on their learning and marks. This aspect, on the one hand, reflected the position of power teachers hold (French & Raven, 1959) in Thai culture since they had a position of authority over their students. On the other hand, it suggests that I successfully exercised my teacher power in the classroom to

influence my students' learning behaviors positively. The implication can be that teachers should embrace and exercise their power relations in pedagogy to positively influence their students to learn (Gore, 1995, 2002; Tananuraksakul, 2011).

The observational analyses above do not strongly indicate the impact of the Facebook Group usage on students' positive attitudes towards, and motivation in, learning ESP since their learning behaviors were rather influenced by collectivism and power relations in teaching. This aspect is resonant with Dörnyei's (2001b) argument that motivation is not something directly observable but inferred from self-report. Despite such cultural factors, there is a positive indication that the Facebook Group usage in the ESP class is appropriate for this group of students.

In terms of interview findings, all students had similar reasons why they disliked English. Many of them said they started disliking it and feeling scared as well as discouraged to learn when they were at a young age primarily because they found it too difficult to learn. They could read texts but not understand the meanings. Only one person ignored studying English as hard as he should because he saw that English was unimportant.

Regardless of the fact that all students did not like English when they were much younger, they began to realize after spending three to six years at the university that English was an essential language for their future career. It is an international language to communicate with people from different backgrounds (Hatoss, 2006). The concept of becoming one community among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries particularly enforces their realization.

The overall analyses of interview data with ten participants were commonly constructed into three themes. While the first two themes emerged in accordance with the purposes of the study, the last theme was out of the exploratory parameter, offering additional insights for EFL teaching and learning.

Key Research Theme #1: Attitudinal Aspects of Facebook Group Usage

All ten students apparently obtained more positive attitudes towards learning ESP after the fifteen-week experience in the Facebook Group usage. Their attitudes appeared to be positive due to their "feelings about something, especially as shown by their behavior" (Macmillan English Dictionary, 2006, p. 76). In such cases, ten of them liked the use of Facebook Group because they use Facebook regularly. Two people (Participants 4 and 6) appreciated the structures of Facebook, namely making comments, editing and posting, integrated in the class, which gave them a sense of

convenience. The former said, "I feel happy, not bored with the Facebook Group usage. I do hope that I will try to learn English more by means of translation." The latter expressed, "There is no need to type homework or write on a piece of paper and ask the instructor to check it, and then I have to bring it back for correction."

Three other students (Participants 2, 7, and 9) tended to work harder by translating the instructors' postings from English into Thai. Participant 2 saw that the use of Facebook Group "is a good alternative teaching approach, better than the traditional way." Participants 7 and 9 also preferred the teaching tool the same way as Participant 4 in that they could practice English online by means of translating all the postings. Another student (Participant 10) expressed his liking because "The Facebook Group usage reminds me of the instructor's assignments, unlike e-Learning [used by the university]." One person (Participant 8) was interested to learn more English technical terms.

One student (Participant 5) described that she had a positive attitude towards the Facebook group usage although she did not think she liked English more. Similarly to Participant 5, Participant 6 thought that he liked English a little more, but he enjoyed the Facebook Group "Because the teaching style gives me a sense of relaxation more than the traditional teaching in the classroom." In addition to this sense, the same student (Participant 6) made an explicit view of the Facebook Group usage that reflected on power distance (PD) deeply embedded in Thai culture (Hofstede, 1997). He said he preferred the Facebook Group usage to the traditional way of teaching because:

the old teaching method involves face-to-face interaction between students and the teacher, and students usually feel intimidated by the teacher's presence and destructive comments...this teaching style helps reduce face-to-face interaction that may cause me to feel reluctant to interact with the instructor...promote more interactions between the instructor and students.

Six other students (Participants 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, and 9) agreed to the above views that the use of Facebook Group encouraged them to take part more in the classroom and online. For example, Participant 1 shared "It gave me courage to ask questions in the classroom. I always avoided face-to-face interaction in the classroom as I was afraid that the instructor would call my name."

Participant 2 said, "There were more classmates, so I did not have courage to ask the

instructor, but the use of Facebook Group helped me feel less anxious.” Participants 5 and 9 implicitly stated similar points. The former said, “It helps reduce my anxiety a lot because it further allows me to feel more comfortable to interact with the instructor outside the classroom. The latter thought that “. . . it reduces my anxiety about 70%. I feel less nervous to interact with the instructor. . . I feel free to use my language to talk to her.”

The above analysis suggests that the Facebook Group usage could help reduce cultural PD between myself and students in a manner that lowered their anxiety when interacting in the classroom and online. Hofstede (1997) posited that PD culture in Thailand is viewed relatively high. Tananuraksakul’s (2013) study in cultural PD reduction in an English listening and speaking class in a Thai context is an example. Learning to call college students by a nickname instead of their real name in the class was a teaching approach to reduce PD, decrease their anxiety, and concurrently increase their confidence in speaking. The reason is that calling each other by nicknames shows a close relationship among friends while students (*luk-sid*) are culturally seen as disciples, and they formally go by real or official names.

Key Research Theme #2: Motivational Aspects of Facebook Group Usage

Findings demonstrated that all ten participants were motivated in learning ESP after a fifteen-week-long encounter with Facebook Group usage. They had motivation due to their “feeling of enthusiasm that makes [them] determined to do something” (Macmillan English Dictionary, 2006, p. 925). Their motivation appeared to be driven intrinsically to some extent because they began to like to learn English more or less as discussed in the first theme. Eight students were enthusiastic to learn English more. For example, Participant 5 said, “It urges me on access to the Facebook Group to see the instructor’s new postings.” Participant 10 mentioned, “I am eager to learn English more because it allows me to express my voice with a sense of convenience.” Participant 3 found that “It kindles me to learn English more because it gives a sense of simplicity to understand the lessons and of convenience to access the Facebook Group. . . I regularly use Facebook.” This aspect of using Facebook as part of daily life and feeling senses of convenience and simplicity suggests that students identified themselves with the Facebook Group usage in the ESP class.

Six people (Participants 1, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9) were determined to complete and submit their assignments virtually in the Facebook Group. Participant 1 said, “I feel enthusiastic to search for information for the

assignments,” while Participant 7 felt eager “because I would like to submit my work and so I have to try to understand all assignments the instructor posted in English on the Facebook Group.” Participant 9 said, “It stimulates me to study and do assignments since I have to post them online.” Participant 8 “feels eager to be responsible for class assignments.” Participant 6 especially stressed the differences between working on assignments virtually and on a piece of paper that “I feel more eager to learn and complete the tasks on Facebook Group because it is more convenient to post, get feedback and edit.” These particular analyses suggest that I successfully exercised my power relations in pedagogy influencing students’ positive behaviors in learning. It further implies that teachers should embrace and exercise their power relations in pedagogy to positively influence their students to learn (Gore, 2002; Tananuraksakul, 2011). This implication aligns with the one constructed in the observations. Past research (e.g. Atkinson & Raynor, 1974; Clement & Kruidenier, 1985; Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1994, 1998, 2001a, 2003; Fineman, 1977), mostly conducted in western contexts, consistently confirmed the correlations between integrative motivation and language learning achievement in which English is used rather as a second language (ESL) than as an EFL. Oranpattanachai (2013) argued that there was no consensus of what type of motivation in non-western contexts affected achievement in learning EFL. In a Thai context, although study into this area is limited, instrumental motivation appeared to correlate with success in EFL learning (Choosri & Intharaksa, 2011; Kitjaroonchai & Kitjaroonchai, 2012), which was socially enforced by the language requirements for all levels of education and better employment opportunities, and integrative motivation appeared to strengthen learners’ motivation to study English beyond such requirements (Oranpattanachai, 2013). The ones who were socially and/or personally inspired to study English tended to pursue their higher education in an English-speaking country (Tananuraksakul, 2010) or study domestically in an international program (Teowkull et al., 2009). Initially, Thai students in this study possessed a low level of instrumental motivation. The results, however, signalled a positive indication that they gained integrative motivation in learning ESP. With hope, they will be personally and/or socially inspired to study English more.

The analyses discussed in themes one and two firstly suggest that Facebook Group with its structures is a social networking tool that can facilitate teaching and learning (Srinivas, 2010) of ESP. Secondly, it places the learning experience relating to students in line with Dalton’s (2009) arguments that new generations feel associated with learning technology and that school is a part of their life. Thirdly, it reduces

cultural PD between teachers and students. Fourthly, it constructs feelings of happiness and relaxation and senses of convenience and simplicity. Fifthly, liking something or feeling happy with something can have positive impacts on learners' attitudes and motivation (Choy & Troudi, 2006). Finally, convenience, simplicity and relaxation are features that characterize Thai EFL learners' learning behaviours. These suggestions firstly imply that Facebook Group is a practical, trendy and useful teaching tool in an ESP class and secondly it is practical, trendy and useful for Thai EFL learners.

Theme Three out of the Exploratory Parameter: Relevant Benefits of Facebook Group Usage

This theme emerged out of the exploratory parameter. It provides insights into the ways in which the participants positively perceived the Facebook Group usage in the ESP class. For example, three people (Participants 5, 7, and 9) appeared to appreciate my posts in English, as they perceived they could learn the language more through this channel. Acquiring new words through reading comprehension was in particular. One student (Participant 6) thought, "It helps save time and money for group discussion. I can ask the instructor virtually without face-to-face interaction." Two students (Participants 1 and 2) spent their leisure time reviewing weekly lessons online. Participant 4 mentioned that she learned English better via the instructor's virtual correction, "The instructor corrects our English online after we posted our assignments. The error correction helps me learn because I am aware of the writing mistakes I made."

Eight other students (Participants 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9) agreed to the above views of Participant 4 that the instructor's error correction could help them learn English. In fact, they thought they learned the language in many positive ways. For example, Participants 1 and 8 saw that it helped them learn English better. The former added that this was "Because the instructor corrected some words I knew incorrectly; I also learn new words." Participant 2 noted, "Sometimes I could not translate sentences correctly, but the instructor helped correct it." Participant 3 believed that "It makes me eager to learn from mistakes I made." However, three students (Participants 5, 6, and 7) appeared to learn English better than the rest. Participant 5 explicitly shared, "It helps me be aware of the errors I made and how to correct them. In my other English classes, the instructor did not correct my grammatical errors but deducted my marks."

The reasons nine students possessed positive perceptions of my direct feedback on their writing errors may be because they were incompetent in English as beginners and unable to self-correct their

work (Ferris, 2002, 2003). Those corrections made available virtually, not face-to-face, may give them a sense of security, confidence and/or comfort, since Komin (1991) asserts that the notions of losing, gaining and maintaining face are parts of Thai culture. The *face* is identical with *ego* and is very sensitive. Thai people place important emphasis on these two aspects, and preserving one another's ego is the basic rule of all Thai interactions on the superior-inferior continuum.

The analyses of the unexpected data indicated that the students had positive perceptions of their English level through the use of Facebook Group in the ESP class. Regardless of how much they self-perceived they could learn—better, a lot, or more—their experiences in learning English through the Facebook Group usage appeared to impinge on their sense of self-efficacy. This is a kind of mastery experience that can encourage learners in lifelong learning (Bandura, 1994). The data also imply that Facebook Group, on the one hand, is a practical, trendy and useful teaching tool in an ESP class. On the other hand, it is practical, trendy and useful for EFL learners.

Conclusion

The study qualitatively investigated the ways in which the Facebook Group used as an LMS, a pedagogical tool in an English reading-writing for professional purposes class, could enhance EFL undergraduate students' attitudes towards, and motivation in, learning ESP. The results positively illuminated that the students enjoyed learning English better with the use of Facebook Group and concurrently felt more enthusiastic to learn the language. The primary reason was that they could relate themselves to the Facebook Group usage as regular Facebook users. These outcomes go in line with Prensky's (2001) argument that young students of the current era of globalization acquire knowledge effectively through technology as they are digital natives. They also comport with Dalton's (2009) arguments that young students feel connected with learning technology, especially a social networking site (Srinivas, 2010), and that teachers can take on the role of trainer, not of engineer.

The positive outcomes led to insightful suggestions as well. First, Facebook Group with its structures is a social networking tool that can facilitate teaching and learning of ESP. Second, it is a teaching tool to reduce PD between teachers and students as it could lower the latter's anxiety during their interaction with the former. As such, interaction between them tended to be promoted. Third, it constructs feelings of happiness and relaxation and senses of convenience and simplicity. Fourth, liking something or feeling happy with something can have positive impacts on learners'

attitudes and motivation. Finally, convenience, simplicity and relaxation are features that characterize Thai EFL learners' learning behaviors.

Unexpectedly, with time and space compression on the Internet, the use of Facebook Group additionally provided benefits to students to learning ESP as well as saving time and money. My error correction was seen to contribute to most students' language improvement.

Implications

It is apparent that the analyses of findings from both observations and interviews suggest three positive implications. The first is that teachers of EFL should consciously practice their position power or power relations in pedagogy to positively influence their students to learn. The second implies that Facebook Group is practical, trendy and useful for Thai EFL learners, and the third is that it can be a teaching tool that is practical, trendy and useful for an ESP class.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Although this qualitative exploration comprising a small number of ten participants may limit the outcomes, it offers positive directions and implications for EFL practitioners. Quantitative study into the same topic or other relevant English language learning in different contexts with similar characteristics of participants is recommended for future research. Since attitudes towards, and motivation in, language learning are affective variables that can positively influence EFL learners' cognition, investigation into the effects of the use of Facebook Group as an LMS on their learning achievement is another recommendation.

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NOPARAT TANANURAKSAKUL is a full-time teaching staff member in the Department of English, Faculty of Liberal Arts at Huachiew Chalermprakiet University in Thailand. She has recently utilized Facebook Groups as a blended learning and learning management system. This kind of pedagogical strategy to teach EFL is added to an area of her research interests.

Appendix
Survey and Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Survey

This survey is part of a research study into use of Facebook Group as a learning management system for an ESP class. Please complete all sections. Your information will help me improve my teaching strategies, and it will be kept confidential.

I. Demographic Profile

1. Gender: female male
2. Age: 20-25 over 25
3. Year of study: 3 4 5 6
4. Your grades of other English classes:
 - 4.1 English for Communication 1 _____
 - 4.2 English for Communication 2 _____
 - 4.3 English Listening-Speaking for Professional Purposes _____
5. GPA: _____
6. How often do you use Facebook?
 - rarely a few times per week everyday
 - other - please specify _____
7. How often do you use Facebook Group?
 - rarely a few times per week everyday
 - other - please specify _____

II. Views on Facebook Group Usage

1. What do you think about the use of Facebook Group?
2. How does the use of Facebook Group help your learn English?

Semi-structured interview questions:

1. Do you feel more enthusiastic to study English on your own? If yes, please explain how.
2. Has the instructor's error correction helped you learn English? If, yes, how has it helped you so?
3. Does virtual communication with the instructor help you feel more comfortable to interact? If yes, can you explain how it helps you feel more comfortable?
4. Do you start to like English better after the use of Facebook Group the ESP class? If yes, why do you like it so? If no, why do you not like it?
5. Why didn't you like English?
6. Was it because you could hardly read and understood it?
7. Do you feel enthusiastic to learn English with the use of Facebook Group? If yes, why do you feel so? If no, why do you not feel so?
8. Do you think English is important for you to study? If yes, why is it important? If no, why is it not important?