An Exploration of Instagram to Develop ESL Learners’ Writing Proficiency

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Abbreviations

L2: Second Language
SLA: Second Language Acquisition
ESL: English as a Second Language
TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
ELT: English Language Teaching
PC: Personal Computer
SMA: Social Media Application
SNS: Social Network Site
FB: Facebook
CEFR: Central European Framework of Reference for Languages
IELTS: International English Language Testing System
Abstract

In the last decade second language learners have increasingly utilised Social Network sites to develop their language proficiency. English language educators have thus far struggled to adapt and integrate Social Network sites into formal and informal educational practices. This study seeks to explore how the Social Network site Instagram may be used to develop learners’ descriptive writing proficiency and to discover their attitudes towards Instagram as an interactional learning tool in an informal setting. Employing an action research design, five English language learners’ Instagram posts containing descriptive writing were given corrective feedback and analysed. Following this interviews were performed to collect their attitudes. The results of the study indicate Instagram as an effective tool for developing learners’ vocabulary range and grammatical accuracy. Learners’ also demonstrated positive attitudes, citing key facets as authentic interaction, learning communities and learner autonomy. This study finds that Instagram can be an effective pedagogical tool if used appropriately and advocates further research into the use of Social Network sites in second language education.
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Chapter 1 Introduction

Introduction

This study seeks to investigate how SNSs can be integrated into L2 education. More specifically, it will explore how using Instagram, a SNS, affects English language learners’ descriptive writing ability. As part of this investigation learners’ attitudes towards Instagram as an interactional learning tool are also examined. The current chapter will establish the purpose, context and framework for investigation of the study.

1.1 What is Instagram?

Instagram is currently one of the most popular SNSs in the world with over 300 million active users (Instagram Press, 2015). The focus of Instagram is for users to post individual images or videos with a description on their profile, some 70 million images and videos are posted daily (Instagram Press, 2015). Therefore, Instagram seems to provide an ideal environment for L2 learners to produce descriptive writing.

Users form connections by ‘following’ each other’s profiles which enables them to view the content posted on these profiles and respond in the form of comments or ‘likes’. A ‘like’ is a tag users can place on images to indicate they view them favourably. Once a user follows other users, all postings from these users will be collected and presented on the user’s ‘News Feed’. Instagram members also have the ability to message each other privately using ‘Direct message’. These facilities allow users to engage in synchronous and asynchronous communication, both publicly and privately.

Instagram profiles with default settings can be viewed publicly by anyone who visits the site; there are also privacy settings which can restrict the access to one’s profile to approved followers only.

1.2 L2 Education in the Web 2.0 Era

Second language learning and use through digital means has experienced significant development since the advent of ‘Web 2.0’ i.e. online tools which enable user generated content (Blattner and Fiori, 2009; Harrison and Thomas, 2009; Blattner and Lomicka, 2012; Hafner, 2013). Thorne and Black (2007) state that many L2 learners now acquire the target language primarily through online means which may include
online gaming, SNSs and blogging. Consequently, L2 educators are exploring how these online tools can be integrated into formal L2 education (Kern, Ware and Warschauer, 2008; Harrison and Thomas, 2009; Kabilan, Ahmad, and Abidin, 2010; Kessler, 2013; Prichard, 2013). A few specific examples include Kabilan et al.’s (2010) investigation of merging Facebook (FB) use with pedagogic goals and Blattner and Fiori’s (2011) exploration of FB to develop learners’ socio-pragmatic awareness.

Current research asserts the positive impact of the SNS Facebook when used in conjunction with classroom teaching to augment learners’ language acquisition (Blattner and Fiori, 2009; Blattner and Fiori, 2011; Prichard, 2013; Blattner and Lomicka, 2012). However, less research has focussed on how Instagram can be used to enhance learners’ proficiency. With Instagram being overwhelmingly popular this is an area which merits investigation as different socio-cultural learning tools result in different uses and interactional patterns (Thorne, 2008; Peterson, 2009; Zourou, 2012).

Several studies have produced conflicting findings and advocated further research regarding learners’ attitudes towards the use of SNSs as a language learning tool (Mills, 2009; Hitosugi, 2010; Kilmanova and Demovskaya, 2010; Blattner and Lomicka, 2012; Kabilan et al., 2010; Prichard, 2013). Considering the variance amid the current literature and the need for further research, this study will investigate learners’ attitudes towards the SNS Instagram as an interactional learning tool.

1.3 Aim of the study

As mentioned the practice of utilising SNSs in L2 education is at an embryonic stage with educators unanimously advocating the need for further research. Thus, the fundamental aim of the study is to advance the practical use of SNSs in informal L2 education settings and hopefully shed insight into how they can be integrated into formal L2 education.

1.4 The Problem and Research Questions

Justification for the current study derives from the common view that SNSs can be effectively used in L2 education, yet there is a dearth of research concerning the value of utilising Instagram, one of the most prominent SNSs. The key features of Instagram appear to encourage descriptive writing, hence this will form the basis of investigation.
Furthermore, the current literature regarding L2 learners’ attitudes towards SNSs as language learning tools is deeply conflicted and necessitates clarification. The research questions this study seeks to answer are:

1. **How does the use of Instagram affect learners’ descriptive writing proficiency?**

This question investigates the development, if any, of learners’ descriptive writing ability as a result of using Instagram. The pedagogic value of Instagram and SNSs in general are explored by addressing this question.

2. **What are learners’ attitudes towards Instagram as an interactional learning tool?**

After using Instagram to post descriptive writing, learners’ attitudes will be probed. This question seeks to clarify the findings of previous research and identify attitudes in relation to specific features of Instagram and SNSs.

1.5 **Methods of Investigation**

To investigate the stated research questions the study will adopt an action research design within the qualitative research paradigm. The data collection tools employed consist of participants’ online Instagram posts and comments, semi-structured interviews and a researcher’s journal. Descriptive writing contained in participants’ online Instagram posts were graded and given corrective feedback to investigate how using Instagram affected this skill. Based on the data collected from semi-structured interviews, Instagram comments and the researcher’s journal participants’ attitudes were discerned.

1.6 **The Researcher’s Position**

The first person singular will be temporarily adopted to reflect the personal nature of this section. As a consequence of my teaching experiences I have acquired many English learners as friends on various SNSs. This has led me to notice that many of these learners primarily post content in English rather than their L1. More interestingly, they choose to post on SNSs in English as part of their daily lives and independent of formal L2 education. Hence I considered it practical to question how can L2 educators better support learners' use of SNSs to develop their L2?
1.7 Preview of the Study

Upon completion of this introductory chapter the current literature in the field of SNSs and L2 education will be critically discussed and key issues identified in Chapter Two. Chapter Three will present the methodology employed to address the research questions. The findings and their analysis will be exhibited in Chapter Four and the study will conclude with a discussion of the findings and their implications for future research and practice in Chapter Five.

Conclusion

The context, purpose and structure of the study have now been established. The following chapter will critically consider the relevant literature and any gaps which ought to be addressed.
Chapter 2 Literature Review

Introduction

This review of the literature seeks to critically discuss any research relevant to Instagram, SNSs and L2 education. Firstly, second language acquisition (SLA) foundational concepts and theoretical frameworks in relation so SMAs will be considered. SNSs are a type of SMA and to enhance context the current state of SMAs and L2 education will first be discussed. Following this the discussion will progress to focus on SNSs, their role in L2 education, the challenges they present and learners’ attitudes when they are used as an interactional learning tool. Finally, key issues and gaps in the current research are identified and discussed.

2.1 Second Language Acquisition

SLA is, ‘the acquisition of a language after the acquisition of the mother tongue’ (Ellis, 2008, p.6). SLA occurs globally, encompassing a diverse range of people, languages and contexts. There are numerous factors which influence a learner’s ability to acquire an L2 including learner aptitude, educational setting, age, culture, motivation, attitudes and learner identity (Lightbrown and Spada, 1999; Bot, Lowie and Verspoor, 2006; Ellis, 2008). Learners’ competence in an L2 is evaluated through linguistic competence i.e. grammatical knowledge and communicative competence, which is the ability to communicative effectively using one’s grammatical knowledge (Ellis, 2008).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The relatively novel and rapidly changing nature of SMAs and their L2 educational uses has created a gap between technological pedagogies and traditional SLA theories (Lomicka and Lord, 2009; Thorne and Smith, 2011; Wang and Vasquez, 2012). A review of 43 empirical studies in this field by Wang and Vasquez (2012, p.420) found 56% of the studies analysed to have “no identifiable theoretical framework”. The remaining 44% of studies which adopted a theoretical framework exhibited 12 different approaches, the most popular being sociocultural and socio-constructivist approaches. This issue calls for researchers, “to re-unite SLA theory with technology mediated language education” (Thorne and Smith, 2011, p.269).
The Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium (CALICO) journal convened a research panel in 2012 in an attempt to draw SLA theory and the L2 educational use of SMAs closer together. The panel selected four key SLA theoretical frameworks to discuss; Psycholinguistics, the interactionist approach, sociocultural approaches and ecological approaches (Thorne and Smith, 2011). Conversely, Wang and Vasquez (2012) found interactionist and psycholinguistic approaches employed in a solitary study each, and found no examples of an ecological approach. This comparison further highlights the inconsistent alignment between SLA theories and pedagogies in current use.

Research relating to SLA and SMAs predominantly adopts a sociocultural or social cognitive framework, emphasising the importance of online social interactions for SLA. (Thorne and Smith, 2011; Wang and Vasquez, 2012). Users of SMAs engage in constant social interactions through features such as generating content for other users to view or viewing and responding to content created by other users.

Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory states that L2 learners acquire language through social interactions, both with other L2 learners and native speakers. In contrast, a Psycholinguistic approach examines how a learner’s independent thought processes and memory functions impact their language acquisition (Thorne and Smith, 2011).

Social cognitive theory merges psycholinguistics and sociocultural theory under the premise of cognitive learning processes occurring via social interactions and observing the actions of others (Bandura, 1986). Riazi (1997) maintains a social cognitive approach towards L2 writing explores how learners’ individual thought processes e.g. what and how they write, are a product of their interactive relationships with teachers, peers and social contexts.

SMAs encompass a diverse range of features, subsequently no SLA theory can claim exclusive compatibility with them for L2 educational purposes. To ensure successful SLA, a well-defined pedagogic purpose and a comprehensive understanding of the features an application provides are necessary. Upon establishing a contextual framework, an appropriate theoretical framework can be employed.

The major features of Instagram require users to consistently socially interact with other users through posts, comments, likes and direct messages. This suggests that
an investigation into Instagram’s pedagogic value would entail a sociocultural or social cognitive approach. However, these approaches are not indisputably appropriate as evidenced by Mill’s (2011) study involving Facebook (FB), a similar SNS, using a situated learning approach. This approach is similar to the aforementioned theories in that learning is precipitated through social interactions, yet differs as an emphasis is placed on building a community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Mills (2011) cites Wenger’s (1998) three fundamentals of a community of practice as joint enterprise, mutual engagement and a shared repertoire as areas for investigation. Participants role-played as people living within the same apartment building in Paris and were observed to fulfil the requirements to constitute a community of practice, hence successful SLA was reported. A weakness, however, was the decision to give learners online aliases which may have obstructed their sense of authentic participation in a community.

Upon consideration of the features of Instagram and the purpose of this study a social cognitive approach is most appropriate. Based on Riazi’s (1997) interpretation of a social cognitive approach the current study investigates learners’ L2 writing via interactional relationships with a tutor and peers within the social context of the SNS Instagram. Learners’ L2 writing proficiency is examined through the cognitive process of posting descriptive texts and receiving corrective feedback from a tutor. Social interaction occurs as learners receive instructions from the tutor and view and comment on each other’s posts. It is possible an online learning community will start to emerge, however such a community will not dictate the learning process.

2.3 Definitions
To precisely situate Instagram and it features within the vast and multi-faceted realm of SMAs definitions relevant to the study are now discussed.

The term Web 2.0 has garnered various definitions, the key consistencies among these definitions detail the advent of online applications which provide a platform for user generated content, forming connections among users and community building (Harisson and Thomas, 2009; Wang and Vasquez, 2012; Zourou, 2012). These applications are also commonly referred to as ‘social media applications’, and this study will adopt the common practice of using the terms ‘social media’ and ‘web 2.0’ interchangeably (Kessler, 2013).
User participation is the foundation of SMAs as initial engagement requires users to actively generate content. The public nature, albeit with tiered privacy in some cases, of this content fosters an open environment in which users interact; hence communities are formed. These features of participation, openness and community are also present in most L2 education classrooms, so it is logical to assume that SMAs are potentially effective L2 educational tools. Practice and research involving SMAs and L2 education are continually progressing, Wang and Vasquez’s (2012) investigation of a literature sample found SLA research involving 8 different categories of SMAs, which employed at least 12 SLA theories and 17 research focuses such as L2 writing, attitudes and identity to name just a few.

Conole and Alevizou (2010) differentiate SMAs into 10 distinct categories; social networking, blogging, social bookmarking, media sharing, media manipulation and mashups, instant messaging, chat and conversational areas, online games and virtual worlds, wikis and collaborative editing tools, syndication and recommendation systems. It would be poor scientific form to generalise views and analysis of one category across the others as different socio-cultural tools result in different uses and interactional patterns (Thorne, 2008; Peterson, 2009; Zourou, 2012). Thus, the uses and merits of Instagram must be investigated within the realms of SNSs and generalisations cannot be produced based on research in other SMA categories.

Instagram is defined as a SNS as it allows users to create a public profile, connect with other users’ profiles, view theirs and other users’ connections within the site and share events in their everyday life in real-time (Boyd and Ellison, 2007; Boyd, 2011). An Instagram user’s profile typically contains short demographic information and posts of photos and videos with a description. McBride (2009) states that a user’s profile is the platform from which they navigate a SNS.

An Instagram user’s profile and connections i.e. followers constitute their digital identity (Boyd and Ellison, 2007; McBride, 2009). Boyd and Ellison (2007) highlight four key processes which lead to the formation of a user’s identity; impression management, friendship management, network structure and the bridging of online and offline social networks.

According to them, impression management refers to the personal information provided on one’s Instagram profile and the degree of public access to this information.
The connections made based on the perceived identity of other users, which in turn contributes to the identity of the original user is regarded as friendship management. Network structure views the level of participation a user has within their social community on Instagram i.e. some users may post rarely while others will post frequently and with a greater degree of publicity. Finally, the bridging of the online and offline social networks concerns how users’ online and offline identities are entwined and the resulting impact.

A salient feature of Instagram which distinguishes it from similar SNSs (e.g. Facebook and Twitter) is that users can only upload images directly from a smartphone or tablet. The inability to upload images using a personal computer (PC) is enforced by Instagram as it prevents third party users and ‘spam bots’ abusing the site, hence ensuring all content is from genuine users (Instagram Press, 2015). This feature also serves to exclude those who do not possess a smart phone, however with over 1.5 billion smartphones in use worldwide a significant portion of the global population still have access (ABI Research, 2014). Other SNSs afford the ability to post using a smartphone in conjunction with a PC, however the sole use of a smartphone may lead to different uses and interactional patterns. Possession of a smartphone makes Instagram, and potentially L2 learning, accessible to users at all times. Furthermore, it seems to support autonomous learning as learners will consistently engage with a plethora of texts without the instruction or guidance of a teacher.

2.4 Social Media Applications and L2 Education

Before focussing specifically on SNSs and L2 education it is pertinent to first discuss the ‘parent’ field of SMAs and L2 education. Since the beginning of the ‘web 2.0’ era in 2004 and the wealth of user generated content it has instigated, the concept of digital language learning has changed rapidly (Blattner and Fiori, 2009; Prichard, 2013; Kessler, 2013). As a result, the pedagogical use of web 2.0 applications has been identified as one of the fastest developing and least researched fields in L2 education (Thorne and Smith, 2011; Blattner and Lomicka, 2012; Wang and Vasquez, 2012; Prichard, 2013).

Previously the educational settings for SLA have been distinguished as naturalistic (i.e. language acquisition through naturally occurring social interactions) or instructed study (Ellis, 2008). SMAs have caused a blurring of these distinctions as learners have
the ability to engage in both naturalistic and instructed means simultaneously. Barton and Potts (2013) refer to this as 'language-as-social-practice', meaning learners’ production and interaction with online texts are observed and pedagogy is impacted accordingly. This view of language acquisition has foundations in Vygotsky’s (1978) socio-cultural theory and Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory as learning occurs both through participation in social interactions and observation of social interactions. Barton and Potts (2013, p.816) further stipulate that, “learning and using are not often distinguished,” in the context of online L2 interactions.

TESOL practitioners have generally struggled to adapt to the blurring of naturalistic and instructed environments (Barton and Potts, 2013; Kessler, 2013; Hafner, 2013). Kessler (2013) argues that the wealth of available tools may cause some teachers to feel overwhelmed. It is possible that teachers may feel intimidated if unfamiliar with a tool that is popular with their students, thus the tool may be avoided and the potential to further students’ L2 acquisition is lost.

Some educators are reluctant to use SMAs with their students as it requires them to relinquish control of the discourse, and adopt a position as one of several sources of feedback (Kessler, 2013). It appears that in some cases teachers will block the door to learning for their students, a grave concept which must be addressed by improving teachers’ knowledge, training and attitudes. Continued research which exhibits further evidence of the effective use of SMAs in L2 education may improve this situation.

The under exploitation of SMAs and other technological resources, and the lack of required training and skills for both educators and learners has been recognised by the formation of the TESOL Technology Standards Task Force (Healy et al., 2011). As a result three key technology goals were set, the goals are to aid L2 learners to (Healy et al., 2011):

1. Demonstrate foundational knowledge and skills in using technology for a multilingual world;
2. Use technology in socially and culturally appropriate, legal, and ethical ways;
3. Use and critically evaluate technology-based tools as aids in the development of their language learning competence as part of formal instruction and for formal learning.
Users of SMAs require digital literacy skills, in addition to traditional reading and writing skills to communicate successfully online (Hafner, 2013). Those digitally literate not only generate content, but are adept at online social engagement, relationship building and identity construction (Hafner, 2013). Therefore, it cannot be assumed that traditional L2 educational practices can be transferred to social media environments with instant success. Conole and Alevizou (2010) add a further warning that it would be an error to assume that those who have grown up in the era of SMAs will have acquired the skills to effectively use them for educational purposes.

For L2 learners to successfully use SMAs they must be able to navigate issues including ownership, authority, formality, openness, production and use (Conole and Alevizou, 2010). If educators do not address these factors they could lead to issues which are detrimental to the immediate and long term success of integrating SMAs and L2 education. Users have the potential to unwittingly make private information public, accept false information as true or superficially evaluate the educational benefits of SMAs due to the positive image they possess (Conole and Alevizou, 2010). These concerns do not directly relate to SLA, however they require attention as they may stifle an otherwise proficient learner.

Strategies to facilitate the effective use of SMAs for ELT purposes centre around the need to consider the learners’ perspectives, effective teacher guidance and comprehensive student support structures (Conole and Alevizou, 2010; Healy et al., 2011). Learners’ experiences, attitudes and motivations are a crucial aspect as they could dictate the long term L2 educational success of SMAs.

To support a fruitful learning environment using SMAs the role of the teacher must be clearly defined and comprehended by all those involved (McBride, 2009; Kessler, 2013; Prichard, 2013). L2 education in a social media environment allows a teacher to adapt their role along a continuum from an informal facilitator to the traditional formal instructor. The facilitator role requires teachers to guide students along their learning paths, rather than dictate their actions (Vygotsky, 1978). The role a teacher adopts is heavily influenced by both the pre-defined formality of the environment and the autonomy either shown by or afforded to learners.

2.5 Social Network Sites and L2 Education
In accordance with Zourou’s (2012) warning against unscientific generalisation of research across all SMA categories, research solely concerning the educational use of SNSs will now be discussed.

SNSs have predominantly received praise for providing co-operative and informal educational settings (Mills, 2009; Blattner and Fiori, 2011; Blattner and Lomicka, 2012). Prichard (2013) states that SNSs can be used to develop the four key skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking, in addition to the development of vocabulary, grammar and socio pragmatic awareness skills. Furthermore, SNSs also provide learners with the ability to engage in meaningful social and cultural exchanges with native speakers and other L2 learners (Harrison and Thomas, 2009).

Instagram primarily provides learners with the opportunities to read and write through photo descriptions, comments and direct messages. A study by Kabilan, Ahmad and Abidin (2010) states that learners found FB, a similar SNS, to afford opportunities for writing practice and noted increased motivation to post using English. Learners writing in this public setting may feel their text has greater authenticity and purpose in comparison to traditional writing which may only be viewed by a teacher (Prichard, 2013; Blattner and Fiori, 2009).

Reading the posts of native speakers of the target language on SNSs has also been found to improve reading skills and absorption of the target culture (Kabilan et al., 2010; Klimanova and Dembovskaya, 2010). Most of the time spent reading on other SNSs relates to small informal posts; however Instagram has a limit of 2200 characters per post or comment which allows more extensive texts. Instagram users are encouraged to write at length and this may result in different interactional patterns when compared to other SNSs e.g. Twitter. This larger character capacity also provides students with the opportunity to improve the structure, coherence and thematic development of their writing, such aspects are irrelevant on other SNSs where posts are typically a few sentences.

Previous research has pre-dominantly been performed in blended environments where SNSs are used in conjunction with pre-existing classroom lessons (Prichard, 2013; Blattner and Lomicka, 2012; Mills, 2011; Blattner and Fiori, 2011). In these studies the teacher adopted a traditional formal classroom role, yet they also acted as
informal facilitators online, and in some cases they merely observed online interactions without any input.

Blattner and Fiori (2011) argue that participation in a social network community through FB, in conjunction with classroom lessons, can develop learners’ socio-pragmatic awareness and multiliteracy skills. The term socio-pragmatic awareness is categorised as a communicative competency, however its dimensions are amplified in the context of a SNS (Prichard, 2013). A post on a SNS is of a much more public nature than a standard real-world conversation, hence it may be less appropriate to discuss certain content e.g. personal issues.

The results of Blattner and Fiori’s (2011) study detailed significant progression of learners’ socio-pragmatic awareness and multiliteracy skills. This study also suggests that in order to successfully use online communities for L2 learning purposes students require appropriate guidance and feedback from educators. However, the researchers could have added additional context to their results by collecting data on students’ attitudes and their perceptions of why the use of FB was effective.

The next evolutionary stage, which this study seeks to address, is to utilise SNSs in L2 education without support from concurrent classroom practices. In this study learners are afforded the ability to act more autonomously; something which is already the case for most of those using social media (Barton and Potts, 2013). In this era learners engage in ‘self-authorship’, to be more specific, they generate materials which function as the basis for learning (McBride, 2009). Learner generated content is also considered to increase student interest and allow them to play, “a more active role in their own learning process” (McBride, 2009, p.40). This study seeks to further understand the potential L2 educational use of SNSs independent of classroom support.

Despite the generally positive perception of SNSs and their language education capabilities they are, “perhaps the most underutilized ICT in L2 education” (Prichard, 2013, p.752). To enhance the quality of L2 education via SNSs the practice must first be given an enhanced status in common curricula (Prichard, 2013). An enhanced curricular profile should place emphasis on how to guide students and develop pedagogies which combine digital literacies and traditional writing more effectively (Hafner, 2013; Barton and Potts, 2013).
2.5.1 Social Network Sites and L2 Education: Challenges

The most prominent benefit of using SNSs for L2 education is the creation of an authentic social environment in which learners acquire language (Prichard, 2013). However, several significant challenges to the success of this learning environment have been raised.

English language education is now in a learner centred era, in other words pedagogy is dictated by learners’ needs (Brandl, 2002; Kessler, 2013). The use of SNSs is allowing a portion L2 learners to dictate their own learning paths and L2 educational practices should be adapted to support this (Hafner, Chik and Jones, 2013; Barton and Potts, 2013). The adaptation of educational practices becomes problematic as a multitude of learners dictating their own educational paths will result in a diverse range of needs. Blattner and Fiori (2009) also assert that a sense of community among users in an educational context is necessary for a productive learning experience. A pertinent consideration for this study is how to create or support a language learning community which satisfies all of its members’ diverse needs.

Despite some learners navigating their own learning pathways, Harrison and Thomas (2009) argue that learners still require direction from educators to avoid using SNSs with an obsolete pedagogy. It is paramount for students to be actively participating and generating content, rather than passively consuming. Harisson and Thomas (2009) have refuted Boyd and Elisson’s (2007) claim that individuals use SNSs to solidify existing social networks rather than create new relationships. The veracity of this claim, however, may be context bound. Harisson and Thomas (2009) investigated the use of Livemocha, an L2 learning SNS, which necessitates forming connections with native speakers and other learners. It is likely that users predominantly formed new social networks as speakers of the target language were not present in their existing social networks. Based on this premise Livemocha may encourage the creation of new relationships more than Instagram, emphasising that generalisations across SNSs should be treated with caution and considered in relation to the purpose and features of specific sites. This study into the L2 educational use of Instagram at a distance will further investigate the formation and dynamics of new relationships as there are no pre-existing social networks among learners.
2.5.3 Social Network Sites and L2 Education: Learner Attitudes

An overview of the literature regarding learners’ attitudes towards the use of SNSs for L2 education identifies some conflicting results. Several studies have found learners to feel inhibited and reluctant to post publicly due to perceived negative judgement from native speakers or L2 users of a higher level (Hitosugi, 2011; Klimanova and Demovskaya, 2010). However, similar research has produced opposing results in which learners claimed they were less fearful of negative judgement as most writing on SNSs is informal and mistakes are commonplace (Mills, 2011).

Blattner and Lomicka (2012) sought to collect students’ attitudes when using FB to augment current classroom practices. A survey was used to collect students’ attitudes, perhaps interviews would have been more appropriate so as to provide richer and more insightful data (Robson, 2011; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). The results of this study indicate that students harbour favourable attitudes towards the use of FB to support L2 education. Participants stated that communicating using the L2, with both their peers and native speakers, in this authentic environment felt more meaningful compared a traditional classroom setting.

Prichard (2013) considered whether students’ use of and attitudes towards the efficacy of SNSs, in this case FB, for L2 education would be affected by a training course on how to use the site effectively. Issues concerning privacy and security, English ability and usage, content of posts and finding friends were surveyed prior to the training. Participants who had not used FB before displayed more negative attitudes regarding these issues than their counterparts who were already familiar with the site. After completion of the training and use of FB, all participants surveyed reported positive attitudes concerning the educational value of FB, motivation to use it and interest in their friends’ posts. However, a significant opportunity for enhanced knowledge and understanding was left unexploited by not interviewing participants as to why they harboured these attitudes.

In a later article, Prichard (2013) suggests learners’ attitudes primarily depend on individual traits such as personality, learning style and confidence. This is likely true; however, different socio-cultural learning tools result in different uses and interactional patterns (Thorne, 2008; Peterson, 2009; Zourou, 2012). Therefore, it would be
pertinent to further investigate whether divergent uses and interactional patterns across different SNSs e.g. Instagram and FB result in divergent attitudes.

A lack on research concerning L2 education which takes place exclusively on a SNS i.e. no face-to-face interactions with teachers, was highlighted and consequently there is little data on students’ attitudes concerning such a practice. This study seeks to address this by collecting learners’ attitudes towards Instagram as an interactional learning tool when used independent of classroom education.

2.6 Key Issues

A review of the literature has identified several research gaps and conflicting findings, which this study seeks to address. The use of the SNS Instagram to develop ESL writing proficiency and learners’ attitudes towards Instagram as an interactional learning tool are the primary areas identified. Further issues involving educational environments, relationship building and access are discussed.

The pedagogic value of Instagram for L2 education, more specifically its use for L2 writing has not previously been investigated. Previous research has investigated the use of Facebook, Twitter and Livemocha among other SNSs. Instagram merits investigation as it features necessitate different interactional patterns and uses, and perhaps a different effect on learners’ writing.

The research into learners’ attitudes towards using SNSs as interactional SLA tools is heavily conflicted. This study seeks to directly address this by continuing research in the field and perhaps offering a new perspective as attitudes towards using Instagram for L2 education have not been collected previously.

Several researchers argue that TESOL practitioners have struggled to adapt to the blending of naturalistic and instructed settings when using SMAs in ELT (Barton and Potts, 2013; Kessler, 2013; Hafner, 2013). The current investigation operates exclusively online, yet within a blended naturalistic and instructed environment and seeks to further knowledge and understanding in this area.

Boyd and Elisson (2007) assert that SNSs are used primarily to solidify existing social relationships, an argument Harisson and Thomas (2009) have contested. The learners in this research do not have formerly existing social relationships, therefore the efficacy of SNSs i.e. Instagram for building new relationships is tested.
Finally, users are required to possess a smartphone to post images on Instagram. This is in contrast to other SNSs which one can post on using a PC or a smartphone. It is pertinent to investigate what, if any, effect this may have on interactional patterns, uses and possibly attitudes.

**Conclusion**

Within this chapter the literature relevant to Instagram and L2 education has been critically considered and key issues for further investigation have been identified. The following chapter outlines the methods and practical considerations undertaken to investigate the use of Instagram to develop ESL learners’ writing ability and their attitudes towards Instagram as an interactional learning tool.
Chapter 3 Methodology

Introduction

As mentioned previously the study investigates the use of Instagram to develop L2 learners’ writing proficiency and their attitudes towards Instagram as an interactional learning tool. An action research design was utilised and the present chapter will discuss the key processes and considerations undertaken to implement this. Firstly, an appraisal of research paradigms and the rationale for adopting a qualitative approach is presented. Following this participants and the data collection tools of online Instagram posts, semi-structured interviews and a researcher’s journal will be discussed. Details and considerations regarding data collection procedures will follow. To ensure the quality of the study, key concerns regarding ethics, validity and reliability are then deliberated. Finally, data analysis methods are examined and rationalized.

3.1 An Overview of Research Paradigms: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches

Creswell (2014) defines a qualitative study as one which seeks to build interpretive analysis based on specific data, within a flexible structure. Phenomenological, ethnographical, interactionist and action research designs conventionally operate as part of qualitative methodologies (Robson, 2011; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2014). Quantitative methodologies typically concern statistical analysis of hypothesis testing, surveys and experiments (Cohen et al., 2011; Robson, 2011; Creswell, 2014). Mixed methods research advocates a pragmatic approach which entails the use of quantitative and qualitative methods within the same piece of research to answer research questions more effectively (Robson, 2011; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2014).

Qualitative research focuses on meanings, actions, attitudes and intentions gathered from the perspectives of those involved (Robson, 2011; Cohen et al., 2011). Robson (2011) further states that objectivity and generalisability are not key concerns. To enforce objectivity may obstruct acquisition of genuine data and seems to rail against the human nature of subjectivity.
Cohen et al. (2011) argue that qualitative approaches may be flawed in certain cases as they acknowledge external factors less than quantitative approaches. The subjectivity of participants is given precedent, while their understanding may not be in line with the truth. Furthermore, in the case of asymmetrical power relationships some participants may be coerced into accepting, and perhaps reiterating, the views of others.

Research undertaking a quantitative approach seeks to assign numerical values to data (Robson, 2011). A significant emphasis is placed on objectivity and generalisability, while the researcher positions themselves neutrally (Cohen et al., 2011; Robson, 2011). However, the neutral position of the researcher may hinder the accuracy of the research, as they are more distant from the phenomena under investigation than a researcher operating under a qualitative approach.

The theory that qualitative and quantitative approaches are exclusively incompatible has been all but rejected due to the plethora of successful research combining them (Robson, 2011; Cohen et al., 2011). Using mixed methods is potentially a more practical approach as complex and multi-faceted phenomena may encompass data best viewed both objectively and subjectively (Cohen et al., 2011, Robson, 2011). Cohen et al. (2011, p.26) suggest a mixed-methods approach, ‘possesses the flexibility in usage that reflects the changing and integrated nature of the world’.

The benefits of a mixed-methods design include the ability to probe for meaning, triangulation and to further investigate contradictory data (Cohen et al., 2011). Nevertheless, these benefits are based on the assumption that the researcher has correctly identified and understood the nature of the phenomena at hand. A mixed-methods approach may have a negative impact on the value of the research if employed unnecessarily or ineffectively.

The choice of research paradigm must be dictated by its ability to answer the research questions (Cohen et al., 2011; Robson, 2011; Creswell, 2014). Therefore, the ability of the researcher to effectively match their questions to the salient features of a paradigm is paramount.

**3.1.1 Action Research and Interactionism**
Action research aims to problematize an issue and enact change through intervention and collaboration with participants (Somekh, 2006; Cohen et al., 2011). There are typically four stages of action research which can be performed in a number of cycles: plan, act, observe and reflect (McAteer, 2013). Preforming the research in cycles allows the researcher more flexibility to improve and adapt; however, an apparent weakness is the potential to unnecessarily complicate or elongate the process. Figures 3.1 and 3.2 exhibit the typical action research processes (adapted from McAteer, 2013, p.30).

Fig. 3.1 Plan-Act-Observe-Reflect cycle

In the context of ELT the researcher also assumes the role of a teacher. Burns (2010) argues action research is highly beneficial for English language teachers by enhancing their reflective practice and consequently stimulating progressive change.
There are, nonetheless, concerns as to whether teaching and research can be successfully combined due to their inherently conflicting subjective and objective nature (Cohen et al., 2011). Furthermore, due to the context specific nature of action research there is little scope for generalisability, causing some to question the value of findings (Cohen et al., 2011). Finally, all participants and institutions must be open to the concept of change or the endeavour is futile.

Woods (1983) defines interactionism as the process through which humans attach meaning to social symbols e.g. language. The focus of this approach is to place emphasis on the social activity taking place, then consider the influence of the individual and the social context (Woods, 1983).

3.2 Rationale for Chosen Paradigm and Design

This study has implemented a qualitative research approach, encompassing an action research design with elements of interactionism. Since the aims of the study are to explore L2 learners’ writing proficiency and attitudes, to quantify each participant's unique contribution regarding how they perceive and interact with the world they live in would be impractical and obstruct in depth analysis (Robson, 2011; Cohen et al., 2011).

Both research questions, (How does the use of Instagram affect learners’ descriptive writing proficiency? What are learners’ attitudes towards Instagram as an interactional learning tool?) were examined through action research. The researcher in this study engaged with participants in the role of an online teacher to administer and provide corrective feedback on writing tasks using Instagram. This process was then revised and continued in its updated form. Finally, interviews were performed to seek learners’ attitudes towards Instagram as an interactional learning tool. As seen in Figure 3.3, action research was performed in 3 cycles: Instagram posting and feedback, updated Instagram posting and feedback and interviews.
Moreover, research involving L2 education and Instagram is relatively novel, an undertaking which aligns with action research concepts of innovation and seeking new knowledge (Somekh, 2006; Burns, 2010). The researcher performed the role of a teacher free from institutional constraints, minimising any outside influences which may have impeded the study from investigating its stated aims. An interactionist approach was also employed as the research views the participants’ social activity of using the SNS of Instagram.

### 3.3 Research Participants

The exclusionary criteria employed dictated participants must not be native English speakers and have at least elementary level English language proficiency.

There were 5 participants, with ages ranging from 21 to 30 (M =22.5). Furthermore, 4 were male and 1 was female. The pseudonyms Luke, David, Sam, Thomas and Alice were bestowed on participants. A diverse range of nationalities were present i.e. Hungarian, Kazakhstani, Vietnamese (2) and Cambodian. The ability of participants varied from elementary (CEFR A2) to advanced (CEFR C1). Participants had not previously been acquainted in any form.

### 3.4 Data Collection

Data collection was completed in three sequential phases. Initially participants’ Instagram posts were collected and given corrective feedback, then this process continued after it was revised and updated. Upon completion of the first two stages

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**Fig. 3.3 Action research cycles of the current study**
semi-structured interviews were performed. The researcher kept a research journal throughout both data collection phases.

3.4.1 Online Instagram Posts

3.4.1.1 Rationale

Participants Instagram posts contain their writing, therefore it is evident that they should be collected and given corrective feedback in relation to answering the first research question. Corrective feedback was given through a Microsoft word document and the posts, containing an image, description and comments were electronically copied and stored as images on the researcher’s PC. This practice was established based on previous research practices regarding the capture of data from SNSs in relation to L2 writing (Blattner and Fiori, 2011; Mills, 2011; Blattner and Lomicka, 2012; Prichard, 2013).

3.4.1.2 Online Instagram Posts Design

Prior to beginning data collection participants were required to create a profile on Instagram (2 out of 5 already possessed this). Furthermore, participants were required to provide a sample of their writing to be graded so a base-line of their ability could be established prior to commencing the research.

The writing sample and Instagram posts of participants were graded using the prominent Central European Framework of Reference (CEFR) creative writing rubric (Appendix 2). This rubric matched the descriptive writing focus of the research and participants’ vocabulary range, vocabulary control, grammatical accuracy, coherence, orthographic control and thematic development skills were assessed. Additionally, to ensure consistent grading an independent English language teacher graded participants’ pre-Instagram writing samples (Appendix 3). This teacher’s grades were compared to the researcher’s to ensure the researcher interpreted the rubric accurately.

The action research design of the Instagram posting was performed in 2 cycles over the course of 5 weeks, separated into the initial 2 weeks and the following 3 weeks. In the initial 2 week cycle participants posted an image with a description twice a week. The first post was required to be at least 80 words and each subsequent post in phase one was required to be at least 150 words. The ensuing three weeks of the cycle
required participants to continue to post an image with a description of 150 words twice a week in addition to posting at least 2 comments under the posts of other participants. The length of participants’ comments was at their discretion. Figure 3.4 exhibits the 2 cycles which occurred within this data collection tool.

Fig. 3.4 Instagram posting data collection cycles

In week 1 the tutor provided the topics for participants to write about, whereas in week 2 the participants were allowed to choose the 2 topics. This alternating pattern continued over the course of the 5 weeks. Participants were instructed only on the topic via the tutor’s Instagram page as seen below in figure 3.5. Grammar or vocabulary requirements were not given as students were encouraged to be creative. The tutor also provided examples for the first 2 posts. Participants were required to make 10 posts in total and table 3.1 displays the topics along with expected grammar and lexical sets.
Table 3.1 Instagram topics, expected grammar and lexical sets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Expected Grammar</th>
<th>Expected Lexical Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Favourite school memory</td>
<td>Past simple/continuous tenses</td>
<td>School life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Scariest place you've ever been</td>
<td>Past simple/continuous tenses</td>
<td>Danger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Participants’ choice</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Participants’ choice</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. A life changing experience</td>
<td>Past simple/continuous and present perfect tenses</td>
<td>Emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Describe a gadget 30 years in the future</td>
<td>Future simple/continuous tenses</td>
<td>Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Participants’ choice</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Participants’ choice</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Your future house when you're rich</td>
<td>Future simple/continuous tenses</td>
<td>Home life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The greatest event in history</td>
<td>Past simple/continuous and present perfect tenses</td>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first topic required the 5 participants to compose a post of at least 80 words concerning their, ‘favourite school memory’. As seen in figure 3.6 below the tutor posted an image on Instagram with an example description based on this topic. It became apparent that the minimum word limit of 80 was insufficient as 3 out of 5 participants posted over 120 words. Luke was an example of such which can be seen in figure 3.7, based on this the minimum word limit for all future posts was set at 150 words. The tutor copied the text from participants’ posts into a Microsoft word document to provide corrective feedback. The document with corrective feedback was then emailed to participants and an illustration of Luke’s feedback for his post on, ‘favourite school memory’ can be seen in figure 3.8. The entire catalogue of Participants posts and the corresponding corrective feedback can be found in appendices 4 and 5.

Alice and David posted their writing in the comments section of the tutor’s example post as seen in figure 3.5. Therefore, further instructions were clarified and repeated to participants to ensure they performed the task correctly by posting an image with a description on their own profiles. Sam, David and Luke also raised the question of
whether the images posted had to be photographs they had taken themselves. Following this, all participants were informed that they could use any picture at their discretion, whether they produced it or not.

3.6 Tutor’s ‘favourite school memory’ example post with David’s comment

My first day of secondary school brought with it many mixed emotions. It is also my favourite school memory. When I reached the gates I was quite nervous, yet excited. The building itself was bigger than any I’d seen before and I wondered how I would ever find my way around it. There were 200 new pupils that day so the school was chaotic. We spent most of the day getting to know our new classmates and had a free lunch. I think the lack of school work and free food made this my favourite school memory, it seems so long ago now.

I often call my high school is my second home. My high school is not very large but very beautiful and clean. There is a gate which is a entrance and spacious, and specially, the two sides is the flower corridor leads straight to go to playground and the
I have a lot of great memories, it's very hard to pick just one, but one highlight was the first day that I met my first girlfriend in high school. Before that, I really hated my high school because I had to choose it after failing to get into my expected school. It was a stormy day, rain dropped heavily and there was so much lightning in the sky. After finishing lessons, I went home on foot without an umbrella or a raincoat. Everybody hurried up to go home but she came to near where I was standing and asked me whether I wanted to hitchhike. I rode her bike and talked to her all the road very happily. At that moment, I was wishing the silly wish that the road never ended. 😊 We seemed to fall in love at first sight. Until now, we had broken up, I really forgot her, but I can't forget that days 😞
3.8 Corrective feedback for Luke’s ‘favourite school memory’ post

Standing and asked me whether I wanted to hitchhike. I rode her bike and talked to her all along the road very happily. At that moment, I was wishing the silly wish that the road never ended would never end.

We seemed to fall in love at the first sight.

Usually, we had have broken up, if I really forget her, but I can’t forget that those days.

Vocabulary range: Good emotional language and phrasal verbs e.g. on foot. B2
Vocabulary control: Generally good but some confusion on meaning e.g. all the road. B1
Grammatical accuracy: ‘We had broken up’ means that you had broken up but you are now back together. In this case use ‘Now, we have broken up’. Good use of tenses (past perfect and past continuous). Days is plural so the plural of that is those B1
Coherence: Progression of the points is good and you link your writing well by using conjunctions like ‘but’ and ‘because’ correctly. B2
Orthographic control: Remember to use a capital ‘Y’ when talking about yourself e.g. I went home. Good punctuation but some minor spelling mistakes e.g. standing B1
Thematic development: an emotional story with an interesting conclusion. B2
Overall: A good piece of writing which tells an interesting story. B1

3.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

3.4.2.1 Rationale

Interviews and observations are the pre-dominant methods through which qualitative data is collected. Observation is a primary source of data collection and allows the researcher to directly witness the participant’s behaviour, rather than their perception of their behaviour (Robson, 2011; Cohen et al., 2011). However, in this study the data required is the participants’ perceptions i.e. their attitudes towards Instagram as an interactional learning tool. Therefore, an observation is inappropriate as it would provide the researcher’s perception of participants’ attitudes, adding an additional and unnecessary layer of subjectivity.

An interview is defined as, ‘an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest’ (Kvale, 1996 p.14 in Cohen et al., 2011 p. 409). Cohen et al. (2011) elaborate stating that interviews provide all participants with a platform to share their experiences and understandings of the world which they inhabit. McDonough & McDonough (1997) and Robson (2011) state that interview types are categorised
along a continuum of structured, semi-structured and unstructured, as opposed to three set categories.

A structured interview follows a monolithic questioning format which allows little flexibility for interviewees to offer varied answers or for interviewers to prompt or probe (Robson, 2011; Cohen et al., 2011). Moving along the continuum to semi-structured interviews allows both participants more flexibility as the interviewer can prompt, probe and adapt questions as necessary (Drever, 1995; McDonough and McDonough, 1997; Robson, 2011). At the other end of the continuum is an unstructured interview which is performed with no set questioning format, only a topic to be discussed with the intentions of stimulating the participant to offer responses with as little restrictions as possible (Drever, 1995; McDonough and McDonough, 1997; Robson, 2011).

In a similar fashion some of the advantages and disadvantages of each interview type can be represented by a continuum. As an interview becomes less structured the flexibility afforded to the questions and answers increases, therefore consistency and comparability among participants becomes less credible (Robson, 2011; Cohen et al., 2011). Thus, a more structured interview provides greater scope to generalise results, whereas a less structured interview offers greater depth of analysis (Robson, 2011; Cohen et al., 2011). Drever (1995) states that performing an interview is a time consuming process, regardless of the structure, and requires considerable skill on the part of the interviewer.

A semi-structured interview was selected as it provides an adaptable structure which allows participants to express their attitudes regarding the use of Instagram as an interactional learning tool on their own terms (Drever, 1995; McDonough and McDonough, 1997; Cohen et al., 2011). Furthermore, a semi-structured interview provides the researcher with the opportunity to clarify, probe and prompt while maintaining a reasonably consistent structure (Drever, 1995; McDonough and McDonough, 1997; Robson, 2011).

A semi-structured interview was appropriate to collect learners’ attitudes, however, its limitations must be acknowledged. A more flexible interview structure requires a skilled interviewer to ensure the discussion remains relevant (Drever, 1995; Robson, 2011). Moreover, a lack of anonymity may cause the participant to be less truthful and an
The interview is time consuming for the participant in comparison to questionnaires and observations (Drever, 1995; Robson, 2011).

3.4.2.2 Semi-structured Interview Design

Semi-structured interviews were performed using Skype, an online application which allows audio and visual communication in real time. Face-to-face interviews were not possible as none of the participants and the researcher resided in the same country. There were 19 interview questions which were separated into three stages including the participant’s background, their use of Instagram and SNSs and their attitudes towards Instagram as an interactional learning tool in this study. The purpose of the interview was to gain data on participants’ opinions, beliefs and attitudes and therefore dichotomous questions are seldom used. Drever (1995) and Robson (2011) state an effective and efficient interview should last between thirty to sixty minutes, therefore the running time of thirty minutes was adequate.

The first stage of the interview contained 7 questions which investigated the participant’s L2 learning background. The participant should answer these questions with ease, allowing them to feel more comfortable within the interview setting and establishing a rapport with the interviewer (Cohen et al., 2011). These questions are factual and add necessary context to the data the interview seeks to acquire.

The following section comprises 4 questions relating to the participant’s typical use of Instagram and the language they use when posting. These questions add further context and aid understanding of participant’s answers in the final section.

The final stage is the most salient regarding the acquisition of the required data. 8 predominantly open-ended questions regarding the how participants’ writing ability was affected and their attitudes towards Instagram as an interactional learning tool were asked. The use of open-ended questions allows flexibility, improved depth and the more opportunities for the interviewer to probe (Kerlinger & Lee, 1999).

The majority of questions in the final section were asked using non-specific terms (e.g. how?) as they appear less confrontational than direct terms (e.g. do you agree?) and invite the participant to divulge more information (Tuckman, 1972 cited in Cohen et al., 2011). However, if this questioning style did not yield satisfactory responses probing
questions (e.g. why?) were used as they, “increase the richness of the data being obtained’ (Patton, 1990, p.324).

3.4.2.3 Pilot of Semi-structured Interview

Pilots were performed with two non-participant English language learners of intermediate ability who have been given the pseudonyms Andrew and Bell. The length of the interview was thirty minutes, as expected. Both Andrew and Bell demonstrated a solid understanding and ability to answer the questions overall. However, several issues regarding redundancy and privacy were identified and the following amendments were made.

Question 9 (How important is using Instagram and other social network sites to your daily routine?) exhibited poor questioning technique and was removed for being both repetitive and redundant in relation to question 10 (How often do you use Instagram and other social network sites?) (Arksey & Knight, 1999).

The piloting of question 7 (Have you completed any English language exams before e.g. IELTS? What score did you achieve?), raised a significant dilemma for the researcher. Andrew indicated the question may have been too personal and direct, as some participants may believe their score is private information and feel uncomfortable (Robson, 2011). The researcher made a calculated judgment to keep the question in the interview schedule in its original format. Knowledge of participants’ formal English language qualifications enhance both the validity and reliability of the study as it further establishes a baseline of participants’ ability. A valid and reliable baseline of participants’ ability is crucial as this is the criterion the development of their writing proficiency will be judged against. The researcher will rely on their ability to establish a strong and welcoming rapport with participants to diminish this problem.

The pre-pilot semi-structured interview schedule can be found in appendix 7. The semi-structured interview schedule which contains the aforementioned amendments and was used to collect genuine data can be found in appendix 8.

3.4.3 Research Journal

Reflexivity concerns the ability of researchers to question and respond to how their assumptions, goals and subjectivity influence their research (Etherington, 2004; Ortlipp, 2008). Ortlipp (2008, p.695) states keeping a research journal for qualitative
research and using it when analysing data aids reflexivity by making one’s “experiences, opinions, thoughts, and feelings visible and an acknowledged part of the research process”. Furthermore, by openly acknowledging these influences the researcher increases transparency, and their ability to adapt and improve practices (Ortlipp, 2008).

Textbooks and published journal articles can often give novice researchers the impression that carrying out a piece of research is straightforward and mask ‘the complexities, ambiguities, unanticipated difficulties, personal struggles and conflicts which doing research involves’ (Borg, 2001, p. 173). Borg (2001) asserts that keeping one’s own, and reading other’s, research journals is especially beneficial to novice researchers as it allows them to appreciate and analyse the more difficult processes involved when performing a piece of research.

The researcher maintained contact with participants for a period of seven weeks in both the role of a researcher and an online tutor. The initial role assumed was that of the researcher, then during the Instagram posting period the role of online tutor was performed, after this stage the role of the researcher was resumed to complete the interviews. As a result, a research journal was kept throughout all data collection stages to further illuminate and consider the impact of frequent contact with participants, the varying roles of researcher and online tutor and any other difficulties encountered.

The keeping of this journal enhanced my capacity to reflect upon both the students and my own practice, a crucial aspect of action research which informed the amendments made in future cycles e.g. the additional requirement that participants must contribute 2 comments. Furthermore, the ideas considered in the research journal during the Instagram posting period directly informed several interview questions e.g. participants preference between being given and choosing their own topics.

The research journal can be found in appendix 10 and was kept in a simple format consisting of dated entries in a chronological fashion.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures
The researcher instigated and maintained contact with participants for a total of seven weeks. Participants were initially contacted through FB and email either as existing social contacts of the researcher, or as new social contacts established via mutual acquaintances. The research was performed outside the context of any institution and participants were all over 18, therefore no intermediary access permission was required once ethical approval was granted. All participants joined the research voluntarily, the only incentive being the corrective feedback their writing posts received.

It is, however, pertinent to consider if David and Sam felt more obliged to take part due to their existing social relationship with the researcher. To reduce the impact of this status quo on validity, reliability and good ethical practice the researcher explicitly informed these participants they were under no obligation to take part and could withdraw at any time.

In the first week all participants were contacted, their preliminary consent received and subsequent information and consent forms were completed. Following this previous writing samples were collected and the online Instagram posting began in week 2, as participants received posting instructions via Instagram. The data collection of Instagram posts continued in this form for 5 weeks. In the remaining week semi-structured interviews with participants were performed using Skype. The following diagram illustrates the time frame of the data collection:
3.6 Ethical Considerations

Traditional concerns relating to qualitative research will be discussed first, followed by ethical concerns relating to research in online environments and finally interview ethics.

A researcher’s chief responsibility is to protect participants’ welfare at all times and ensure they are fully informed of the nature and purpose of the research (Oliver, 2006; Cohen et al., 2011; Robson, 2011; Creswell, 2014). To ensure participants were aware of the nature and purpose of the research they were provided with identical information and consent forms. The researcher was continually available for questions and they then signed these forms to indicate their informed consent prior to data collection beginning. Furthermore, all participants were informed that they had the option to withdraw from the study at any stage, and for any reason, without fear of negative repercussions.

As the study included participants free from any institution, the researcher did not have to request intermediary access and thus there were perhaps less safeguards in place for participants (Cohen et al., 2011). Given the frequent contact between the researcher, in both the role of researcher and online tutor, and participants over the seven week data collection period this factor rose in prominence. To address this issue
the participants were given highly detailed descriptions to inform their consent, the researcher acted openly and honestly and the researcher's supervisor was made aware of all developments.

Prior to beginning the data collection process participants were informed that the researcher will have ownership of interview recordings and the electronic image copies of their Instagram posts, yet they will retain full ownership of the Instagram profile and posts which are viewable online. As the participants were in different countries a brief video communication through Skype was performed prior to data collection commencing in order to establish the status and identity of both the researcher and the participants (Cohen et al., 2011).

A significant ethical concern arising from research relating to interactions in online environments is the distinction between private and public data (Kern et al., 2008). It was of paramount importance participants were aware that the anonymity and confidentiality of their online Instagram posts could not be guaranteed. Only the confidentiality of the use of those posts in this study could be assured. Participants’ need to know this was heightened as their cultural backgrounds were diverse and some may have been uncomfortable with the public expressions required on Instagram.

The interview data was collected from participants confidentially via individual Skype interviews. Participants also consented to the researcher taking an audio recording of the interviews. Additionally, participants were informed that data collected would be held by the researcher for up to ten years in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

3.7 Rigour of the Study

3.7.1 Reliability

Reliability regards the accuracy and consistency of the research methods i.e. if they were performed again in a similar context, similar findings should arise (Robson, 2011; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2014). Cohen et al. (2011) continue by asserting that in a qualitative study, the achievement of neutrality, trustworthiness and dependability also take prominence. The ensuing steps were taken to ensure the reliability of the online Instagram posts and semi-structured interview data collection tools.
To ensure the instructions given to all participants for each post were identical the tutor posted an image with instructions for each post on Instagram. The use of the established Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) creative writing rubric to grade writing lessened subjectivity and supported reliability (Robson, 2011; Cohen et al., 2011). Furthermore, the pre-Instagram writing samples were marked by an independent English language teacher and compared to the researcher’s grades to ensure interpretation of the marking criteria was consistent, enhancing inter-rater reliability (Cohen et al., 2011).

Oppenheim (1992) contends that if the wording of the same question is altered in several interviews, then it is no longer the same question for each participant. This practice would lead to inconsistent interview questions and lower the reliability of the data. The questions on the interview schedule were asked to each participant using the exact order and wording in which they appear to minimise this threat. Follow-up probes, however, were asked by the interviewer based on the participant’s responses in accordance with the semi-structured interview framework.

The performance of two pilot interviews highlighted redundancy and privacy issues which were then corrected to aid reliability (Cohen et al., 2011).

3.7.2 Validity

Validity in a qualitative study is primarily based on the objectivity of the researcher, quality, rigor, trustworthiness, triangulation and the richness and depth of data (Winters, 2000; Golafshani, 2003). Golafshani (2003) states that by maximising or testing the validity of a study it becomes more credible. Triangulation i.e. employing two or more data collection or data analysis methods is one of the most distinguished practices to maximise validity (Golafshani, 2003; Robson, 2011; Cohen at al., 2011).

This study utilised triangulation in the form of three data collection tools (online Instagram posts, semi-structured interviews and a research journal). The validity afforded by these tools will be examined by their ability to better answer the research questions.

The first research question investigated the effect using Instagram had on participants writing proficiency. The writing from their Instagram posts was collected as the primary source of data to answer this question. It is further supported by the asking the
participant’s opinion of how their writing was affected in the semi-structured interview and the researcher’s subjective opinion contained in the research journal.

In terms of data analysis methods, the use of the established CEFR creative writing rubric also supported validity as the subjective influence of the researcher was reduced (Robson, 2011; Cohen et al., 2011).

Participant’s attitudes towards using Instagram as an interactional learning tool are sought in the second research question. The key source of data for this question was the semi-structured interview. Comments on Instagram posts and the researcher’s journal ensured triangulation as supporting data sources.

It should be acknowledged that the researcher has a personal relationship with 2 of the participants. Furthermore, the relationship was previously that of a teacher and student, an asymmetrical power relationship which may have disproportionately influenced the research (Drever, 1995; Robson, 2011; Cohen et al., 2011). The validity of the study is challenged as participants may have acted unnaturally in an effort to provide the data they believe the researcher desired. To negate this it was clearly expressed to participants that the study seeks to find the truth, and the primary desire was that they act naturally regardless of the perceived positive or negative effects.

To further validity participants were required to be competent English speakers, ensuring they had the ability to effectively comprehend questions and express their intended meaning when interviewed.

3.8 Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis in this study operates interpretively with emphasis on the researcher’s ability to draw together several data sources and represent them truthfully (Cohen et al., 2011). Data was analysed following the 6 steps advised by Creswell in figure 3.10 (2014, p.285):
Participants’ pre-data collection writing samples and Instagram posts were graded by the researcher applying the CEFR rubric for creative writing. The resulting grades for each category e.g. coherence and overall grades were then viewed in chronological order and any variation identified both for individuals and as a collective.

The interview data was originally collected in an audio format then transcribed. Cohen et al. (2011) state that transcribing an interview provides more accuracy yet it cannot express non-verbal cues and is time-consuming. There was sufficient time for the researcher to transcribe the interviews and any non-verbal cues the researcher deemed significant were entered in the research journal. Qualitative analysis of the semi-structured interviews was performed using open coding (sentence by sentence) to identify themes relating to learners’ attitudes towards Instagram in this study (Cohen et al., 2011).

The researcher’s journal was used as a source of triangulation. The results generated from the Instagram posts, comments and semi-structured interviews were compared against the researcher’s interpretations at different times over the course of the study. The subsequent data analysis therefore contains extracts from the researcher’s journal which support or contradict findings from the other data collection tools.

**Conclusion**
This chapter has reviewed the key aspects of the action research design employed in this study. In the succeeding chapter the data collected utilising this design will be analysed and presented.
Chapter 4 Findings

Introduction

The data collected from Instagram posts, semi-structured interviews and the researcher’s journal will now be analysed and presented in relation to their ability to answer the research questions.

Each participant in the research originates from a distinctly different background i.e. different cultures, educational experiences and variations in English language ability. Based on these discrepancies a brief vignette of each participant will be given before the data analysis is presented. These vignettes will maintain the integrity of each individual’s data and add necessary context to enhance understanding of the findings (Cohen et al., 2011).

Following the vignettes, data analysis from the grading of online Instagram posts will be utilised to address research question one i.e. How does the use of Instagram affect learners’ descriptive writing proficiency? Subsequently data analysis of the semi-structured interviews, participants’ Instagram comments and the researcher’s journal will be presented to address the second research question i.e. What are learners’ attitudes towards Instagram as an interactional learning tool?

4.1 Vignettes

Data analysis was performed regarding the collective development, if any, of participants’ descriptive writing proficiency and the most frequent themes regarding attitudes were identified. This approach allows observation of ‘the big picture’, however, given their diverse backgrounds, it is also salient to recognise the individuality of participants. The participants discussed in the following vignettes are given pseudonyms, all other information is genuine and was collected from the semi-structured interviews.

David is a 30-year-old Vietnamese Engineer who has been learning English at a private school for 3 years. He describes his motivation to learn English as, ‘I learn for my work and so I can talk with foreigner.’ Furthermore, he feels that writing is the most difficult skill when learning the English language and he improves his writing by translating newspaper articles from Vietnamese to English and chatting with friends.
on SNSs. Prior to this study David had never used Instagram but was a frequent user of FB and posted using both English and Vietnamese.

David has never completed any formal English language exams and is currently studying to take an IELTS exam with the aim of achieving level 6.0 (equivalent to CEFR B2). The pre-data collection writing sample about a day trip David provided gained an overall CEFR A2 grade. It appears his vocabulary control, orthographic control and thematic development writing skills are stronger than his vocabulary range, grammatical accuracy and coherence. David’s participation in the study encompassed 10 posts on his Instagram profile, 14 comments on the posts of others and an interview.

Sam is a 21-year-old Cambodian University student and has studied English at private and public schools since he was 16. The primary motivations Sam identifies for learning English are to gain employment and, ‘to travel to other countries… it is my focus’. Sam typically finds reading and the organisation of writing texts the most difficult English language skills and says he simply practises to improve. Before beginning the research Sam had never used Instagram but posted on FB several times a week using English. He states that he pre-dominantly used English so that his foreign friends could understand his posts.

Sam has never completed an internationally recognised English language exam but has completed several public school exams where, ‘sometimes I first in the year’. The pre-data collection writing sample on the topic of modern technology provided by Sam received an overall CEFR A2 grade. Analysis of this sample exhibits Sam’s strengths as vocabulary range, coherence and orthographic control, whereas his weaknesses are vocabulary control, grammatical accuracy and thematic development. Sam posted 9 times on his Instagram profile, 2 comments on the posts of others and gave an interview.

Luke is a 21-year-old Vietnamese male who has recently graduated from university with a degree in Finance. Primary school classes provided Luke’s first engagement with the English language and he has continued with English classes throughout high school and university. Luke believes that learning English will further his career goals and allow him to travel as, ‘I can go everywhere with English’. Speaking is the most difficult part of the English language for Luke as he becomes nervous. Interestingly,
Luke states he likes to read websites to improve his writing ability but has only been able to do so recently as,

‘When I was at high school my parents don’t permit me (3) use the internet because they worry if…um… I use the Internet can affect badly to my exam in school.’

Luke is now a frequent social media user and typically posts on Instagram and FB several times a week in Vietnamese. He states that he has never posted on SNSs using English before this study. During his time at high school and university Luke completed English language exams but has never taken any internationally recognised English language exams. The pre-data collection writing sample concerning family relationships that Luke provided attained a grade of CEFR B1 with his strengths being highlighted as vocabulary range, coherence, orthographic control and thematic development. The vocabulary control and grammatical accuracy in this piece were slightly weaker than the other aspects. Luke posted on his Instagram profile 9 times, in addition to 12 comments on the posts of others and contributed an interview.

**Thomas** is a 23-year-old Hungarian male who works at an international forwarding company. Thomas uses English as part of his job and has studied English at both public and private schools, and university since he was 12 years old. His reasons for learning English include employment opportunities, communicating with foreign friends and work colleagues and to use the Internet more effectively. He feels that pronunciation and fluency are the most difficult English language skills but states when he first started learning English, ‘I was afraid of writing tests’. Thomas had never used Instagram before this study yet he posts on FB using both English and Hungarian every day.

Preceding this study Thomas has achieved a C1 grade for a CEFR exam and has passed an intermediate level Cambridge business English exam. Thomas provided a book review as a sample of his writing before the study began and attained a CEFR C1 grade. His vocabulary range, vocabulary control, coherence, orthographic control and thematic development were all of a high standard whereas the standard of his grammatical accuracy was marginally lower. Thomas produced 9 Instagram posts, 7 comments on the posts of others and an interview as part of the research.
The final participant is **Alice**, a 22-year-old from Kazakhstan who is currently studying at a university in the UK. Alice first began to learn English in primary school but feels she had poor ability at this time. The main reason for Alice learning English is to further her educational and career goals. Alice states that although she lives in a native English speaking environment, ‘the only way I can speak English is in school,’ as she lives with fellow Kazakhstani students. Furthermore, she feels that speaking is the most difficult English skill and improves her writing by reading as much as she can. Prior to this study Alice used Instagram and FB daily in her native language, but never in English.

To gain admission to a UK university Alice took an IELTS exam and achieved a score of 6.0 (equivalent to CEFR B2). However, Alice was only able to provide 2 Instagram posts and an interview for the purposes of this study and therefore this data sample is too small to address the progression of her writing proficiency meaningfully. Conversely, her interview data is important as it may unveil different attitudes to those participants who used Instagram more frequently.

Despite the evidently diverse English learning backgrounds of participants, some consistencies can be identified. All five participants exhibit instrumental motivation as they explicitly identify furthering educational and career goals as sources of motivation (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). Furthermore, while some have only previously posted exclusively in their native language, all participants are familiar with SNSs and their features. The vignettes provided allow the findings to be viewed both as a representation of general English language learners and in the context of each individual leaner. The following table 4.1 summarises the total number of Instagram posts, comments and interviews provided by each participant.

**Table 4.1 Participants’ contributions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Instagram Posts</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Interview</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2 The Effect of Using Instagram on English Learners’ Descriptive Writing

Each participants Instagram posts were graded and returned using the CEFR rubric which specifically evaluated the vocabulary range, vocabulary control, grammatical accuracy, coherence, orthographic control and thematic development of participants’ writing. An overall grade was given for each post based on the scores achieved in each of these categories.

The effect of using Instagram on participants’ descriptive writing ability will be addressed based on the individual progression, if any, of proficiency within each of these categories and then as a whole. A brief description of the highest and lowest grades is given for each category to aid understanding and extensive descriptions can be found in appendix 2.

4.2.1 Vocabulary Range

An L2 learners’ use of vocabulary is a key component when appraising the quality of a writing text (Raimes, 1985; Leki and Carson, 1994; Walters and Wolf, 1996; Lee, 2003). Vocabulary range refers specifically to the diversity of words, phrases and idiomatic expressions a learner produces. The CEFR grades used to evaluate participants’ vocabulary range from A1 (‘a basic vocabulary repertoire of isolated words and phrases’) to C2 (‘a very broad lexical repertoire including idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms’). Figure 4.1 provides an overview of participants’ vocabulary range grades.
David’s grades over the posting period are the most erratic, however from weeks 5-10 they stabilise somewhat by fluctuating between the B1 and B2 grades which indicates an improvement from the A2 grade given to his pre-Instagram writing sample. Examples of the more advanced vocabulary David produced in later posts include, ‘exchange’, ‘conditions’, ‘career ladder’ and ‘meaningful’.

Initially Sam’s grades were inconsistent but this was rectified as he achieved a B1 grade in his last 6 posts which inferences an overall improvement from his pre-Instagram sample grade of A2. A comparison of the tutor’s comments from the pre-Instagram sample, ‘allows basic description of the topic’ and post 9, ‘powerful and emotional language in relation to the topic’ highlight this development.

The most consistent participant was Luke who remained at a B2 level of the course of the posting despite a slight dip to B1 grades for posts 2 and 3. The use of lexis such as, ‘combine’, ‘residential’ and ‘leakage of radioactive substances’ validate a B2 grade.

Thomas began at a C1 level which then rose to a C2 in the final 3 posts, which suggests an improvement in his vocabulary range. Thomas’ exemplary use of vocabulary included, ‘façade’, ‘perfect harmony’, ‘irrevocably’ and ‘emotion packed’.
romance novel’. Overall, it appears that 3 out of 4 participants’ vocabulary range improved over the course of the study, with Luke’s ability left unchanged.

The third post appears to be significant as both David and Sam suffered a lower grade this week while Luke and Thomas’ grades remained constant. This was the first instance participants were required to choose their own topic to write about so perhaps this decrease was due to unfamiliarity with such an approach. The subsequent posts in which students chose their own topics followed the overall trend so they may have become more comfortable with this approach over time.

4.2.2 Vocabulary Control

Vocabulary control concerns the participants’ ability to use vocabulary which expresses accurate and appropriate meaning in the context of the topic. The CEFR grades range from A1 (accurate use of simple words and phrases) to C2 (‘consistently correct and appropriate use of vocabulary’). Figure 4.2 exhibits the variation in participants’ vocabulary control grades.

Fig. 4.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instagram Posts</th>
<th>A1</th>
<th>A2</th>
<th>B1</th>
<th>B2</th>
<th>C1</th>
<th>C2</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
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</table>

In David’s case his pre-Instagram writing sample received a B1 grade and his grades in the final 3 weeks were B1 so there is no significant difference in his vocabulary control after the posting period. David’s grades drop to A2 in weeks 3 and 4 in which he was required to choose his own topic so perhaps he was unfamiliar with this
approach. However, the next time he was required to choose his own topic in weeks 7 and 8 he achieved B2 and B1 grades, so any preliminary negative effects of choosing his own topic appear to be resolved.

In the opening 3 weeks Sam’s scores varied between A2 and B1, after which he consistently attained B1 grades. A sample of the tutor’s comments from A2 in post 2, ‘Incomplete phrases and missing nouns and verbs’ to B1 in post 6, ‘generally good but a few incorrect or inappropriate uses’ demonstrate Sam’s vocabulary control improved from A2 to B1 over the course of the posting period.

Luke’s vocabulary control was consistent with his pre-Instagram B1 grade for the first 5 weeks and afterwards fluctuated between A2, B1 and B2, before a final grade of B1. Therefore, it cannot be asserted that Luke’s vocabulary control improved or deteriorated over the course of the research. The following tutor’s comment from post 5 typifies Luke’s vocabulary control,

‘Generally appropriate with some inaccuracy. The correct phrase is ‘to break up’ or have ‘broken up’, when talking about the end of a relationship.’

Similarly, Thomas’ final grade of C2 is an improvement from his pre-Instagram sample grade of C1 yet he did not achieve C2 consistently enough for it to be recognised as a bona-fide improvement. The tutor’s comment from post 9 provides an example of what merited a C1 grade,

‘Excellent, one minor error, ‘outskirts’ is plural because it is non-specific i.e. we do not know what area or side of the city it is on.’

The general findings across the 4 participants is that their vocabulary control was not materially affected over the course of the Instagram posting. Only Sam’s vocabulary control can be viewed as improved, while there were improvements and declines of vocabulary control grades among the others they typically stayed at the level of their pre-Instagram writing sample.

4.2.3 Grammatical Accuracy

Grammatical accuracy examines a learner’s ability to follow the rules of the English language pre-dominantly concerning syntax, morphology and semantics, and is a key factor when assessing English language proficiency (Celce-Murcia, 1991). CEFR
grades for grammatical accuracy vary from A1 (‘limited control of a few grammatical structures’) to C2 (‘consistent grammatical control of complex language’). Figure 4.3 exhibits how participants’ grammatical accuracy was affected over the course of the Instagram posting.

Fig.4.3

The ten B1 grades David received were entirely consistent with his pre-Instagram sample grade of B1. The main sources of error for David involved articles, prepositions and syntax. A comparison of post 3 in which all these errors were present and post 9 which only contained, ‘some syntax errors’ attest that these errors became less frequent over the posting period. Nevertheless, they did not decrease sufficiently to justify a higher grade.

Sam’s grammatical accuracy grades were much more irregular, despite a B2 and several B1 grades it cannot be said his grammatical ability absolutely improved from its original A2 grade. The typical difficulties encountered by Sam concerned verb tenses and syntax. Some progression in these areas can be viewed by contrasting text from post 3, ‘there was a hunter aimed him with the gun’ and post 9, ‘Pain and suffering caused by other’s and life’s situations will always be there.’
The most frequent, and final, grade achieved by Luke was B1 which aligns with his pre-Instagram sample grade of B1 and indicates no concrete improvement in grammatical accuracy. Luke primarily produced errors involving articles and tense switching, a key example was when he had to describe a life changing experience in post 5, ‘No longer being a young boy, I have been a man’. In the post Luke struggled with switching between describing what happened in the past and how it affects him now, mistakes of this nature were less frequent in the ensuing posts.

Thomas’ pre-Instagram sample received a B2 grade and also final grade of B2, however he attained seven C1 grades in between which indicate a clear ability to achieve a higher level. The inconsistency in Thomas’ grades in the final four posts suggest that Thomas’ final level is a very high B2 and requires more dependability to be considered a solid C1. Thomas’ errors were typically pro-nouns, determiners or plurals in his B2 graded posts e.g. ‘After spending beautiful months together’ (post 8). Also, two of the three B2 grades occurred in posts 3 and 8 in which he was required to choose his own topic.

A general analysis has identified a marginal improvement of the participants’ grammatical accuracy over the course of the Instagram posting. Certain aspects of individual’s grammatical accuracy improved e.g. David’s use of articles but the overall progression is trivial. As mentioned with vocabulary range a noticeable trend is that in post 3 when participants were first asked to choose a topic, Sam, Luke and Thomas’ grades all decreased, while David’s remained constant. It is probable that their grades temporarily suffered as they adapted to choosing their own topics and later analysis does not indicate any further problems with topic selection.

4.2.4 Coherence

Johns (1986) emphasises that coherence regards the writer’s ability to clearly link and discuss ideas in a logical fashion, and additionally to consider their writing in relation to its audience. The CEFR grading of coherence extends from A1 (‘can link words…with very basic linear connecters like ‘and’’) to C2 (‘can create coherent and cohesive text with a variety of organisational patterns’). Figure 4.4 demonstrates how participants’ ability to write coherently was affected by using Instagram.
The pre-Instagram sample provided by David received an A2 grade and viewing his subsequent grades stipulates a steady improvement to B1 and then B2 in the final four posts. A comparison of the tutor’s comments from the A2 graded sample post, ‘The story can be followed but jumpy and confusing in parts’, and the B2 graded final post, ‘good essay writing language to move the points along e.g. moreover’, display a marked improvement.

On the contrary, Sam’s grades were inconsistent yet they were primarily B1 which suggests no discernible improvement from his sample grade of B1. Luke initially began at a B2 level and, despite a decrease in posts 2 and 3, he consistently achieved a B2 grade, therefore there is little evidence the posting affected his overall ability to write coherent texts. Similarly, Thomas’ grades, on all but one occasion, were in agreement with his sample grade of C1 and it appears his coherent writing skills were unaffected.

The topic for the second post, ‘the scariest place you’ve ever been’ which requires participants to describe past events and their present impact produced notable results. Sam and Luke both suffered lower grades for this topic while David and Thomas’ grades remained constant. Topic 5 used a similar time frame for, ‘a life changing event’ and produced conflicting results as Sam and Thomas improved, while David and Luke’s grades were unchanged. After this improvement, learners’ grades stabilised...
over the last 5 posts, perhaps they became more comfortable using the features of Instagram. A review of all participant’s grades proposes that posting on Instagram did not materially affect their coherent writing skills.

4.2.5 Orthographic Control

The participants’ orthographic control was analysed by their ability to adhere to conventional English spelling, punctuation and layout of a text. The CEFR grades used to measure orthographic control vary from A1 (‘can copy familiar words and short phrases’) to C2 (‘writing is orthographically free of error’). Figure 4.5 demonstrates the effect posting on Instagram has had on participants’ orthographic control.

Fig. 4.5

David’s pre-Instagram sample received a B1 grade and varied between A2 and B1 until the last four posts in which he achieved three B2 grades. Therefore, there is evidence that David’s orthographic control improved over the course of the posting period. A significant error in David’s earlier posts e.g. post 2 which contributed to his lower scores was his persistent use of a lower case ‘i’ when using the first person singular. He corrected this mistake from the third post onwards, hence significantly reducing the amount of orthographic errors in his texts.
Sam’s orthographic control followed a different trajectory to David’s. The pre-
Instagram sample Sam provided received a B1 grade, however his last five posts all
received A2 grades which exhibits a clear regression of his orthographic control. The
texts Sam provided were often littered with spelling mistakes, albeit usually with higher
level vocabulary, and the overuse and misplacement of commas and full stops. An
archetypal example of these errors can be found when he described a trip to Angkor
Wat in post 7, ‘when i reached the centeral… i had some rest for my visting.’

Analysis of Luke’s Instagram posts suggest his orthographic control has remained
unchanged with his final two grades of B2 matching his sample grade of B2. However,
there were several posts in between which received a lower B1 grade due to spelling
errors e.g. ‘dissagree’, ‘creat’ and ‘enviroment’ in post 7. The progression from a
sample C1 grade to a C2 grade in the last four posts demonstrates a clear progression
of orthographic control for Thomas. The punctuation and layout of Thomas’ writing
was exemplary throughout and the higher C2 level was achieved by totally eradicating
spelling errors exemplified by the tutor’s comment for post 9, ‘first-rate, no errors’.

Analysis of how participants’ orthographic control was affected produces divergent
findings as David and Thomas exhibit clear progression, Luke was unaffected and
Sam’s ability deteriorated.

4.2.6 Thematic Development

Thematic development builds on coherence as it analyses the writer’s ability to
produce a structured and cohesive narrative on a discourse level, as opposed to the
linkage of points within a text (Wang, 2007). The descriptors for the CEFR grades are
provided from A2 (‘describe something in a simple list of points’) to C1 (‘can give
elaborate descriptions and narratives’). Figure 4.6 displays how participants’ thematic
development skills were affected through posting on Instagram.
The first four posts David made were in agreement with his sample grade of B1, he then subsequently achieved B2 grades for the remainder of his posts which demonstrates a clear advancement in his thematic development. This development was based on his use of improved narrative structures with effective introductions, discussions and conclusions e.g. a detailed and thoughtful discussion on the importance of learning English in post 8.

Sam made a clear progression over the posting period from an A2 to a solid B1, while achieving a B2 grade for the ninth post. Sam was capable of rich description from the beginning and the progression stemmed from his ability to employ more complex narrative structures and rhetorical devices. Sam discussed self-motivation in post 9 and the tutor’s comments showcase the advancement of his thematic development,

‘Powerful language and themes are discussed using an effective structure and great conclusion.’

Luke consistently achieved a B2 grade except in posts 2 and 3, generally his thematic development ability has remained unaffected by posting on Instagram. The topics with which Luke struggled were, ‘describe the scariest place you’ve ever been’ and a description of family members which achieved a lower B1 grade as it is a rudimentary
topic. The C1 grades and tutor’s comments Thomas received, e.g. ‘an elaborate narrative with a solid conclusion’ in post 4, were regular and in accordance with his pre-Instagram sample, thus his ability in this regard is wholly unchanged.

A general review suggests that the Instagram posting improved the thematic development ability of participants with a lower initial level i.e. David (B1) and Sam (A2). Whereas those participants with a higher initial level, i.e. Luke (B2) and Thomas (C1), remained unaffected.

4.2.7 Overall

Participants’ were given an overall grade for each post which took into account their grades for vocabulary range, vocabulary control, grammatical accuracy, coherence, orthographic control and thematic development. Figure 4.7 displays the overall effect that using Instagram had on participants’ descriptive writing ability.

Fig. 4.7

The pre-Instagram sample David provided achieved an A2 grade while 9 out of the 10 subsequent Instagram posts were given a B1 grade. Therefore, it is evident that David’s overall descriptive writing ability was enhanced by posting Instagram. In particular, David’s vocabulary range, coherence and thematic development improved, his grammatical accuracy marginally improved and his vocabulary control was unaffected.
Sam’s pre-Instagram sample was graded as A2 and while he received this grade again for posts 2 and 3, the final 7 posts he provided were graded as B1. Based on this evidence there was a clear progression in Sam’s descriptive writing proficiency over the course of the study. It was also clear that using Instagram affected different aspects of his writing as his vocabulary range, vocabulary control and thematic development were enhanced. Whereas Sam’s grammatical accuracy noticed minor improvement, his coherence was unaffected and his orthographic control regressed over the posting period.

Over the course of the study Luke’s general descriptive writing ability was unaffected with his grades predominantly matching his pre-Instagram sample B1 grade. In the final four posts Luke’s grades suggested that his vocabulary control, grammatical accuracy and orthographic control may have improved but none of these improvements were consistent and therefore it cannot be conclusively said. In similar fashion, analysis of Luke’s posts states his vocabulary range, coherence and thematic development skills were not materially affected by posting on Instagram.

In general Thomas’ descriptive writing ability was also unaffected by posting on Instagram as each of his overall C1 grades was consistent with his pre-Instagram sample. However, delving deeper it appears that both his vocabulary range and Orthographic control were enhanced during the course of the study yet this does not merit an overall C2 grade. Thomas’ vocabulary control, grammatical accuracy, coherence and thematic development were materially unaffected.

Analysis of each writing facet reveals a progression in vocabulary range and improvement of some grammatical aspects. Additionally, both vocabulary control and coherence remain unaffected on the whole. The effect of using Instagram on orthographic control and thematic development writing skills produced mixed results with some progressing while others were unaffected, or in fact regressed.

A review of each participant’s overall performance suggests that posting on Instagram significantly enhanced the descriptive writing proficiency of David and Sam, while Luke and Thomas remained unaffected. It appears those with a lower initial level benefitted more as David and Sam’s pre-Instagram samples graded their ability as A2, whereas Luke and Thomas received B1 and C1 respectively.
4.3 Attitudes towards the Use of Instagram as an Interactional Learning Tool

The primary source of data used to investigate participants’ attitudes towards the use of Instagram were the semi-structured interviews. Secondary data sources, which provided triangulation, were the participants’ use of comments on Instagram and the researcher’s journal. Investigation into participants’ attitudes towards Instagram as an interactional learning tool identified four key themes:

✓ The positive effects of Instagram use on writing ability
✓ The importance of an online learning community
✓ Nurtured learner autonomy
✓ Embracing the future use of Instagram.

These themes and the data which caused their conceptualisation will now be presented.

4.3.1 The Positive Effects of Instagram Use on Writing Ability

The analyses of interview data show that all five participants exhibited positive attitudes in this regard and used descriptions such as, ‘improved’, ‘helped’ and ‘getting better’. Writing about specifically given topics and being able to receive corrective feedback seemed to be acknowledged by some participants as Sam provided a detailed account of his views,

‘You know I started to use Instagram the first time my topic… it was not very good. But the next topic I think was very good and I got to improve a lot in writing because when I write a topic then I can learn… from the correction’.

Prior to the interviews participants also exhibited positive attitudes regarding the affect using Instagram was having on their writing. In the researcher’s journal there is a record of Luke sending a message to the tutor after the first two posts which read, ‘thank you for helping me improve my writing’.

The use of comments elicited positive responses such as, ‘useful’, ‘I liked it’ and help a lot’ in relation to their effect on participants’ writing proficiency. David states his reading was also improved,

‘if I use my review or my comment I have to write or understand what they write so yea it can help my writing and reading. It will improve.’
The main benefits participants found were that Instagram was, ‘convenient’ and ‘not difficult’ to use and that they could, ‘talk to each other easily.’ Furthermore, Thomas stated that he found the variety of topics, ‘quite interesting for young people like the thing about inventions.’ Thomas was referring to topic 6 which can be viewed below.

Fig. 4.8 Thomas’ post 6 describing a gadget 30 years in the future with David’s comment

Nowadays we could hardly imagine our lives without those essential gadgets which we carry everywhere because they strongly belong to us. Owning a mobile or a notebook doubtlessly make a lot of things easier in certain respects. In fact, the greatest benefit of them in daily life is their significant role in social contacts. They assure limitless opportunity to be accessible whenever you are and to improve your relationships by getting to know more and more new people. Another point is that thanks to these smart devices you can even organize your imminent meetings whenever you are while dealing with anything else, consequently the current level of multitasking would only be a dream without the easily portable gadgets. A huge choice of gadgets in reasonable prices is given and they enable us to stay up-to-date.
Luke, David, Sam and Thomas all emphasised that they perceived the corrective feedback their posts received as a key factor in their improvement as well as a motivating one for online engagement. David and Sam utilised Instagram to support their formal L2 education as Sam commented,

‘when I go to my university my teachers always say that my writing is good because I learn from you.’

The negative aspects of using Instagram suggested by Luke and David were that it could not improve listening and speaking and English speaking Instagram followers are required to make it productive. For instance, Luke informed the researcher in a private conversation recorded in the research journal that the researcher was his first native English speaking friend and therefore he had no desire to post on SNSs in English beforehand.

In total, Alice only posted 2 short texts in the comments section of the tutor’s Instagram profile, as seen in figure 4.9, and later stated in her interview, ‘short posts (2) is easier.’ The researcher also considered in their journal whether she was comfortable with, ‘the public nature of posting the writing on her own profile.’
Alice, Luke, David, Thomas and Sam all stated that their primary motives for learning English were instrumental (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). Based on the interview data
and the researcher’s journal entries it appears that Luke, Thomas, David and Sam’s motivation improved, whereas Alice showed no increase in motivation. David, Luke and Sam all expressed the view that the corrective feedback they received from an online tutor improved their motivation. David explicitly declared, ‘I know my friend they will give his correction so that is motivation for me to write.’ This assertion is supported in the researcher’s journal which states David continually posted at a faster rate than his peers and requested to be given topics in advance using phrases such as, ‘I am so eager to write.’ Moreover, Thomas suggested his motivation was enhanced because he, ‘could connect with more people.’

4.3.2 The Importance of an Online Learning Community

It is commonly expected that a learning community will develop, and is necessary, among learner groups exploiting SNSs for language learning purposes (Blattner and Fiori, 2009; Mills, 2009; Blattner and Fiori, 2011; Zourou, 2012). Wenger (1998) defines the three fundamentals of a community of practice as joint enterprise, mutual engagement and a shared repertoire. In this study participants’ joint enterprise manifested in their common goal of developing English writing skills, they mutually engaged with each other via comments and the ability to navigate and post on Instagram exhibited a shared repertoire. The following findings illustrate participants’ attitudes regarding the role and efficacy of this learning community.

Firstly, most participants expressed that posting in Instagram in English instantly allowed them to connect with a wider audience. Thomas previously mentioned that he was more motivated because he, ‘could connect with more people.’ David, ‘I can talk to foreigner if I post in English’ and Sam, ‘when I post in English I think that it is very good for foreigners to understand’, shared similar sentiments. In figure 4.11 David can be seen conversing in the comments section of his post in English with a foreign friend.
Thomas, David, Sam and Luke all expressed positive attitudes concerning the learning community created by posting comments on each other’s posts. However, Sam had much less interaction through comments than the others. The reason stipulated for Sam’s lack of comments participation in the researcher’s journal was the erratic and delayed timing of his posts which highlights Wenger’s (1998) assertion that mutual engagement is required to be a part of a community of practice. The following quote from David emphasises the value he placed on forming supportive connections with the other participants,

‘When someone give me some comment on my post I know they take care and read my post and… we can to be a friend and we can talk together on Instagram.’
A significant event which demonstrates a supportive learning community among participants is showcased in figure 4.12. Luke chose to write about an emotional relationship break-up for topic 5 (‘a life changing event’) and received several messages of support from David and Thomas.

Fig. 4.11 David and Thomas’ comments on Luke’s post

The general reaction to forming a learning community with other participants was positive, however the issue of online privacy was raised by Luke and David. In relation to posting on his own profile Luke stated, ‘I’m afraid of making mistake when I writing on Instagram and everyone can see it.’ Furthermore, when discussing the use of comments Luke voiced a concern perhaps related to a shy learner identity when he stated, ‘I haven’t known them a long time so I’m very afraid of the writing comment to their picture.’ The reservations Luke expressed exhibit similarities with his self-described ‘nervous’ feelings towards speaking in public. David said he found a slightly different disadvantage to be, ‘there are a lot of people on… Instagram and you don’t know about them’, implying that he did not fully trust people he met online.
There are strong indications based on both their Instagram interactions and interview testimony that a successful learning community was present among Luke, Thomas and David. A salient point perhaps is that both Luke and David share the same Vietnamese cultural background which may have made them feel more trusting and willing to interact with each other. Conversely, as a Hungarian Thomas hails from a substantially different culture yet formed a community with David and Luke which demonstrates cultural differences can be overcome.

Alice did not interact with any other participants and Sam contributed two comments to the posts of the other’s over the course of the study, thus he played little more than a bit-part role in this community. The erratic timing of Sam’s posts may have caused him to lack a sense of belonging as in some cases conversations between others were over a few days before he was active again on Instagram. The role of trust, cultural differences and frequent participation in this study offer insight into how future designs can improve learners’ sense of community.

4.3.3 Nurtured Leaner Autonomy

The use of SMAs is allowing a portion L2 learners to act autonomously and dictate their own learning paths (Hafner, Chik and Jones, 2013; Barton and Potts, 2013). Analysis of participants’ Instagram interactions, interview testimony and the researcher’s journal suggested different aspects of autonomy present (e.g. the differences between online and classroom environments) and varying attitudes across these aspects.

No one of the participants explicitly stated that they preferred to choose their own topics when writing on Instagram. Thomas, ‘I like both,’ and Luke, ‘I think they are equal’, had no preference between writing about a topic they selected and a topic set by the tutor. A desire to be given topics by the tutor was articulated by Sam, Alice and David.

On the 9th of July the researcher made a note in their journal that participants appeared to choose easier topics (e.g. David’s post 3 describing hobbies) when given the choice and to investigate whether this was deliberate. Further investigation found this choice was deliberate as David stated, ‘if I choose the topic I often choose the easy topic’ and these sentiments were echoed by Thomas,
‘if you… let us post what we wanted always then maybe we would have written about the same topics always.’

In the opening 2 week posting cycle participants were required to post on Tuesdays and Fridays. However, Participants did not conform to this structure and it was amended for the following 3 week cycle that they must simply post twice a week. On Thursday 16th of July the researcher considered in their journal whether participants preferred this approach as it gave them more power than in a classroom. In the interview Luke stated he preferred this approach because, ‘I can… do it every time, everywhere because of my phone’. It should be noted from the researcher’s journal that Luke, David and Thomas who typically posted regularly within the two posts a week structure were also the most frequent commenters on each other’s posts. Perhaps suggesting autonomous learners still require some form of structure to participate. Thomas also suggested using Instagram was advantageous compared to the classroom as it could easily remain contemporary,

‘In the classroom you know sometimes papers contain very out of date tasks.’

Furthermore, David preferred Instagram as he found in a classroom that, ‘When I write something my teacher doesn’t have time to correct if for me’. Nevertheless, he did qualify this by asserting that Instagram use was not enough to develop his overall ability, ‘Instagram I only improve my skill to writing and reading,’

Thomas, Luke, David and Sam all expressed a preference for having an online tutor using phrases such as, ‘having an online teacher is very important’, ‘I can learn from mistakes from the online teacher’ and ‘I really liked it’. Luke elaborated further,

‘There are so many teacher who teach me in the past… but they never… make me feel comfortable to learn English… this research make me a different feeling (2) it make me a… feel relax’

An issue raised in interviews of those less active was time management. Alice stated that she simply did not have time to post due to her existing educational commitments, ‘I have essays, deadlines, homeworks’. Sam echoed these views in relation to his lack of comments, ‘I didn’t have free time’.

The aforementioned data raises questions as to how the online tutor can adapt their role to ensure learners are challenged while allowing them to maintain the level of
freedom which they appreciated. If learners are inclined to choose easier topics on occasion perhaps they can bring a basic topic idea to the tutor and together they can develop a topic which is suitably challenging.

4.3.4 Embracing the Future Use of Instagram

All 5 participants stated that they expected to post on Instagram using English in the future with supporting comments such as, ‘I think it good method for me’, ‘I really like it’ and ‘I think it is good for me’. In David, Thomas and Sam’s cases it is probable they will continue to post in English as they had previously posted on other SNSs in English prior to the intervention. Whereas Luke had posted in English, ‘never before meet you’ and Alice did not previously as, ‘it’s easier to me to write in my native language’.

As regards to changes in future Instagram use, Alice, David and Sam indicated they were content with the practices employed throughout the posting period. Luke suggested that he will post, ‘with more… words and more structure sentence to improve my writing’ which is consistent with a note in the research journal declaring his posts were typically the longest. Overall, participants indicated they intended to use English on Instagram in the future.

More comments which, ‘could open some debates’ were advocated by Thomas as he feels, ‘debates are always useful’. Debating is a speaking skill, yet the comments feature on Instagram allows debating style conversations to occur between learners. Participants also previously mentioned they would like to improve skills other than basic reading and writing when using Instagram. Future use of Instagram should explore online debates, a tutor could post a debate topic e.g. the benefits of artificial intelligence, which learners are then required to debate in the comments.

Conclusion

The current chapter has presented how using Instagram has affected participants’ descriptive writing ability and their attitudes towards Instagram as an interactional learning tool. The following chapter will discuss the main findings in relation to the current literature and any contribution this study has made to the field.
Chapter 5 Conclusion

Introduction
The current chapter will review the findings of the study by addressing the research questions. The implications of the key findings will be discussed and afterwards limitations of the study and future recommendations presented. The chapter concludes by evaluating the achievements of the study.

5.1 Key Findings
Based on the data analysis and presentation in Chapter four the main findings of the study are summarised by addressing each research question:

How does the use of Instagram affect learners’ descriptive writing proficiency?

- Using Instagram develops learners’ vocabulary control and grammatical accuracy.
- Instagram use yields mixed results regarding how it affects the structural aspects of learners’ writing.
- Elementary to pre-intermediate learners benefit more from using Instagram.

What are learners’ attitudes towards Instagram as an interactional learning tool?

- Learners exhibit positive attitudes towards the use of Instagram to improve their descriptive writing proficiency.
- Motivation is increased by receiving corrective feedback and connecting with other learners and native English speakers online.
- Individual learner identities influence attitudes towards privacy issues.
- Learners place importance on forming learning communities with those outside their pre-existing social circles and from different cultures.
- Learners prefer a balance of autonomy and guidance.
- The future use of Instagram in L2 education is embraced by learners.

5.2 Discussion
A significant volume of research has been performed concerning the role of SNSs in L2 education, yet research has until now neglected to investigate the role of the
prominent SNS Instagram as an interactional learning tool (Mills, 2011; Blattner and Fiori, 2011; Blattner and Lomicka, 2012; Prichard, 2013). Upon addressing this gap in the research the findings of this study will consider the L2 educational value of Instagram, and more general implications for SNSs.

The learners within this study were provided with corrective feedback for each post they contributed, a practice which typically improves learners’ vocabulary and this was indeed the case for developing learners’ vocabulary range (Laufner, 1994; Lee, 2003). However, after using Instagram learners’ vocabulary control was unaffected and this aligns with Laufner’s (1994) assertion that the development of vocabulary range and vocabulary control are not inextricably bound. It seems Lee’s (2003) claim that reading and producing text alone can develop vocabulary range, while more focussed instruction is typically required to enhance vocabulary control is true in this case. The grammatical accuracy of learners was also affected positively, perhaps caused by the integration of grammar into the overall pedagogical approach rather than acting as solitary focus (Celce-Murcia, 1991).

Prior to study beginning it was expected that orthographic control, coherence and thematic development in learners’ writing would be developed. It was anticipated this would occur due to the larger text capacity on Instagram compared to other SNSs, thus requiring learners to be more considerate of their writing structure. The results were not as predicted as learners’ orthographic control, coherence and thematic development were unaffected or produced mixed results. It appears the informal nature of Instagram as a SNS caused learners to pay less attention to the structural aspects of producing a text, a phenomenon Mills (2011) also alludes to. One specific learner exemplified this by posting only two short texts and later claiming they preferred to produce short texts on SNSs. This evidence finds the study in agreement with Mills (2011) that SNSs are not conducive to improving the structural aspects of learners’ writing.

Using Instagram saw those learners with a lower initial descriptive writing ability progress more than those of a higher initial level. The traits associated with lower level learners may offer some explanation for this e.g. a lack of fossilisation (Selinker, 1972). However, the individual identity of learners also merits discussion as those who improved stated they regularly used SNSs and posted in English prior to the study.
Therefore, this study agrees with Hafner (2013) and Conole and Alevizou (2010) that effective L2 education using any type of SMA requires learners to be proficient and experienced at online social engagement, relationship building and identity construction. Additionally, learners suggested their reading skills were improved by reading and commenting on the posts of others, an occurrence also reported by similar studies (Kabilan et al., 2010; Klimanova and Dembovskaya, 2010).

Prichard (2013) and Blattner and Lomicka (2012) found that students exploiting SNSs for L2 education would welcome corrective feedback and recommended future studies investigate this. Learners within this study received corrective feedback and upon reflection they all exhibited positive attitudes towards the value of this practice. Moreover, receiving corrective feedback was found to be a motivating factor in learners’ continuous online engagement.

Each learner felt that their writing ability improved, yet this can only be conclusively said for a portion of them. Thus, the findings have realised Conole and Alevizou’s (2010) warning that learners are susceptible to overestimating the positive effect of using SNSs on their English ability. It may be pertinent in future studies to investigate how learners evaluate the effect of using SNSs on their English language proficiency and how this perception actually affects their proficiency.

Most learners indicated that connecting with each other and native English speakers over Instagram improved their motivation. Furthermore, by learners interacting via posts and comments both learning and use of the language were occurring simultaneously (Barton and Potts, 2013). Despite specifying that they found this environment motivating, some learners expressed difficulties such as anxiety or distrust of others online. The sources of these negative attitudes were found to derive from individual personalities, learning styles and confidence levels rather than the features of Instagram (Prichard, 2013).

Learners within this study had not previously been acquainted yet formed social relationships and a learning community by satisfying Wenger’s (1998) fundamentals of a community of practice i.e. as joint enterprise, mutual engagement and a shared repertoire. This community was further developed by the openness of learners to discuss various feelings and problems e.g. a relationship break up, perhaps they would not be so open with people whom they had a pre-existing social relationship.
Aligning with Harisson and Thomas (2009) this study further refutes Boyd and Elisson’s (2007) claim users of SNSs solidify existing social networks rather than create new relationships. It can be inferred from the findings of this study that employing SNSs for L2 education does not require learners to have previously established social relationships. Thus advancing the legitimacy of L2 education using SNSs with an online tutor and learners without pre-existing social relationships founded in a classroom.

Current research states that learners are dictating their own learning paths, however this study has found more investigation and specificity as to what this entails is required (Hafner et al., 2013; Barton and Potts, 2013). The findings demonstrate that learners prefer to dictate only certain aspects of their learning practices when using a SNS to learn English e.g. flexible participation or generating content. The constant accessibility of Instagram via smartphones allowed learners to contribute at any time and they appreciated the increased flexibility to balance their education with other commitments. The frequent use of a SNS application via smartphones in this study warrants further investigation into the autonomy, accessibility, flexibility or other advantages the integration of smartphones may provide learners.

Conversely students were not comfortable with the same flexibility or autonomy when selecting topics to write about. None preferred to select a topic themselves and several stated that they would choose a topic they perceived to be easier when given a free choice. Learners’ reluctance to challenge themselves without the guidance of a teacher could cause their development to stagnate, and indicates teachers still have an important role to play in language learning using SNSs (Harrison and Thomas, 2009). This study argues that current views misrepresent learner autonomy as a broad characteristic in relation to SMAs and L2 education as a whole. A more accurate and effective approach contemplates the autonomy learners demonstrate in relation to specific online contexts, tools and pedagogical features.

A prominent feature of learners’ Instagram interaction, however, was that only those who commented in a regular fashion, or rather, showed a sense of belonging were a part of the learning community. One learner posted on their own profile but interacted little with others and learners’ willingness to participate in a community is one of the defining factor of its success (Wenger, 1998). Blattner and Fiori (2011) argue that a
learning community is required for L2 education on SNSs, yet as mentioned more autonomous learners can choose to avoid participating in these communities. Future research should address how best to facilitate and develop learning communities on SNSs which simultaneously support autonomous learners.

5.3 Limitations

The researcher has attempted to minimise any limitations which may impact the validity of the conclusions offered, however some remain. The scope of the findings is limited due to the relatively small sample size of 5 participants and short posting period of 5 weeks. Despite this lack of generalisability the study still offers a valuable insight into the use of SNSs for L2 education. Blattner and Lomicka (2012) contemplated the ‘novelty effect’ of introducing new technology to L2 learners which increases learners’ performance via their interest in the new technology. In the case of a ‘novelty effect’ learners’ progression is not sustainable and it appears a pertinent consideration in the context of this research.

The online tutor’s role is a key challenge when integrating SNSs into L2 education. Considering the flexible participation and topic choices learners were allowed in this study, the tutor’s role veered towards Vygotsky’s (1978) informal facilitator rather than a formal instructor. As mentioned in Chapter two the teacher’s role has a significant bearing on the effectiveness of using SNSs in L2 education, perhaps more formal instruction would have further improved learners’ writing skills but resulted in more negative attitudes. As a consequence, the findings are representative of the teacher’s role in this study and not any role a teacher might play.

5.4 Future Recommendations

The most straightforward recommendation offered is for the research to be performed again with an increased sample size of at least 15 learners and an extended timeframe of no less than 3 months. A study of this magnitude and length would enhance generalisability and lessen the ‘novelty effect’. Following this the research has identified 3 crucial areas for further investigation.

1. How do learners evaluate the effect of using SNSs on their English language ability and how does this perception affect their actual ability?
Within this study learners overestimated the positive effect of using the SNS Instagram on their writing proficiency. Based on this it would be beneficial to investigate how students evaluate the use of SNSs on their English proficiency and how this perception influences their actual ability.

2. In what ways are learners acting autonomously when using SNSs for L2 educational purposes? What are the effects of integrating SNSs via smartphones into L2 educational practices?

Future research should investigate different aspects e.g. flexible participation or content selection, of learner autonomy. This study indicates learner autonomy is not a single entity, and encompasses many complexities. Furthermore, the integration into L2 educational practices of smartphones which allow flexible and easily accessible participation from learners merits investigation. Embedding L2 education in learners’ daily lives would further explore Barton and Pott’s (2013, p.816) 'language-as-social-practice' approach. One such idea this study suggests is exploring the use of Whatsapp, a smartphone application which has over 900 million users and allows instant messaging in groups (Statista, 2015).

3. How does learner autonomy exist within learning communities?

Finally, given the diverse nature of online language learning communities such as the one in this study it would be valuable to examine how to improve their efficacy. This examination ought to centre on the roles of autonomy, diverse learner backgrounds and flexible participation within a learning community.

Conclusion

SNSs and their use in L2 education is a burgeoning field, with much more research required. In this study using Instagram, a prominent SNS, was found to positively affect the vocabulary range and grammatical accuracy of learners’ descriptive writing ability. Conversely, the structural aspects of learners’ writing were mainly unaffected, further illuminating L2 learners’ informal approach to writing on SNSs.

Learners in this study have also been found to harbour generally positive attitudes regarding the use of the SNS Instagram in L2 education. The results of this study serve to offer an insight into the pedagogical potential of Instagram and SNSs in L2 education. Consequently, evolution can be achieved by exploring enhanced
integration of SNSs in L2 education via smartphones, the development of diverse learning communities and supporting autonomous learners within these communities. To conclude, the global magnitude of SNSs compels L2 educators to further embrace and celebrate their role in L2 education.

19,774 words.
References


Appendix 1: Information and consent forms

Information Sheet

My name is XXXXXXX and I am currently studying for a Master of the Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (MA TESOL) at XXXXXXXX. For my dissertation I want to research how Instagram can be used to improve English language learners’ descriptive writing ability. Firstly, I want to find out what effect, if any, the informal use of Instagram can have on learners’ descriptive writing ability. After this I wish to collect participants’ attitudes towards Instagram when it is used as an informal learning tool.

Data will be collected in four ways:

1. A writing sample so each participant’s writing ability can be established before beginning to post on Instagram.
2. For 5 weeks participants will post 2 pictures, with an 80-150 word description for each, online using their Instagram account. The posts will be on a topic they choose or I will provide one e.g. favourite memory. I will then make a copy of each post and store it safely on my computer.
3. After the 5 weeks I will perform a short semi-structured interview (20 minutes) with each participant to collect their attitudes towards Instagram after using it as a language learning tool.
4. From the beginning of collecting Instagram posts until after the interviews are completed I will keep an online journal to reflect on how I may have influenced the participants as an online tutor and researcher.

I guarantee that your participation and Instagram posts will be kept confidential and you will not be identified within my dissertation. However, as the original Instagram posts are online I cannot protect their confidentiality or anonymity. You can use the settings on the Instagram website to decide how much access the public will have to your posts. The interview recordings will be kept confidential and stored on a password protected computer which only I can access. Your name will not appear anywhere within the dissertation.

I hope this research will improve our understanding of how Instagram can be used as an interactional learning tool so that we can use it more effectively in the future. If you have any questions you can contact me (XXXXXXXX) or the chief investigator (XXXXXXXXX) by email. If you wish to take part in the research please complete the attached consent form.
An Exploration of Instagram to Improve ESL writing skills

Chief Investigator: XXXXXXX

Student Investigator: XXXXXXXX

Please Initial

- I confirm that I have been given and have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and have asked and received answers to any questions raised.

- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without my rights being affected in any way.

- I understand that the Instagram posts I produce which appear online cannot be guaranteed as confidential or anonymous. The use of these Instagram posts for this study is kept confidential and non-identifiable.

- I understand that the researcher will hold all information and data collected securely and in confidence and that all efforts will be made to ensure that I cannot be identified as a participant in the study (except as might be required by law) and I give permission for the researcher to hold relevant personal data for up to 10 years.

I agree to take part in the following parts of this study (please initial):

- Providing a writing sample prior to posting on Instagram
- Posting of an image and description to Instagram twice a week, for a period of 5 weeks.
- A semi-structured interview about attitudes towards the use of Instagram as an interactional learning tool.

_________________________________ _______________________
Name of Subject Signature Date

_________________________________ _______________________
Name of person taking consent Signature Date

_________________________________ _______________________
Name of researcher Signature Date
### Appendix 2: CEFR rubric for grading of descriptive writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CREATIVE WRITING</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C2</strong></td>
<td>Can write clear, smoothly flowing, and fully engrossing stories and descriptions of experience in a style appropriate to the genre adopted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C1</strong></td>
<td>Can write clear, detailed, well-structured and developed descriptions and imaginative texts in an assured, personal, natural style appropriate to the reader in mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B2</strong></td>
<td>Can write clear, detailed descriptions of real or imaginary events and experiences marking the relationship between ideas in clear connected text, and following established conventions of the genre concerned. Can write clear, detailed descriptions on a variety of subjects related to his/her field of interest. Can write a review of a film, book or play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B1</strong></td>
<td>Can write straightforward, detailed descriptions on a range of familiar subjects within his field of interest. Can write accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions in simple connected text. Can write a description of an event, a recent trip - real or imagined. Can narrate a story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A2</strong></td>
<td>Can write about everyday aspects of his environment e.g. people, places, a job or study experience in linked sentences. Can write very short, basic descriptions of events, past activities and personal experiences. Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences about their family, living conditions, educational background, present or most recent job. Can write short, simple imaginary biographies and simple poems about people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A1</strong></td>
<td>Can write simple phrases and sentences about themselves and imaginary people, where they live and what they do</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### VOCABULARY RANGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>C1</strong></td>
<td>Has a good command of a very broad lexical repertoire including idiomatic expressions and collocations; shows awareness of connotative levels of meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C1</strong></td>
<td>Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions; little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies. Good command of idiomatic expressions and collocations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B2</strong></td>
<td>Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to his field and most general topics? Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B1</strong></td>
<td>Has a sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to his everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A2</strong></td>
<td>Has sufficient vocabulary to conduct routine, everyday transactions involving familiar situations and topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A2</strong></td>
<td>Has a sufficient vocabulary for the expression of basic communicative needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A1</strong></td>
<td>Has a sufficient vocabulary for coping with simple survival needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A1</strong></td>
<td>Has a basic vocabulary repertoire of isolated words and phrases related to particular concrete situations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### VOCABULARY CONTROL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>C2</strong></td>
<td>Consistently correct and appropriate use of vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C1</strong></td>
<td>Occasional minor slips, but no significant vocabulary errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B2</strong></td>
<td>Lexical accuracy is generally high, though some confusion and incorrect word choice does occur without hindering communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B1</strong></td>
<td>Shows good control of elementary vocabulary but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts or handling unfamiliar topics and situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A2</strong></td>
<td>Can control a narrow repertoire dealing with concrete everyday needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A1</strong></td>
<td>No descriptor available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### GRAMMATICAL ACCURACY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>C2</strong></td>
<td>Maintains consistent grammatical control of complex language, even while attention is otherwise engaged (e.g. in forward planning, in monitoring others’ reactions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C1</strong></td>
<td>Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B2</strong></td>
<td>Good grammatical control. Occasional &quot;slips&quot; or non-systematic errors and minor flaws in sentence structure may still occur, but they are rare and can often be corrected in retrospect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B1</strong></td>
<td>Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A2</strong></td>
<td>Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control though with noticeable mother tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what he/she is trying to express. Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used &quot;routines&quot; and patterns associated with more predictable situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A1</strong></td>
<td>Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes - for example tends to mix up tenses and forget to mark agreement, nevertheless, it is usually clear what he/she is trying to say.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A1</strong></td>
<td>Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a learnt repertoire.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### COHERENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>C2</strong></td>
<td>Can create coherent and cohesive text making full and appropriate use of a variety of organisational patterns and a wide range of cohesive devices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C1</strong></td>
<td>Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B2</strong></td>
<td>Can use a variety of linking words efficiently to mark clearly the relationships between ideas. Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link his/her utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some &quot;jumpiness&quot; in a long contribution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B1</strong></td>
<td>Can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a connected, linear sequence of points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A2</strong></td>
<td>Can use the most frequently occurring connectors to link simple sentences in order to tell a story or describe something as a simple list of points. Can link groups of words with simple connectors like &quot;and&quot;, &quot;but&quot; and &quot;because&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A1</strong></td>
<td>Can link words or groups of words with very basic linear connectors like 'and' or 'then'.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Orthographic Control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>C2</strong></td>
<td>Writing is orthographically free of error.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C1</strong></td>
<td>Layout, paragraphing and punctuation are consistent and helpful. Spelling is accurate, apart from occasional slips of the pen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B2</strong></td>
<td>Can produce clearly intelligible continuous writing, which follows standard layout and paragraphing conventions. Spelling and punctuation are reasonably accurate but may show signs of mother tongue influence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B1</strong></td>
<td>Can produce continuous writing, which is generally intelligible throughout. Spelling, punctuation and layout are accurate enough to be followed most of the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A2</strong></td>
<td>Can copy short sentences on everyday subjects - e.g. directions how to get somewhere. Can write with reasonable phonetic accuracy (but not necessarily fully standard spelling) short words that are in his/her oral vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A1</strong></td>
<td>Can copy familiar words and short phrases e.g. simple signs or instructions, names of everyday objects, names of shops and set phrases used regularly. Can spell his/her address, nationality and other personal details.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Thematic Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>C2</strong></td>
<td>No descriptor available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C1</strong></td>
<td>Can give elaborate descriptions and narratives, integrating sub themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B2</strong></td>
<td>Can develop a clear description or narrative, expanding and supporting his/her main points with relevant supporting detail and examples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B1</strong></td>
<td>Can reasonably fluently relate a straightforward narrative or description as a linear sequence of points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A2</strong></td>
<td>Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A1</strong></td>
<td>No descriptor available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3: Pre-Instagram writing samples graded by the researcher i.e. David, Sam, Luke and Thomas

David

The **An** interesting day for me **was when** I went to Academy of Journalism and Communication with my friends who come from my province this morning. Although I had a little regret as **I wasn't to** I **couldn't** stay all day with them, but I had a interesting trip with my tourists. The first, we went to Ho Chi Minh museum.

This is **was** the first time I was a tour guide and visited to Ho Chi Minh museum, that was the very **a** sacred place. In there, they display historical artefacts that president Ho Chi Minh used, many pictures and more **other things** that concerned to **war** of Vietnamese war in history. Then we had a **lunch** together, we ate Bun Cha and Nem Lui, now I hope my tourists will **liked it** and never forget it.

After that, we came to the cultural temples of Quoc Tu Giam where **was**. We **took** many pictures to **so** in the future when we see them, we will remember this trip. Thanks for a helpful trip.

**Vocabulary Range:** allows reasonable description and detail of the trip, yet some errors. A2

**Vocabulary Control:** Basic and but usually appropriate. B1

**Grammatical Accuracy:** Tense selection can be a problem e.g. we **taken** many pictures. Sentence structure and syntax can be a problem and some redundant language. Difficulty with prepositions e.g. **to.** Minor mistakes with articles and their positioning (**the, a, an**). A2

**Coherence:** The story can be followed but jumpy and confusing in parts. A2

**Orthographic Control:** Spelling is good with some minor mistakes e.g. lunch, artefacts.B1

**Thematic Development:** effective progression of the narrative and conclusion. B1

**Overall:** A well organised piece of writing, however grammar and coherence prevent a higher score. A2
We are living in the big universe with the modern world. As we can see the world is getting developed very fast, especially about the technology.

If we compare now to the last 500 years, it is extremely different. Nowadays, the scientist makes a lot of modern things for all people to use all over the world. For examples. Cars, planes, phones, computers, ships, etc. It is very easy for everyday travelling.

You can contact everywhere by using phones. Also you can use the Internet with phones. There is everything on the Internet. You can just type what you want read or watch. Using the internet is very helpful for your learning and a lot of knowledge is on there.

Vocabulary range: allows basic description of the topic. A2
Vocabulary control: some confusion of meaning e.g. you can connect everywhere by using phones. A2
Grammatical accuracy: Tense, preposition and article errors. A2
Coherence: Follows a basic linear structure, although clunky in parts. B1
Orthographic control: Good spelling but careless use of full stops. B1
Thematic development: good overall but lacking an effective conclusion. A2
Overall: A decent piece of writing but vocab control and grammar is weak. A2
Luke

In the past, people mostly preferred to stay in their extended families. Today, it is observed that the relationship between family members is not as close as before. In the following essay, I would like to present my point of view.

To begin with, the trend of city living is one of the main reasons that people are no longer having strong bonds among the family members. The citizens might face too many social competitions regarding money, work, studying and relationships. With respect to work, individuals now focus on their career development to a greater extent. For example, there is the group of professionals who spend most of their time in their companies. As a result, they do not have much time for themselves and their families. Besides, the availability of various kinds of recreational facilities also diverts people from enjoying chats with the members of their families. Take for example, nowadays children are tending to spend more time on playing games online than that of talking with their families.

This happening could lead to several effects which can be anticipated. On the one hand, the trend of becoming less close among families’ members has some benefit. Firstly, citizens have more time in order to develop their career, pursue their hobbies. Secondly, because of not being close to each other members in family, people can live independently, they must do everything by themselves.

On the other hand, I believe that the disadvantages of this happening are even more significant. The first, parents would not get along well with their children which might make the child feel lonely, not concerned and they can be implicated in criminal activity. As a result, the rate of adolescent crimes is increasing dramatically. In addition, this fact is the most probable reason of the breakdown of today’s marriages. In conclusion, it seems to me that the drawbacks of the growing tendency that families members are not as close to each other which outweigh the benefits.

Vocabulary range: diverse and supports detailed discussion. B2

Vocabulary control: pre-dominantly accurate but some misuse e.g. implicated. B1

Grammatical accuracy: errors typically involve tenses, prepositions and articles. Some syntax errors e.g. lead to might. Remember when to use plurals as people/children will make the noun a plural e.g. themselves, games, chats. Be aware of ownership e.g. their extended families, today’s marriages. The correct phrase is ‘take for example’. B1

Coherence: coherent progression, good use of connecters and transitional language. B2

Orthographic control: good punctuation and paragraphing, any spelling errors due to tense errors. B2

Thematic development: detailed discussion of themes and suitable conclusion. B2

Overall: a strong piece of writing with mainly grammatical errors. High B1
Thomas

*Sense and sensibility – film review*

This film is based on a novel of the same title, written by Jane Austen. When the rich Mr. Dashwood dies, his wife and three daughters are left with a tiny inheritance and they have to move to a cottage. There, the main ambition is to find suitable husbands for the two older girls. But they are opposites: While the younger, Marianne, always listens to her heart, the older, Elinor doesn’t trust in her emotions, she follows her common sense. She is a very strong character who can hide her feelings. Marianne falls in love, then she is abandoned by a man, named Willoughby, than saved by another important character, colonel Brandon.

At the end, both girls can find the proper husband.

Which I really liked in the film is the behaviour of male characters, because they always show hard respect for the women, mainly colonel Brandon, my favourite character. And everyone behaved differently from today’s people. The plot is also very interesting and I also liked the classical music, and the clothes and places and all of the characters.

**Vocabulary range:** Diverse and allows detailed description. C1  
**Vocabulary control:** Always appropriate. C1  
**Grammatical accuracy:** High level of accuracy, most issues concern verb tenses, adverbs and pronouns. B2  
**Coherence:** Logical progression of points. C1  
**Orthographic control:** No spelling errors and good punctuation. C1  
**Thematic Development:** Appropriate structure and conclusion. C1  
**Overall:** A well written review. C1
Appendix 4: Pre-Instagram writing samples graded by external English teacher i.e. David, Sam, Luke and Thomas

David

The interesting day for me. I went to Academy of Journalism and Communication with my friends who come from my province this morning. Although I had a little regret as wasn't to stay all day with them, but I had a interesting trip with my tourists. The first, we went to Ho Chi Minh museum.

This is the first time I was a tour guide and visited to Ho Chi Minh museum, that was the very sacred place. In there, they display historical artifacts that president Ho Chi Minh used, many pictures and more other things that concerned to war of Vietnamese in history. Then we had fun lunch together, we ate Bun Cha and Nem Lui, now I hope my tourists will like and never forget it.

After that, we came to cultural temples Quoc Tu Giam where is the first university in Vietnam. We taken many pictures to in the future when we see them, we will remember this trip. Thanks for a helpful trip.

Vocab Control – Uneasy and inconsistent, makes meaning a little difficult to follow at times – B1
Vocab Range – Lower level, not a wide range and many repeated items. Some misappropriation – A2
Grammatical Accuracy – Simple mistakes and inconsistency with tenses - A2/B1
Orthographic Control – Structure is fine, some spelling mistakes and punctuation errors, rather basic – A2/B1
Thematic Development – Consistent - B1
Coherence – Issues with coherence and proper linking. Lower level, difficult to read and unexpanded upon ideas leaves questions for the reader ‘Why couldn’t you stay all day?’ – A2
We are living in the big universe with the modern world. As we can see the world is getting developed very fast. Especially about the technology.

If we compare to the last 500 years. It is extremely different. Nowadays, the scientist makes alot of modern things for all people to use in all over the world. For examples. Cars, planes, phones, computers, ships, etc. It is very easy for everyday travels.

You can contact everywhere by using phones. Also you can use the Internet with phones. There are everything in the Internet. You can just type what you want read or watch. Using internet is very helpful for your learning and alot of knowledges in there.

Vocab Control – Generally quite weak, meaning occasionally lost. – A2
Vocab Range – Uses limited vocab to address the topic. – B1
Grammatical Accuracy – Difficulty with articles, agreements, prepositions. Tenses generally fine, but the style of writing does not test tense skill. – A2
Orthographic Control – More mistakes than one might expect for a word processed short written piece. Careless as many of the errors were highlighted by my software before I looked at the content. Generally intelligible – B1
Thematic Development – Fine, there is a structure that was followed – B1
Coherence – Some difficulty – not easy to read or follow at times. – A2/B1
In the past, people mostly preferred to stay in the extended families. Today, it is observed that the relationship between family members is not as close as before. In the following, I would like to present my point of view.

To begin with, the trends of city living is one of the main reasons that people are no longer having strong bonds among the family members. The citizens might face to many social competitions on money, work, studying and relationships. With respect to work, individuals focus toward their career development to a greater extent. For example, there is the group of professional who spent most of their time in their companies. As a result, they do not have much time for themselves and their families. Besides, the availability of various kinds of recreational facilities also diverts people from enjoying charts with the members of their families. Take an example, nowadays children are tending to spend more time on playing game online than that of talking with their families.

This happening could lead to several effects which can be anticipated. On the one hand, the trend of becoming less close among families’ members has some benefit. Firstly, citizens have more time in order to develop their career, pursue their hobbies. Secondly, because of not being close to each member in family, people can live independently, they must do everything by themself.

On the other hand, I believe that the disadvantages of this happening are even more significant. The first, parents would do not get along well with their children which lead to make the child feel lonely, not concerned and they can be implicated in criminal activity. As a result, the rate of adolescent crimes is increasing dramatically. In addition, this fact is the most reason of the breakdown of the today marriages.

In conclusion, it seems to me that the drawback of growing tendency that families members are not as close to each other which do outweigh the benefits.

Vocab Control – High, impressive use of vocabulary related to the topic. – B2
Vocab Range – Great range displayed. Enjoyable to read. B2
Grammatical Accuracy – Difficulty selecting correct form of the present tense. Should revise the uses of each to make sure that their functions are understood. Plural agreements need more care. Some tense switching. A2/B1
Orthographic Control – Some small errors in spelling. Structure is logical. B2
Thematic Development – Very good. B2
Coherence – Generally very good, even when let down by expression. Two instances when meaning is lost, or difficult to nail down. B1
Thomas

Sense and sensibility – film review

This film is based on a novel of the same title, written by Jane Austen.

When the rich Mr. Dashwood dies, his wife and three daughters are left with a tiny inheritance and they have to move to a cottage. There, the main ambition is to find suitable husbands for the two older girls. But they are opposites: While the younger, Marianne, always listen to her heart, the older, Elinor doesn’t trust in her emotions, she follows the sense. She is a very strong character who can hide her feelings. Marianne is fell in love, than she is abandoned by a man, named Willoughby, than saved by another important character, colonel Brandon.

At the end, both girls can find the proper husband.

Which I really liked in the film is the behaviour of male characters, because they always show hard respect for the women, mainly colonel Brandon, my favourite character. And everyone behave differently from today’s people. The plot is also very interesting and I also liked the classical music and the clothes and places and all of the characters.

Vocab Control – Generally very good, when mistakes are made they are not due to limited vocabulary but sensitivity to their actual usage in natural English, more of an experiential issue than a problem with vocab in general. – B2

Vocab Range – Impressive range appropriate to the writing style – B2/C1

Grammatical Accuracy – Generally very good, small careless mistakes aside -B2

Orthographic Control – Spelling very good, structure is logical and easy to follow. Aside from the listing at the end it is very good – B2

Thematic Development – As one might expect from a short film review –B2

Coherence – Very good, easy to read.– B2/C1
Appendix 5: Image copies of Instagram posts i.e. online tutor, David, Sam, Luke, Thomas and Alice.

Online Tutor

1. ‘Favourite school memory’ (example post)

2. ‘The scariest place you’ve ever been’ (example post)
3. Participants chose individual topics

4. Participants chose individual topics
5. ‘A life changing experience’

6. ‘Describe a gadget or device we will have 30 years in the future’
7. Topic chosen by participants

8. Topic chosen by participants
9. **Describe your house in the future when you are rich**

10. **‘The greatest or most important event in the history of the world’**
David

1. ‘Favourite school memory’ (mistakenly posted in the comments of tutor’s example post)

![Image of a high school playground]

I often call my high school my second home. My high school is not very large but very beautiful and clean. There is a gate which is a entrance and spacious, and specially, the two sides is the flower corridor leads straight to go to playground and the classroom. My school ground is quite wide and long, around the playground are some trees covering the sunshine for the people who play on it. Therefore, we can read books and talk after each lesson under the trees row. The classrooms are full tables and chairs, cabinets for learning. In addition, you also have the other classrooms as music room, computer room, library, English classrooms... I even loved the school because here we have good friends and the teachers are always interested to teach and impart knowledge to us. People. I loved my second home!

Add a comment...

2. ‘The scariest place you’ve ever been’

![Image of a war monument]

One of the scariest places I have ever been is the War Remnants Museum. That place is a war museum at 28 Vo Van Tan, in District 3, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. It has many exhibits related to the Vietnam War. It is opened by Vietnamese government. This museum includes a series by topic rooms in some building, with military equipment placed within a courtyard. The military equipment includes helicopters, bombs, planes, tanks etc. In addition, there are some number of pieces unexploded ordinance saved in the corner of the yard. When I went inside this museum, I saw some people who lived in cell, most of Vietnamese patriots were imprisoned by America government in south of Vietnam. They were killed and tortured until they die, and their skulls were showed everyone seeing and made people feel scare. Therefore Vietnamese people will give
museum includes a series by topic rooms in some building, with military equipment placed within a courtyard. The military equipment includes helicopters, bombs, planes, tanks etc. In addition, there are some number of pieces unexploded ordnance saved in the corner of the yard. When I went inside this museum, I saw some people who lived in cell, most of Vietnamese patriots were imprisoned by America government in south of Vietnam. They were killed and tortured until they die, and their skulls were showed everyone seeing and made people feel scare, therefore Vietnamese people will give up the struggle for independence. Finally, there was a scene that I will never forget, is a killing machine for beheading people. But we didn't feel scare, we stood up and fought for independence.

3. Topic chosen by David

I have many hobbies, so I often do some of my hobbies in my spare time. But I like reading and watching the most. Books are always a good friend to me. That is a good way to improve my skill. By reading, I get better at concentration because it makes me to have to focus on what I am reading for long time. Books also open up and give the knowledge door for me. Reading books tell me about the history and modern world. In addition, watching television is also one of the activities that I like doing in my free time. I enjoy watching historical movies, document movies on the weekend and sports programs every weekend evening, because the football match often take place at the weekend. Therefore I can get relaxation after a week hardwork. Sometimes I watch television during the week after I have finished all my work. At night, I really like watching movies and live show of music. If I have a lot of work, I try to arrange my schedule
free time, I enjoy watching historical movies, documentary movies on the weekend and sports programs every weekend evening, because the football match often take place at the weekend. Therefore I can get relaxed after a week hardwork. Sometimes I watch television during the week after I have finished all my work. At night, I really like watching movies and live show of music. If I have a lot of work, I try to arrange my schedule so that I can watch my favorite shows at least one time per week. Watching television and reading books are not the only two activities that I like doing in my spare time. My other favorite hobbies are playing football and going shopping with my friends. However, when I have some free time, I spend more time watching television and reading than any other hobbies, they can help me not only relax but also give me a big knowledge of the world.

4. Topic chosen by David

All of the films I have seen, I think Harry Potter is the one I like best. This movie is a fiction film. It is about the bravery of some people who have good friendship in the wonderful world. The film is made in England. It is a story written by J.K. Rowling. The main actors and actresses are Harry Potter, Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger. They study at Hogwart school together. Everyone loves Harry Potter and his friends. He is one of the most famous actors in the world. He is also a brave, kind and friendly wizard. Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger are his close friends. They always stand by him and help him save the wonderful world from destroying entire by Voldemort who is a wicked wizard. After many terrible fought what break out between Harry Potter and that wicked wizard, He won and Voldemort died. That is a happy ending of a film.
friends. He is one of the most famous actor in the world. He is also a brave, kind and friendly wizard. Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger are his close friends. They always stand by him and help him save the wonderful world from destroying entirely by Voldemar who is a wicked wizard. After many terrible fought what break out between Harry Potter and that wicked wizard, He won and Voldemar died. That is a happy ending of a film.

It's so wonderful to read your posts and see how much your vocabulary has grown! Miss you. How are you. I'm studying IELTS. Therefore I'm trying to improve my essay writing and my friend Lisa is helping me how to correct them. Miss you too.

5. ‘A life changing experience’ (Comments from Luke, Thomas and Sam)
6. ‘Describe a Gadget 30 years in the future’

Nowadays most people use smartphones anytime and anywhere. They use them when they are eating, talking and doing with a girlfriend or a boyfriend. There is no real conversation now. For instance, people often take some pictures of food before eating and posting them on Instagram and Facebook. Now cutting-edge technology makes people get a big gap. In 30 years later we will not see the smartphone, people will not put their phone on the table when they go inside the coffee shop or restaurant. The smartphone in the future will be a small smartphone and you can put it in your ears. No one can see them. Besides, people will mass-produce watch-phones which they wear it on their wrists. In addition, there is a special phone that I like the most, is glasses-phone, with this phone can translate any language what I hear from people talking on my glasses-phone.
7. Topic chosen by participant David

Everyone has a dream. It can be a small or a big dream but we always want our dream to come true in the near future. As so many others, I also have a desire which is that when I get older, I can make my dream come true. I dream that I will become a football player. Maybe for many people, my dream can be unreal, but who can stop people living their passion. Everytime when I watch the ball on the stadium, I am so eager for playing. In that time, I only want to run down the football ground to play with a ball. This thing can be a sign what my dream I growing up everyday. Therefore, I need to practice more and more if I would like to be a professional football player. Unfortunately, when I was 17 years old, I was a injured by another player, so I could not keep playing football. I was so sad and I cried too much. I think that my dream was finished. Now I have another dream, my new dream is to work for a Non --
8. Topic chosen by David (comment from Sam)

The population in the world now are more than 6 billions people with many different languages, but only international language which is the most popular, it is English. Therefore, the role of English is very important for the following reasons. Firstly, there are more than 400 millions people in the world speaking English fluently. English is their mother’s tongue. Moreover, English is spoken by more than 1 billion people, and they speak English as their second language. Secondly, English is the main language of more than 53 countries, areas and it is also the main language of Europe. In addition, English is ranking third in the world and it is used the most after Chinese and Spanish because the population in each country is different. Thirdly, English is the best way when you speak, exchange information with foreigners or any country around the world. If you know English, it means you know the rest of the world. Fourthly,
9. ‘Describe Your Future house when you are rich’ (Comment from Luke)

I feel interested in this topic. I will tell everyone about my house what I want to have when I am a millionaire. I am living in Sydney now, I have just bought a new house at center of Sydney city. The price of my new house is 10 millions dollars. It’s large about 900 square meters and has 2 floors with 10 rooms. Each room has been decorated with different style. Now let's go inside my house. It has a big living room, a dining room, 4 bed rooms, 4 bathrooms and a small movie on the second floor. Firstly, on the first floor, there is a living which is very large and airy. There is a small vase on the table which I often put a bunch of flower in it. The dining room is so modern and full of kitchen tools. It is enough space for all of member in my family to sit and it is also a place where we spend happy time together. After dinner we often watch TV and drink something at the living room or go to small cinema to watch some movies on...
small cinema to watch some movies on second floor. Next to dining room, there are 2 bedrooms. I like navy blue so that is the reason why my bedroom was painted with full of this color. Cushion are in the light color. Besides that, my bedroom also has a wardrobe and a computer on the desk to do my work or surfing the Internet. Secondly, on the second floors. It also has 2 bedrooms and a small cinema on it. This place is where I often get relaxation after a hard working day. Despite of being busy, sometimes I always invite my friends go to my cinema and watch some movies with me at the weekend. Finally, in front of my house, there is a nice large garden with a lot of beautiful flowers and trees. Next to the garden is a swimming pool with cleaning water. That is awesome place to relax in the summer. On the further side of my house, my neighbours are so kind and nice. When I have some troubles, they often come and help me with hands from. In conclusion, this house is the most important and meaningful place for my life.

You are so ambitious. I hope you can do it to be true. ^_^

Thanks! Each person has different ambitions. What about your ambition?
10. ‘The greatest or most important even in the history of the world’

Each person has a different idea about what is the most invention in the history of human being. Some people think that is the invention of the wheel, car, internet, electricity, electric lamp etc., but as for me, I think the greatest event in the history of the world is a computer which was invented at Harvard University in 1944 by American inventor. It is the most important invention that I have ever known. Computer has many advantages. I will shed the light on these benefits for following reasons. First of all, it helps me do my lessons effectively. I often type my lessons and save them on the computer so that I might learn them by heart quickly and easily to see them again. Secondly, a computer is a powerful and useful tool. It can help people to do lots of work easier and more quickly. Thirdly, a computer can help our materials safely forever. When you want to see and use them again, what we only need to do is open our computer. Today, beside the hard drive, people often bring a USB and use them to save anything what they want at anytime and anywhere.

Moreover, a computer allows people to perform many task everyday quickly. For instance, looking for a new work, shopping online, reading book or watch some breaking news happening in the world, etc...

To sum up, I would like to say thanks to computer. I often access the internet and learn many things. Computer has made my understanding better day by day and it becomes a indispensable in my studies.
Sam

1. ‘Favourite school memory’

Because it gave me a lot of souvenirs. My high school is very huge. And there are many big buildings, a big garden which is a lot of flowers. I loved sitting in the garden. Sometimes I read books with my friends in the garden. I liked spending time on planting flowers with my classmates. And it was my favorite memory. Teachers always appreciated my class. And called my class “green thumb” And my best favorite memory another one was watching Football match. We got a Football stadium at school. And the match takes place once a year. I often supported my school teams. I was very happy to see my school teams win. And we all said “Bingo”

2. ‘The scariest place you’ve ever been’

Talking about the scary place. I always recognized a dangerous jungle I been in 2012. It called ‘Sark forest’. It’s in the Southeast of Cambodia. During the school vacation, I went to visit my second home in Southeast Cambodia. One afternoon, I’m allowed to go and look after the cows near by the forest. It was a scary afternoon I’ve ever had. As I was about to bring my cows home. Unfortunately, they were lost. I tried to see them everywhere. But I couldn’t find. Finally I decided to get into the jungle. Thought, They were there. I walked slowly with a very nervous feeling. I stopped under a tree for few minutes to take a look around. I didn’t know there was a big snake on the branch above my head. Suddenly, I turned a look up. The snake was just a meter above my head. I was very surprised to see that snake. And ran very fast as I can. I couldn’t show how happy I was to be arrived home. And I never back to that jungle again.
Once upon time there was an elephant lived on the forest. He is a big elephant. He is very kind animal. He always healed all the small animals who had trouble in the forest. He like to eat the leaves of the trees. There was a pond in the forest which he loved to swim in. He never walk with other elephants. He was alone all the time. He did not like the summer. He was very happy to be in the winter because there was a lot of green leaves. When the winter was gone the summer began it was very hot and all the small pond ran of water. He was hard to find water to drink. He tried to find the water everywhere. Finally, he found once. He was extremely excited. Suddenly he went into the pond and had a drink of water. Unfortunately, he saw an ant was trying to come out of the water and he felt very pity so he took a branch to forest for that ant to climb on he had saved that ant from dying in the water. The was really pleased and thankful. The elephant went back into the forest. One day when he was sleeping under a tree there was a hunter aimed him with the gun. Fortunately, the ant saw and he ran very fast and go on the man's arm bite very strong. The man was very hurted he dropped the gun down. The elephant was awoken and escaped quickly to the forest.
4. Topic chosen by Sam (comment by David)

Surely nothing has done more for the comfort and happiness of the human race than the advances in health care. How many million of people have benefited from the humble aspirin? How many lives has penicillin saved? The world population is dramatically rising up and a lot of problems are generated such as places, environment, foods, nature, etc. But the most important one is health care. There are many decease are around us and some decease are very nasty and some are not. The medical science are working hard to deal with these decease. This is a wonderful generation all the people can live with a very long age. It's really different to compare to the last 100 years. Average life expectancy worldwide had risen badly and a lot of people were killed by decease. But today we are very lucky to be with the fantastic medical science. They could help us to rid the decease away from our bodies. We expect to live more than 100 years old in the future.

That is awesome. Aspirin is one of the greatest invention in 20th century.
5. ‘A life changing experience’ (comment by David)

I have changed a great life. It’s really good for my present life and future. I have changed a weakness from being a coward person to be a brave person. When I was in high school I was always be a coward student. I was never wanted to be a volunteer to talk in the class. I just sat down in my seat quietly. But sometimes I was asked by teacher. I felt very frightened to talk with a lot of other students look at me and my both hands were shaken. This was my weakness I had and it was very hard to change it. I went to ask my teachers and they gave me a lot of opinions. I was told that there are few ways to deal with it. First, you have to talk a lot in class. Second, don’t be frightened of making mistakes. We will learn by our mistakes. Third, you have to discuss with other students and share your idea. These few ways were really helpful for me. I practiced these again and again. I’m good enough to be talked about in front of many people now. I feel not nervous anymore and my both hands are not shaken again. I’m very delighted that I could change a good life. I’m a brave person now.

How could you do that? I still feel so shy when I talk in front of crowd now.
6. ‘Describe a device or gadget 30 years in the future’

It’s very interesting to talk about gadgets for everyday lives. It’s really wonderful. As we know there are many useful gadgets or modern things in the family or community such as smart phones, computers, modern washing machines, etc. These are very fantastic for people’s businesses, works, and even housework. But how about the next thirty years? For thirty years later it will be more and more wonderful than these because the scientists have their best dreams to make this world more interesting by creating new modern gadgets to reduce human’s money, time, power and it would be the best of all. In the thirty years latter I think there will be a robot server in the families or communities. A robot server is a powered household appliance that is used to serve people by doing housework. It can do many things in the house like cooking food for your whole family to eat. It even serves you while you are eating. You don’t need to spend your time and power in the kitchen. Everything is served for you. It just like you have a waiter at home, you just go to work and when you come home your house is neat, your bed is clean, your things are by ordered, and your meal is prepared. It’s absolutely great to have a robot server at home.
7. Participant did not post

8. Topic chosen by Sam

There are many beautiful places in Cambodia. But my favorite place to visit is Siem Reap city. It’s in the North West of Cambodia. It’s the most beautiful city of Cambodia. When I first arrived there I felt like I was in another world and I was very excited with that place. There are many big tall trees and the nature around the street was very colorful. When I reached the central, I rented a hotel and I had some rest for my visiting on the next day. In the early morning I got up and had shower, prepared myself, and ate breakfast. When everything was ready I started my visit. The place I visited was Angkor Wat. When reached the gate of the temple I was very unbelived that I could see this temple. I thought I just see this temple once enough for me in my life. I went see other places in the temple and to see its beauty and learnt about the sculptures on the wall of the temple. It was amazing how Angkor have could build this temple. I
9. ‘Describe your house when you are rich in the future’

Everybody has their own potential. Their potential is to have a lot of money, have a good family, live in a big comfortable house, drive a big comfortable car, travel to many places, have good children, have a lot of good friends, play a lot of healthy games, be happy with peace of mind etc. But how to achieve it? Many of us live in pain and suffering. Life is so miserable and everything seems to go wrong. There is so much unfairness. This person cheated me, that person lied to me, he stole my money, they only help their friends, they bully me, it’s not my fault but they still punish me, they beat me up, I’m ugly and poor etc. All of these may happen to us. Pain and suffering caused by others and life’s situations will always be there. We can not run away from them. But we have powers to overcome with these problems if we want to. We choose to cry, complain, live in sympathy or we take charge of our lives and everything seems to go wrong. There is so much unfairness. This person cheated me, that person lied to me, he stole my money, they only help their friends, they bully me, it’s not my fault but they still punish me, they beat me up, I’m ugly and poor etc. All of these may happen to us. Pain and suffering caused by others and life’s situations will always be there. We can not run away from them. But we have powers to overcome with these problems if we want to. We choose to cry, complain, live in sympathy or we take charge of our lives and become stronger? Our greatest gifts is our abilities to think the reasons and discover and overcome our problems. We have to struggle to achieve the true potential. Our real potential is so great. Do we still live in miserable? Wake up and take control of your life. Don’t let your destiny to control you future. Your future is in your hands.
10. ‘The greatest or most important event in the history of the world’

World war 2 is well-known as the second world war after the recent great war it was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945. It was the most widespread war in the last 75 years and directly involved more than 100 million people from over 30 countries. It was the mass deaths time in the history. During the world war 2 approximately 11 million people were killed and the strategic bombing of industrial and population centres which approximately 1 million people were killed including the use of the two nuclear weapons bombing in Cambat. It remained estimated 50 million to 85 million fatalities. These made the world war 2 the deadliest conflict in the human history. After 6 years of war had completely done. It remained a very unclear environment. Many countries go damaged. Especially, in Europe. Sadly it is the mass death war in the human history. It is well-known by the world. People wish to avoid from it. People hate war. Being peace is the best of all in human lives.
Luke

1. ‘Favourite school memory’

I have a lot of great memories, it’s very hard to pick just one, but one highlight was the first day that I met my first girlfriend in high school. Before that, I really hated my high school because I had to choose it after failing to get into my expected school.

It was a stormy day, rain dropped heavily and there was so much lightning in the sky. After finishing lessons, I went home on foot without an umbrella or a raincoat. Everybody hurried up to go home but she came to near where I was standing and asked me whether I wanted to hitchhike. I rode her bike and talked to her all the way very happily. At that moment, I was wishing the silly wish that the road never ended. 😊 We seemed to fall in love at the first sight.

Until now, we had broken up. I really forgot her, but I can’t forget that days. 😢
2. ‘The scariest place you’ve ever been’

One place makes me scariest was the road which led to Lao Xa village, located in Ho Giang province of Vietnam. It is a snaky road gone along mountainous between abyss and cliff. Everything started from our trip after first nine months away at university. My friends and I made a plan to visit some nice place in Ha Giang by motobike from Hanoi. It would be very good, we took a lot of pictures and watched landscapes until we had lost on the road led to Lao Xa village. The more we went, the more serious problem became. The road got from bad to worse with a lot of pothole and big rocks. After Nightfall, we couldn’t almost see anything because the headlight of our motobikes were not enough brightness. Although the night sky was so beautiful with full of stars, everybody felt very tired and nervous. Hanoi, it would be very good, we took a lot of pictures and watched landscapes until we had lost on the road led to Lao Xa village. The more we went, the more serious problem became. The road got from bad to worse with a lot of pothole and big rocks. After Nightfall, we couldn’t almost see anything because the headlight of our motobikes were not enough brightness. Although the night sky was so beautiful with full of stars, everybody felt very tired and nervous, and did not care about that. The scariest moment was happened when one motobike of our group deviated from the direction, nearly fell into the abyss. Finally, it took us 2 hours, we had gone to planned place to relax and eat food. All people felt safe and sounds and laughed very loudly when re-thought about what were happened.
3. Topic chose by Luke

Family is always the most important thing in everyone's life. Of course, it is true for me. Our family is not very large, we are the family of four: my father, my mother, my elder brother and I. My mother's name is Ngoc, she is 52 years old that is the same age of my father. Her job is an accountant. It is said that she is a very nice, kind and clever woman.

My father's name is Thuy. He used to be a soldier joined South West war of Vietnam in 1979. After that, he had had a lot of jobs which made him very good at using tools to fix things or make things. Now, he is retired. With experiencing war which led him to be a man of strong character.

The third person of my family is my brother. He is the pride of my family with becoming a pediatrician after six years of hardship at Hanoi medical university.

Besides, he is a person who affected to me so much from my childhood, I love him very much.

The last person of my family is me. I am graduating academy of finance and getting my qualification in August. Like other normal families, we are a very good family with loving and caring each other very much. In the holidays, when all the member of our family get together after long days of work and study, we like to watch TV, to prepare dinner, to talk about different things and to discuss all our problem together. It is rare precious moments because my brother and I have grown up, we must go far away from our hometown for job and studying so we have a little time for our family.

The last thing what I want to say that I

Add a comment...
4. Topic chosen by Luke

Today, I want to talk about the film that I love best - *Forrest Gump*. *Forrest Gump* is a 1994 film starring Tom Hanks, who is my favorite actor, and it was directed by Robert Zemeckis. The film is based on the novel of the same name which was written by Winston Groom. It had been nominated for 13 Academy Award nominations and won six.

*Forrest Gump* is the tale of a good-natured but simple-minded man who has the same name as the title of the film. Despite all the hard things that happened in his life, he had accomplished great things and been present during significant historical events. In this case, far exceeding what anyone imagined he could do. He proved that determination, courage, and love are more important than ability. In the film, the most moving scene was what made me never forget is the moments he talk to Jenny at her grave. It was so touching.
5. ‘A life changing experience’ (comments by David and Thomas)

The most life changing experience. There are a lot of special events in my short 22 years but the most changing experience of my life is the period of time before graduating university. I have changed myself so much at that period of time. That was time period after I and ex-girlfriend had just broken. I loved her so much so that I tried to chang myself to be suitable for her. Unfortunately, she did not appreciated and had had a new boyfriend after that. "LOL". I almost got mad and felt so hurt. At that same time, I had to prepare a period of practical experiences in the sector relating to my field of study that was cell on internship for completing my course at university. These things made me fell so exhausted and tired.
me feel so exhausted and tired.
With so much troubles and terrible feelings, my life had become too hard for me.

Luckily, living in the "real world" at where I interned, I met a lot people, witnessed so many things. I realized I had been too soft and uninvolved. I need to change for my future. With the purpose of restarting myself, I tried to learn new things such as reading a new book, playing the guitar, playing some sports, studying harder...

Beside, I added friend with a lot people who are so interesting and older than me to learn their experience.

After passing that hard period, there were many great things that I gained from my trying. No longer being a young boy, I have been a man. I became stronger, more headstrong and found out what I need to do in order to make my

P.S. The photo on top have been taken where I had so much unforgettable memories.......in a GOOD DAY.

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Add a comment...
6. ‘Describe a device or gadget 30 years in the future’ (comment by David)

Nowadays, technology has greatly improved as time is passing. Scientists are continually working in order to develop useful products, in which facilitate lives’ quality. Your everyday items will be getting an upgrade. When do you ask yourself how far usual items would be advanced by technology in 20, 30, even 50 years from now? In this essay, I want to describe my thinking of a future device what is called “synthetic device” after 30 years from now.

The first side that I want to mention is about it's physical shape. It's shape can be like the watch with touch surface, small size but it has large battery capacity compared to the device at present. Beside, the most special thing of this device is that it can be controlled by your voice.

The other side is about it's function that are combined with by creating innovative smart textiles. The major functions of the
7. Topic chosen by Luke (comments by David and Thomas)

Yesterday, my best friend asked me whether salary was the most important thing to decide a job so that today I want to discuss about this point. The idea of whether salary is the most major concern when deciding a job is currently debated widely. While I side with those who contend that choosing a career with a salary could bring a number of benefits, I disagree that it is the most crucial concern. In my opinion, other factors are of the same importance.

On the one hand, there are several benefits when choosing a job with high salary. Firstly, a stable salary could help people to meet their basic needs. A person with high income likely to afford essential demands of life such as living expenses. Therefore, their living standard would probably be enhanced by high earning. Secondly, a job with high salary might create strong motivation...
A high salary might create strong motivation to succeed. People who have high wages have a tendency to devote more of their time and energy since they have clear targets. In addition, individuals could improve themselves because a well-paid job often requires many skills to work such as communication and technical skill.

On the other hand, there are other factors that are equally important. Primarily, working environment should also be taken into consideration. Working conditions, relationship with other colleagues and pressure might probably have certain impacts on a person's working spirit and efficiency. Moreover, passion is also a key factor that determines an individual's career success. When people work for what they love, they have a tendency to work effectively. For instance, there are many people become successful thanks for their passion such as Bill Gates and Steve Jobs.

In conclusion, I believe that the power of money can have some influences on our choice of career, but it does not outweigh other factors.
8. Luke did not post

9. ‘Describe your house in the future when you are rich’
10. ‘The greatest or most important event in the history of the world’
renewable energy which the human can use for a limitless time. In addition, the applications of nuclear science in the field of medical, space science and industry. On the other hand, there is so much doubt of using nuclear energy with the bad purposes because of its great power. For instance, producing atomic weapons prepare for war. Moreover, the leakage of radioactive substances affects significantly on the environment. It can be threatening the survival of humanity.

In conclusion, I hope the humanity will not witness the second Hiroshima and Nagasaki event in the future. Mankind could take advantage of using nuclear energy that outweighs its drawback.

P.S. my subject which I choosen seems very hard. I hope I’ve made few mistakes.
Thomas

1. ‘Favourite school memory’

The first real English exam of my life was the school-leaving examination at the end of secondary school. Deriving from the fact I had never taken any serious exam before that, I was pretty stressed. The wide variety of required topics also contributed to the anxiety. The corridor was full of anxious candidates, but I was trying to flick through my notes calmly. When the teacher called my name I became fairly nervous. However, by reading the exam topics I realized there was no use worrying. I found the topics interesting and I was full of ideas. Before the exam I had been anxious about the additional questions the examiner might ask, but since my speaking was much longer than required, she didn’t ask anything. She just indicated that I can stop, and in the end she contentedly said that she had found my oral exam spellbinding. I must say the exam was rather enjoyable. I consider it as my favourite school memory because of the positive feedback.
2. Thomas did not post

3. Topic chosen by Thomas
4. Topic chosen by Thomas (comments by Luke)

The town Gyor, which is situated in the North-West Hungary has a famous historical city centre. No stay in Gyor would be complete without walking through the picturesque cobbled pedestrian streets and looking at the ancient monuments and beautiful buildings most of which were built in baroque style. The area called "Kapitelen hill" is bordered by the Danube and Raba rivers and has the longest history. Here you can find one of the most famous tourist attractions of the city: the Cathedral. The history of the city is perfectly introduced by the famous museums located in the city centre. Another place worth visiting is building of the Natural Theatre of Győr, with impressive painting on its façade. While walking along the historical city centre, it's worth entering one of the restaurants providing Hungarian specialties together with a spectacular view on the river. It's the most ideal to choose a sunny day for your visit if you want to take a long walk in the city centre. Because of the beautiful sceneries detailed above, it would be a good idea to take a camera and take impressive photos. What I particularly love about my city are the architecture and the special atmosphere the city provides with its lighting in the dark.

Add a comment...

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Could I make friend with you? :) 

What a interested city! I hope I can visit there someday.

Sure!
5. ‘A life changing experience’ (comment by David)

It was almost 10 years ago when I started Latin-American and ballroom dancing. I’ve decided to take up this new hobby because I had previously visited numerous dance shows and competitions which I found definitely spellbinding. It’s always been immensely inspiring to see dance couples moving together exquisitely. The first few dance lessons triggered enormous enthusiasm. Having the adequate diligence, me and my partner soon started to attend local and international competitions, some of which resulted in memorable achievements. I consider dancing as a life changing experience because it has significantly influenced my personality through the numerous things I’ve learned. Not only did this improve my self-confidence, but I’ve also learned how to keep my enthusiasm to work hard and outstrip my own skills from time to time. Additionally, the companionship

_m Woran can you teach me? Could you tell me how to Latin - American and ballroom dancing now?_  

_Haha yes, good idea_
6. ‘Describe a device or gadget 30 years in the future.’ (comment by David)

Nowadays we could hardly imagine our lives without those essential gadgets which we carry everywhere because they strongly belong to us. Owning a mobile or a notebook doubtlessly make a lot of things easier in certain respects. In fact, the greatest benefit of them in daily life is their significant role in social contacts. They assure limitless opportunity to be accessible whenever you are and to improve your relationships by getting to know more and more new people. Another point is that thanks to these smart devices you can even organize your imminent meetings whenever you are while dealing with anything else, consequently the current level of multitasking would only be a dream without the easily portable gadgets. A huge choice of gadgets in reasonable prices is given and they enable us to stay up-to-date.

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As far as it can be predicted from the cutting-edge trends, it’s likely that the size of smartphones will decrease further or we will use smart watches instead of mobiles. Several types are already being produced. Besides, scientists embarked on developing some ground-breaking ideas like eye-controlled computers.

That is true. Honestly, I can hardly imagine the technology of mobile and the technology of computer in 30 years later.
7. Topic chosen by Thomas (comment by David)

The growth of online shopping has greatly improved life for the consumer. Online shopping clearly has a substantial role in consumer society. As the Internet becomes widespread, more and more people have discovered its advantages regarding to purchasing goods without going anywhere. The huge choice of online shopping opportunities doubtlessly enabled people to get hold of new products in a remarkably quick and convenient way. The greatest benefit of online shopping lies in quickness and efficiency. After placing an order, you can expect the consignment to be delivered within one week and you spare a lot of time by comparing the goods in your armchair. However, the same guarantee is provided and special packages prevent your products from damage during their journey from the furthest countries in the world. Additionally, tracking opportunity for observing the consignment’s current location is also provided. Finally, most of the commodities are definitely cheaper if you place orders via the Internet.

On the other hand, strong arguments suggest that online shopping has unfavourable effects on the domestic market, because people discover that numerous opportunities are given for finding goods with better quality from abroad. Consequently, domestic producers have to put a strain on selling their commodities and the problem can lead to a fall-back in economy. Another drawback is that online shopping changes people’s attitude toward society. By not being forced to spend long hours with shopping and talking to the sales assistant, people tend to become less sociable.

In my view, online shopping has profoundly improved life for consumers.
market, because people discover that numerous opportunities are given for finding goods with better quality from abroad. Consequently, domestic producers have to put a strain on selling their commodities and the problem can lead to a fall-back in economy. Another drawback is that online shopping changes people’s attitude toward society. By not being forced to spend long hours with shopping and talking to the sales assistant, people tend to become less sociable. In my view, online shopping has profoundly improved life for consumers. Even if it has its own drawbacks, the advantages outlined above make it definitely promising.

I like online shopping but in Vietnam it’s so bad. Some products of online shopping look good but when you buy it, the quality is so terrible in my country.

8. Topic chosen by Thomas (comments by David and Luke)
Returning back to her family, Amanda plans to abandon her unhappy marriage, but before this could happen, Dawson is attacked and killed by a man. Meanwhile, Amanda's son was in accident and receives a heart from a donor. At the end, Amanda receives a cell from his son in which he reminds her of his doctor telling him that a year after his heart replacement surgery it is possible to check whom he had received his new heart. The donor was Dawson. I found the novel extremely touching and thought-provoking.

It seems that the novel is very interesting and attractive. I must read it as soon as possible.

Your writing is excellent. I wish I can write like that in recent day.

Thank you! Read it or watch the film!

Is this novel interesting? This novel has been translated to Vietnamese yet?

Hmm I don’t think so, but you can improve your English by reading books.
9. ‘Describe your house in the future when you are rich’

Today I was asked to describe my house in the future if I were rich. The topic is really intriguing. I could imagine the following house:

It is a perfectly situated detached house in the outskirt of the city (maybe in England). The house is about 180 square meters with 2 floors and it provides a friendly atmosphere. 4 rooms can be found on the 1st floor: A kitchen, a dining room, a spacious, bright living room with huge windows and a bathroom. The kitchen is separated only by a countertop from the dining room from which it is possible to enter the terrace through a balcony door. The colour of furniture provides a perfect harmony with the colour of the walls and curtains. On the 2nd floor there are 2 bedrooms, a bathroom, a workroom and an entertainment room. The aim of the entertainment room is to provide a place where I can relax after hard working days. In this room there’s a huge LCD TV with 5.1 sound system that enables me to watch films or listen to music. Deriving from the fact I love Lindsey Stirling’s music, this room would be decorated with her posters, which are already signed.

A smaller garden belongs to house, which contains some fruit trees and flowers. There is possibility to barbecue and organize parties in the garden. Since I love playing tennis, there’s a tennis court right behind the garden. Besides, there’s a garage next to the house where our car can be stored. (Please note it’s just a future imagination.)
10. ‘The greatest or most important event in world history’

It is a widely controversial question what the most important invention is in the history. I consider the invention of personal computer one of the greatest things that happened in the history of the world. My opinion is based on the fact that the device has profoundly altered the daily lives of humans. Computers were invented in the 20th century and are being utilized both in business and in our daily lives. As for business, the manufacturing industry would have never developed so far if computers weren’t used in the production process. They are able to execute tasks without the continual intervention of people, therefore ensuring quickness and efficiency. The invention of computers has also established jobs for people on the field of science, which triggered remarkable growth on the labour market.

As regards our daily lives, computers have made everything undoubtedly easier. Not only are they indispensable for our work, but we also use them for entertainment by watching films, listening to music, connecting people on social network to catch up with the latest news and purchasing necessary products through e-commerce (B2C connection). It is clearly evident for me that since computer enables people to execute several tasks simultaneously, people are getting accustomed to the concept of multitasking. I must admit I could hardly imagine my daily life without using computer for numerous purposes.
Alice

1. Favourite school memory’ (mistakenly posted as a comment on tutor’s post)

2. Alice did not post

3. Topic chosen by Alice (mistakenly posted as a comment on tutor’s post)

4. – 10. Alice did not post
Appendix 6: Graded copies of participants’ Instagram posts i.e. David, Sam, Luke and Thomas.

David Post 1

I often call my high school is my second home. My high school is not very large but it is very beautiful and clean. There is a gate which is an entrance and spacious, and specially, on the two sides is the flower corridor which leads straight to go to the playground and the classroom. My school ground is quite wide and long, around the playground there are some trees covering the sunshine for the people who play on it. Therefore, we can read books and talk after each lesson under the trees row of trees. The classrooms are full of tables, and chairs and cabinets for learning. In addition, you also have the other classrooms such as music rooms, computer rooms, a library, English classrooms ...I even loved the school because here we have had good friends and the teachers are always interested to teach and impart knowledge to us people. I loved my second home!

Vocabulary range: Effective and you use adjectives well e.g. beautiful. B1

Vocabulary control: Few errors relative to the range. B1

Grammatical accuracy: Be careful not to forget adverbs e.g. ‘there’ and be careful to use ‘a’ if it is single or add ‘s’ for plurals. Remember if it is a memory everything will be in the past tense. Syntax error – the trees row should be ‘row of trees’. B1

Coherence: Your writing has a good flow through the use of words such as ‘therefore’ and ‘in addition’. B2

Orthographic control: Some spelling errors and punctuation is decent B1

Thematic development: A reasonably fluent narrative B1

Overall: I think you could improve your descriptive writing by linking emotions to the things you are describing e.g. how do memories of the playground and classrooms make you feel. Overall, it’s good: B1
David Post 2

One of The scariest places I have ever been to is The War Remnants Museum. That place is a war museum at 28 Vo Van Tan, in District 3, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. It has many exhibits which are related to the Vietnam War. It was opened by the Vietnamese government. This museum includes a series of by topic rooms in some the same building, with military equipment placed within a courtyard. The military equipment includes helicopters, bombs, planes, tanks etc. In addition, there are some a number of pieces unexploded ordnance saved in the corner of the yard.

When I went inside this museum, I saw some people who lived in cell. Most of Vietnamese patriots were imprisoned by the American government in the south of Vietnam. They were killed and tortured until they died, and their skulls were showed everyone seeing and made people feel scared shown to everyone to make the people feel scared. Therefore they wanted the Vietnamese people will to give up the struggle for independence. Finally, there was a scene that I will never forget, is it was a killing machine for beheading people. But we didn't feel scared, we stood up and fought for independence.

Vocabulary range: Vocabulary is very good e.g. ordnance, imprisoned, struggle. B2

Vocabulary control: some mistakes which may confuse meaning e.g. series by topic rooms. B1

Grammatical accuracy: Remember to use the past tense when you're talking about the past e.g. scared, was, died. It is correct to say 'some pieces' or 'a number of pieces', but not 'some number of pieces'. When describing a government we put 'the' before it e.g. the American government, the Vietnamese government. B1

Coherence: Good progression and links between past and present. B1

Orthographic control: didn’t use capital ‘I’ for speaking about yourself and began some sentences with lower case letters. Small spelling mistakes also. A2

Thematic development: The ending of the story is quite powerful and it shows great writing skill to have a strong ending that the reader will remember. B1

Overall: To improve you should revise past tense verbs and remember to begin new sentences with a capital letter. This was a good descriptive essay, well done: B1.
David Post 3

I have many hobbies, so I often do some of my hobbies in my spare time. But I like reading and watching television the most. Books are always a good friend to me. That is a good way to improve my reading skill. By reading, I get better at concentrating because it makes me have to focus on what I am reading for a long time. Books also open up the door to knowledge for me. Reading books tells me about the history and the modern world. In addition, watching television is also one of the activities that I like doing in my free time. I enjoy watching historical movies, documentary movies on the weekend and sports programs every weekend evening, because the football matches often take place at the weekend. Therefore I can get relaxation after a week of hard work. Sometimes I watch television during the week after I have finished all of my work. At night, I really like watching movies and live music shows. If I have a lot of work, I try to arrange my schedule so that I can watch my favorite shows at least one time per week. Watching television and reading books are not the only two activities that I like doing in my spare time. My other favorite hobbies are playing football and going shopping with my friends. However, when I have spare time, I spend more time watching television and reading than any other hobbies. They can help me not only to relax but also give me a big knowledge of the world.

Vocabulary range: basic in context of a basic topic. A2

Vocabulary control: suitable but basic. Clumsy in parts, e.g. 'give the knowledge door for me'. A2

Grammatical accuracy: Be careful to use prepositions in the correct place (e.g. of, to, for). Also missing or unnecessary articles. It’s correct to say ‘all of my work’. B1

Coherence: simple elements linked in a linear sequence. B1

Orthographic control: a few spelling mistakes and misuse of capital letters. A2

Thematic development: decent conclusion and discussion, yet a basic topic. B1

Overall: I think you should choose a more difficult topic next time because you have the skill to write about more difficult topics. Overall, a good piece of writing: B1.
Of all of the films I have seen, Harry Potter is the one I like best. This movie is a fiction film. It is about the bravery of some people who have a good friendship in the wonderful world. The film is set in England. It is a story written by J.K. Rowling. The main characters are Harry Potter, Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger. They study at Hogwarts school together.

Everyone loves Harry Potter and his friends. He is one of the most famous actor characters in the world. He is also a brave, kind and friendly wizard. Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger are his close friends. They always stand by him and help him save the wonderful world from being entirely destroyed by Voldemort who is a wicked wizard. After many terrible fights between Harry Potter and that wicked wizard, He won and Voldemort died. That is the happy ending of the film.

Vocabulary range: of an effective level to give detail in the context of the topic. B1

Vocabulary control: clumsy and inaccurate on occasions e.g. actors and fought what break out. Harry Potter is a character because he is fictional, Daniel Radcliff is the actor who plays Harry. Emma Watson is an actress who plays the character of Hermione Granger. We say that a film is set somewhere e.g. The Avengers is set on earth, Jurassic Park is set on an island, and Godzilla is set in New York. A2

Grammatical accuracy: errors when using articles i.e. ‘a/an’ or ‘the’. ‘The’ is for something specific e.g. the Harry Potter movies and ‘a/an’ is for something non-specific e.g. an action movie, a horror movie. Also mistakes involving incorrect adverbs. B1

Coherence: points follow the standard format or a movie review. B1

Orthographic control: punctuation and spelling is generally good. B1

Thematic development: a clear narrative and an opinionated conclusion. B1

Overall: a good piece of writing but issues regarding vocabulary control and use of articles. B1
Nowadays most people use smartphones anytime and anywhere. They use them when they are eating, speaking and dating with a girlfriend or a boyfriend. There is no real conversation now. For instance, people often take some pictures of food before eating and posting them on Instagram and Facebook. Now cutting-edge technology makes people get a big gap (do you mean it creates a distance between people?).

In 30 years later we will not see the smartphone, people will not put their phone on the table when they go inside the coffee shop or restaurant. The smartphone in the future will be a small smartphone and you can put it in your ears. No one can will see them. Besides, people will mass-produce watch-phones which they wear on their wrists. In addition, there is a special phone that I like the most, it is a glasses-phone, with this phone I can translate any language I hear from people talking on my glasses-phone. Hence I can make out what those people say. Therefore they will get a correct answer from people. That is an awesome production in 30 years later time. Does Would everyone would like to buy them?

Vocabulary range: Diverse range with little repetition. B2

Vocabulary control: consistently appropriate. B1

Grammatical accuracy: Good use of tenses. Remember Instagram and Facebook have capital letters because they are proper nouns i.e. the name of something specific. You used the correct future tenses with will and only one small mistake when you used can, although I can see you understand this overall. Remember also to use ‘those people’ because people is plural, if singular it would be ‘that person’. For a future question we don’t need to use ‘does’, we only need to use ‘would’. B1

Coherence: logical progression of points. B1

Orthographic control: good punctuation, some spelling mistakes e.g. Nowadays. B1


Overall: A very good piece of writing. B1
David Post 6

Studying, living and working at in the big city has changed my life. From the sun rises when the sun rises, people who live in a big city, they have to get up early, and prepare something before they go out for working to work. For instance, women often prepare breakfast for their family or cook something and bring it for their lunch at their company. Around about 7am-8am, the streets are full of traffic. Restaurants, coffee shops and offices are open. Pupils and students go to school hurriedly. The Once the working day begins for the adults. In this time the center of the city is full of activities and full of noise. In the afternoon, the offices, school are offices and schools begin to close at 5 - 6pm, most shops often close later because some people who will go to shopping after finishing their work. Besides, now it is a rush time for buses and other transports transport. Everyone seems to be in a hurry to get home. As a result of this rush, some accident happened occasionally when people are hurried. People who live in the countryside, when they go to the city for the first time, they can’t stand to live here, but after they finish their study studies at university or after many year years working here. They will not want to come go back their village and they try in many ways to live in a big city. Because they know, if they live here they can get a higher salary than living in the countryside. Living in a big city is so busy but this it has changed people’s life lives and my life forever.

Vocabulary range: sufficient to discuss topic. B1

Vocabulary control: basic lexis is used appropriately but some clumsy language and inappropriate usage in other parts. A2

Grammatical accuracy: Most of the mistakes are when using articles (a/an/the). ‘Hurriedly’ is the adverb to describe how something is done, this means how the verb is done. E.g. How do children go to school? They go to school hurriedly. B1

Coherence: linear progression of daily routines. B1

Orthographic control: a few spelling mistakes e.g. anh. Punctuation is decent. B1

Thematic development: good description and evaluation of living in a city/village. B2

Overall: a good piece of writing and you can fix most of your mistakes if you are careful when using articles, plurals and adverbs. B1
Everyone has a dream. It can be a small or a big dream but we always want our dream to come true in the near future. As Like so many others, I also have a desire which is that when I get older, I can make my dream come true. I dream that I will become a football player. Maybe for many people, my dream can be unreal, but who can stop people from living their passion. Every time I watch the ball on the stadium, I am so eager for playing to play in. In that time, I only want to run down to the football ground to play with a ball. This thing can be a sign of what my dream when I was growing up every day. Therefore, I need to practice more and more if I would like to be a professional football player. Unfortunately, when I was 17 years old, I was injured by another player, so I could not keep playing football. I was so sad and I cried too much. I think thought that my dream was finished. Now I have another dream, my new dream is to work for a Non – Government organisation. Working for NGOs is a great opportunity to improve my English, communication skills and meet new people. There are many expert experts who come from many countries and different cultures around the world and I can learn a lot from them. The last but not least, we need to change our mind positively.

Vocabulary range: quite diverse and avoids repetition. B1

Vocabulary control: high accuracy regarding appropriateness of word choices. B2

Grammatical accuracy: Most of the mistakes are prepositions. We say, ‘Like so many others’ and ‘stop people from living their passion’. Also it is correct to say ‘in the stadium’ or ‘at the stadium’ but it is wrong to say ‘on the stadium’. Be careful of when you should use plurals e.g. cultures and experts because there is more than one person. To improve you could revise prepositions. B1

Coherence: linear progression and good use of cohesive devices e.g. therefore. B2

Orthographic control: good punctuation and no spelling errors. B2

Thematic development: the first and last sentences are direct and powerful. The structure is very good, with a clear introduction, middle and conclusion.B2

Overall: weakest in grammatical accuracy but an otherwise strong and emotional piece of writing. High B1
David Post 8

The population in of the world is now are more than 6 billion people with many different languages, but only one international language which is the most popular, it is English. Therefore, the role of English is very important for the following reasons. Firstly, there are more than 400 million people in the world speaking English fluently. English is their mother's tongue. Moreover, English is spoken by more than 1 billion people, and they speak English as their second language. Secondly, English is the main language of more than 53 countries, areas and it is also the main language of Europe. In addition, English is ranked third in the world and it is used the most after Chinese and Spanish because the population in of each country is different. Thirdly, English is the best way when you to speak, and exchange information with foreigners or in any country around the world. If you know English, it means you know the rest of the world. Fourthly, Learning English is to improve yourself, your life, and your future. Furthermore, it is one of the conditions to approach and update information of or knowledge from the modern world. Finally, if you would like to have a bright future, and get higher position in your career ladder what all you need to do now is learning English. In brief, Investing in English is the best way to help you can be happy, rich and successful.

Vocabulary range: diverse and supports a detailed discussion. B2

Vocabulary control: quite accurate with few mistakes e.g. world modern. B1

Grammatical accuracy: There is no, 's' on billion or million when giving a figure e.g. 6 billion people – plural issue. Like the last post be careful when using prepositions e.g. the correct phrases are 'population of each country' and 'foreigners in each country'. Some clumsy syntax e.g. information of knowledge. B1

Coherence: effective use of cohesive devices to build points logically e.g. firstly. B2

Orthographic control: punctuation is good, some spelling mistakes e.g. Moreovers. B2

Thematic development: main points are clear and supported with details. B2

Overall: very good vocabulary, coherence and thematic development is hindering by prepositional misuse, syntax and spelling errors. B1
David Post 9

I feel interested in this topic. I will tell everyone about my the house what I want to have when I am a millionaire. I am living in Sydney now, I have just bought a new house at in the center of Sydney city. The price of my new house is 10 millions dollars. It’s large, about 900 square meters and has 2 floors with 10 rooms. Each room has been decorated with a different style. Now let’s go inside my house. It has a big living room, a dining dining room, 4 bedrooms bedrooms, 4 bathrooms and a small movie cinema on the second floor. Firstly, on the first floor, there is a living room which is very large and airy. There is a small vase on the table which I often put a bunch of flowers in flower in it. The dining dining room is so modern and full of kitchen tools. If There is enough space for all of member of my family to sit and it is also a place where we spend happy times together. After dinner we often watch TV and drink something at in the living room or go to the small cinema to watch some movies on second floor. Next to dining dining room, there are 2 bedrooms bedrooms. I like navy blue so that is the reason why my bedroom was painted with full of this color. Cushions are in the a light color. Besides that, my bedroom also has a wardrobe and a computer on the desk to do my work or surfing the internet. Secondly, on the second floor floors. It also has 2 bedrooms and a small cinema on it. This place is where I often get relaxation after a hard working day. Despite of being busy, sometimes I always invite my friends go to my cinema and watch some movies with me at the weekend.

Finally, Finally, in front of my house, there is a nice large garden with a lot of beautiful flowers and tress trees. Next to the garden is a swimming pool with cleaning cleaning water. That is an awesome place to relax in the summer. On the far side of my house, my neighbours are so kind and nice. When I have some troubles, they often come and help me how to handle them. In conclusion, this house is the most important and meaningful place for in my life.

Vocabulary range: broad enough to allow detailed description, but not a particularly difficult topic. B1

Vocabulary control: generally accurate a cinema was referred to as ‘movie’ but you corrected this error in later paragraphs. Word choice does not obstruct communication. B1
Grammatical accuracy: some syntax errors e.g. help me how to handle them. Inaccurate prepositions, it is correct to say, ‘members of my family’, ‘drink in the living room’ and ‘in my life’. Contradictory adverbs of frequency: we cannot use sometimes and always to talk about the same thing because they are different. Always is something you do a lot e.g. I always drink water. Sometimes is for things which do not happen that often e.g. sometimes I go to the cinema. B1

Coherence: appropriate use of devices to link points and description of house. B2

Orthographic control: paragraphs, full stops and commas are used appropriately. Some small spelling mistakes: Dinning room = dining room, dink = drink, finnaly = finally, tress = trees, cleanning = cleaning. B1

Thematic development: Ideas are description are highly organised and follow a traditional pattern for describing one’s house. Good conclusion to describe personal importance of the house. B2

Overall: once again the vocabulary, description and themes are strong but let down by grammatical and orthographic control. Very close to B2 but grammar needs to improve. B1
David Post 10

Each person has a different idea about what is the most best invention in the history of human beings. Some people think that it is the invention of the wheel, cars, internet, electricity, electric lamp etc., but as for me, I think the greatest event invention in the history of the world is a the computer which was invented at Harvard university in 1944 by an American inventor. It is the most important invention that I have ever known. The Computer has many advantages. I will shed the light on these benefits for the following reasons. First of all, it helps me to do my lessons effectively. I often type my lessons and save them on the computer so that I might learn them by heart quickly and easily to see them again. Secondly, a computer is a powerful and useful tool, it can help people to do lots of work easier and more quickly. Thirdly, a computer can help store our materials safely forever. When you want to see and use them again, what we only need to do is open our computer. Today, besides the hard drive, people often bring a USB and use them to save anything they want at anytime and anywhere. Moreover, a computer allows people to perform many tasks everyday quickly everyday. For instance, looking for a new job work, shopping online, reading books or watch some watching breaking news happening in the world, etc. To sum up, I would like to say thanks to the computer, I often access the internet and learn many things. The computer has made my understanding better day by day and it becomes indispensable in my studies.

Vocabulary range: Diverse enough to effectively discuss the topic. B1

Vocabulary control: confusion of event and invention and even and ever, otherwise good. B1

Grammatical accuracy: You could say ‘best’ or ‘most important’ but it is wrong to only say ‘most’ because the reader thinks ‘the most what?’ Remember it is ‘I have ever known’ and not ‘I have even known.’ Remember when to use the infinitive (to in front of a verb) and when to use the bare infinitive (no to). You usually get that right so if you do some quick revision it will be nearly perfect. Several errors involving unnecessary or missing articles e.g. when talking about the invention of the computer it will always need an article (a/the) unless you show ownership e.g. my
computer, his computer. If you say ‘many’ then the noun will be plural e.g. many tasks, many footballs. B1

**Coherence:** good essay writing language to move the points along e.g. moreover and clear progression of ideas. B2

**Orthographic control:** no spelling errors, misuse of comma after etc. B2

**Thematic development:** a descriptive narrative with a beginning, a middle and a firm conclusion. B1

**Overall:** A very good piece of writing with clear evidence of original thought. Ideas and organisation are very good, however grammar and vocabulary are usually better than in this piece. B1
I really miss my high school because it gave me a lot of souvenirs. My high school is very huge and there are many big buildings, a big garden which has a lot of flowers. I loved sitting in the garden. Sometimes I read books with my friends in the garden. I liked spending time on planting flowers with my classmates. And It was my favorite memory.

Teachers always appreciated my class. And They called my class "green thump" and my best other favorite memory another one was watching a Football match. We had a Football stadium at school. And the match takes place once a year? I often supported my school teams. I was very happy to see my school teams win. And we all said "Bingo"

Vocabulary range: enough to convey meaning regarding everyday life B1
Vocabulary control: Correct choice of words relevant to the situation B1
Grammatical accuracy: Don’t begin a sentence with ‘and’ or ‘because’. A good sentence would be, 'I really miss my high school because it gave me a lot of souvenirs’ or ‘I was very happy to see my school teams win and we all said “Bingo”’. Some redundant language e.g. the use of best and favourite to describe the same thing. B1
Coherence: Linear progression of points and time frame is consistent. B1
Orthographic control: Punctuation is accurate enough so as not to disjoint the writing but full stops are used excessively. B1
Thematic Development: Narrative builds well to the football game climax. B1
Overall: A good piece of writing Savorn. Lots of good language to show how you felt e.g. loved, supported, happy. Maybe you could use more language to describe how things looked. What did the flowers, or the stadium, look like? B1
Sam Post 2

Talking I'm going to talk about the scary place. I always recognized a dangerous jungle I went to in 2012. It called 'Saark forest'. It's in the Southeast of Cambodia. During the school vacation. I went to visit my second home. In Southeast Cambodia.

One afternoon, I'm allowed to go and look after the cows nearby the forest. It was a scary the scariest afternoon I've ever had. As I was about to bring my cows home. Unfortunately, I unfortunately noticed they were lost. I tried to see them everywhere. But I couldn't find them. Finally I decided to go into the jungle. Thought I thought they were there.

I walked slowly with a very nervous feeling. I stopped under a tree for few minutes to take a look around. I didn't know there was big snake on the branch above my heard. Suddenly I turned to look up. The snake was just a meter above my heard. I was very surprised to see that snake. And ran very fast as I could. I couldn't show how happy I was to arrive home. And I never went back to that jungle again.

Vocabulary range: Quite basic but sufficient to tell the story. B1

Vocabulary control: Incomplete phrases and missing nouns, verbs. A2.

Grammatical accuracy: Use ‘I ran as fast as I could’. When you use the word ‘and’ don't begin a new sentence. It is better to say, ‘I was very surprised to see that snake and I ran as fast as I could’ or ‘I couldn’t show how happy I was to arrive home and I never went back to that jungle again’. B1

Coherence: A basic timeline is conveyed. A2

Orthographic control: Several spelling mistakes and beginning of sentences with ‘and’. A2

Thematic Development: A basic story is told, it is disjointed in parts but there is a fitting conclusion. A2

Overall: An emotional story but too many errors. A2.
Once upon a time there was an elephant who lived in the forest. He was a big elephant. He was a very kind animal. He always helped all the small animals who had trouble in the forest. He liked to eat the leaves of the tees. There was a pond in the forest which he loved to swim in. He never walked with other elephants. He was alone all of the time. He did not like the summer. He was very happy to be in the winter because there was a lot of green leaves. When the winter was gone—the summer began, it was very hot and all the small pond ran out of water. He was hard struggling to find water to drink. He tried to find the water everywhere. Finally he found some once. He was extremely excited.

Suddenly he went into the pond and had a drink of water. Unfortunately he saw an ant was trying to come out of the water and he felt very pity so he took a branch to float a branch that floated for that ant to climb on, he had saved that ant from dying in the water. The ant was really pleased and thankful. The elephant went back into the forest. One day when he was sleeping under a tree there was a hunter aimed at him with a gun. Fortunately the ant saw this and he ran very fast and go on to the man's arm and bit him strongly arm bite every strong. The man was very hurt and he dropped the gun down. The elephant was awoken and escaped quickly to the forest.

**Vocabulary range**: Basic level. A2

**Vocabulary control**: Excellent control of a basic range. B1

**Grammatical accuracy**: You used the correct tenses (past simple and past continuous) most of the time after the first paragraph, good work. You should say, ‘there was a hunter aiming at him with a gun’ because it was an action that was happening in the past so add –ing to the verb. Remember the past of ‘go’ is ‘went’. Also, we say that ‘he never walked with the other elephants’. A2

**Coherence**: The time frame of the story is clear, however very basic sentence structures are used. A2

**Orthographical errors**: Basic punctuation errors and some spelling mistakes. A2

**Thematic**: an effective narrative told using simple constructs. A2

**Overall**: a good piece of writing. A2
Surely nothing has done more for the comfort and happiness of the human race than the advances in health care! How many millions of people have benefited from the humble aspirin? How many lives has penicillin saved? The world population is dramatically rising up and a lot of problems are generated such as places, environment, foods, nature, etc. But the most important one is health care. There are many diseases around us and some diseases are very nasty and some are not. The medical scientists are working hard to deal with these diseases.

This is a wonderful generation when all the people can live with a very long age. It's really different compared to the last 100 years. Average life expectancy worldwide had risen badly and a lot of people were killed by disease. But today we are very lucky to have fantastic medical science. They could help us to get rid of the diseases away from our bodies. We expect to live to more than 100 years old in the future.

Vocabulary range: very good, quite diverse. B2

Vocabulary control: generally good but some misuse e.g. dramatically. B1

Grammatical accuracy: We ‘have’ fantastic medical science because we own it. Plural mistakes are evident. We would say that the ‘world population is dramatically rising’. Be careful with certain phrasal verbs e.g. get rid = to get rid of, with a very long age = to a very old age. Overall grammar is very good. B1

Coherence: excellent use of rhetorical devices in introduction, but middle and end are weak. B1

Orthographic control: bad form to begin a sentence with but, however only one spelling mistake (decease = disease). B1

Thematic development: excellent introduction but the rest is not to the same standard. B1

Overall: A solid piece of writing with room to improve. B1
Sam Post 5

I have changed to have a great life. It's really good for my present life and future. I have changed a weakness from being a coward person to being a brave person. When I was in high school I was always a coward student. I was never wanted to be a volunteer to talk in the class. I just sat down in my seat quietly. But sometimes I was asked to talk by the teacher. I felt very frightened to talk with a lot of other students looking at me and my both hands were shaking. This was my weakness I had and it's very hard to change it. I went to ask my teachers and they gave me a lot of opinions. I was told that there are a few ways to deal with it. First, you have to talk a lot in class. Second, don't be frightened of making mistakes. We will learn by our mistakes. Third, you have to discuss things with other students and share your idea ideas. These few ways were really helpful for me. I practiced these again and again. I'm good enough to be talked talk in front of many people now. I don't feel nervous anymore and my both hands are not shaken again. I'm very delighted that I could change to have a good life. I'm a brave person now.

Vocabulary range: generally basic but sufficient in relation to the context. B1

Vocabulary control: applied correctly and effective communication. B1

Grammatical accuracy: Most of the mistakes are tense mistakes when using the verb 'be'. Use 'were' with 'a few ways' because it is plural and remember the negative is 'I don't feel nervous'. When an action is happening at a certain time in the past it is in the present continuous tense so we add -ing e.g. 'I was shaking' 'students looking at me.' Also, it is correct to say 'both my hands'. B1

Coherence: Ideas are well connected and use of listing devices e.g. first, second etc. B2

Orthographic control: Remember that Im = I'm and always use a capital I for 'I'. Spelling errors occur due to tense mistakes. B1

Thematic development: The structure of the story is very good, it has an effective beginning, middle and end. B1

Overall: This is a very good piece of descriptive writing and an emotional story story: B1.
It's very interesting to talk about gadgets for everyday lives. It's really wonderful. As we know there are many useful gadgets or modern things in the family or community such as smart phones, computers, modern watches, cameras, washing machine, etc. These are very fantastic for people's businesses, works, and even housework. But how about the next thirty years? For thirty years later it will be more and more wonderful than these before because the scientists have their best dreams to make this world more interesting by creating new modern gadgets to reduce (or improve?) human's money, time, power and it would be the best of all inventions. In the thirty years latter time I think there will be a robot server in the families or communities. A robot server is a powered household appliance that is used to serve people by doing housework. It can do many things in the house like cooking food for your whole family to eat. It even serves you while you are eating. You don't need to spend your time and power in the kitchen. Everything is served for you. It is just like you have a waiter at home. You just go to work and when you come home your house is neat, your bed is clean, your things are by ordered, and your meal is prepared. It's absolutely great to have a robot server at home.

Vocabulary range: definitely sufficient for the topic but not at the highest level. B1

Vocabulary control: generally good but a few incorrect or inappropriate uses e.g. reduce your money/spend your power. B1

Grammatical accuracy: very few grammar mistakes. ‘Housework’ is an uncountable noun which means it is wrong to put the plural with an ‘s’ on the end (houseworks). It is correct to say housework or 4 pieces of housework. B2

Coherence: logical and appropriate progression of points. B1

Orthographic control: quite poor, majority of errors were spelling related: Waches = watches, camara = camera, ineresting = interesting, latter = later, appliance = appliance, absolutely = absolutely. A2

Thematic development: good progression of narrative and discussion with an effective structure. B1

Overall: a very good piece of writing, but let down by some basic errors. B1
Sam Post 7

There are many beautiful places in Cambodia. But my favorite place to visit is Siem Reap city. It's in the North West of Cambodia. It's the most beautiful city of in Cambodia. When i first arrived there i felt like i was in another world and i was very excited with that place. There are many big tall trees and the nature around the street was very colorful. When i reached the central centre i rented a hotel and i had some rest for before my visiting on the next day. In the early morning i got up and had a shower, prepared myself, and ate breakfast. When everything was ready i started my visit. The place i visited was Angkor Wat. When reached the gate of the temple i was very amazed that i could see this temple. I thought i would just see this temple once enough for me in my life. I went to see other places in the temple and to see its beauty and learnt about the sculptures on the wall of the temple. It was amazing how Angkoreans could build this temple. I spent my time for my tour three days three days on my tour in Seim Reap. It was not enough for me to see all the temples because there are more than a hundred temples. It would take 15 days or 1 month to see all of the temples. But however three days of it was ok for me. This tour is always in my mind. I'm Hoping i would go there again with my family.

Vocabulary range: reasonably diverse to discuss the topic. B1

Vocabulary accuracy: generally accurate, however some errors e.g. unbelieved, my tour three days. B1

Grammatical accuracy: Basic syntax structure is used well but few complex grammatical structures. A city is always 'in' a country e.g. Phnom Penh is in Cambodia, Bangkok is in Thailand. ‘Days’ is plural because there are 15 of them. Be careful when using prepositions (on/at/of…). Also, errors involving articles e.g. of. B1

Coherence: Linear progression of points, but not a particularly difficult task. B1

Orthographic control: error regarding the use of a capital ‘I’ for first person singular throughout. Several spelling mistakes: Colorfull = colorful, visting = visiting, thougth = thought, scultures = sculptures, leant = learnt. A2

Thematic development: effective structure but a very basic topic. B1

Overall: a good piece of writing but could be better given your ability. B1
Sam Post 9

Everybody has their own potential. Their potential is to have a lot of money, have a good family, live in a big comfortable house, drive a big comfortable car, travel to many places, have good children, have a lot of good friends, play a lot of healthy games, be happy with peace of mind etc. But how to achieve it? Many of us live in pain and suffering. Life is so miserable and everything seems to go wrong. There is so much unfairness. "This person cheated me, that person lied to me, he stole my money, they only help their friends, they belly me, it's not my fault but they still punish me, they beat me up, I'm ugly and poor etc" All of these things may happen to us. Pain and suffering caused by others and Life's situations will always be there. We cannot run away from them. But we have powers to overcome these problems if we want to. We choose to cry, complain, live in sympathy or do we take charge of our lives and become stronger? Our greatest gifts are our abilities to think about the reasons and discover and overcome our problems. We have to struggle to achieve our true potential. Our real potential is so great. Do we still live in misery? Wake up and take control of your life. Don't let your destiny control your future. Your future is in your hands.

Vocabulary range: powerful and emotional language in relation to the topic. The correct phrase is ‘peace of mind’. B1

Vocabulary control: used in the appropriate context, confusion between the noun misery and the adjective miserable. B1

Grammatical accuracy: Say ‘all of these things may happen to us’. ‘Our greatest gifts are our abilities’ use are here as gifts is plural. Also we want, ‘to achieve our true potential’. Some tense errors using ‘to be’. Occasional gaps in sentences. B1

Coherence: solid progression of points and good use of rhetorical questions. B2

Orthographic control: several spelling mistakes and overuse of commas. A2

Thematic development: powerful language and themes are discussed using an effective structure and great conclusion. B2.

Overall: powerful themes but grammar and orthographic control needs more consideration when writing, as taking care can rectify some of these mistakes. B1
World war 2 is well-known as the second world war. It was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945. It was the most widespread war in the last 75 years and directly involved more than 100 million people from over 30 countries. It was the most mass deaths at any time in the history. During the world war 2 approximately 11 million people were killed and the strategic bombing of industrial and population centres in which approximately 1 million people were killed including the use of the two nuclear weapons bombing in Combat. It remained was estimated there were 50 million to 85 million fatalities. These made the world war 2 the deadliest conflict in the human history. After 6 years of war had completely done was over. It remained a very unclear environment. Many countries go were damaged. Especially in Europe. Sadly it was the most mass deaths in human history. It is well-known by the world. People wish to avoid from it happening again. People hate war. Being peaceful is the best of all in for all human lives.

Vocabulary range: sufficient to allow an detailed discussion on the topic. B1

Vocabulary control: confusion between correct forms or word e.g. confliction and peace. Some clumsy expressions e.g. the mass death war. B1

Grammatical accuracy: For ‘it remained estimated 50 million to 85 million fatalities’ it would be correct to say ‘it was estimated there were 50 million to 85 million fatalities’. Also say, ‘after 6 years the war was over’. It is correct to say, ‘sadly it was the most mass deaths in human history’. Do not use ‘the’ before human history. Be careful of word order and tense errors e.g. many countries go damaged. Incorrect use of prepositions e.g. avoid from it. A2

Coherence: basic and logical progression of points. B1

Orthographic control: punctuation is accurate, yet frequent spelling mistakes. A2

Thematic development: logical structure and conclusion. B1

Overall: a good effort on a topic it appears you were unfamiliar with. Good organisation but be more careful of spelling and grammar errors. B1
I have a lot of great memories, it's very hard to pick just one, but one highlight was the first day that I met my first girlfriend in high school. Before that, I really hated my high school because I had to choose it after failing to get into my expected school. It was a stormy day, rain dropped heavily and there was so much lightning in the sky. After finishing lessons, I went home on foot without an umbrella or a raincoat. Everybody hurried up to go home but she came near where I was standing and asked me whether I wanted to hitchhike. I rode her bike and talked to her all along the road very happily. At that moment, I was wishing the silly wish that the road would never end.

We seemed to fall in love at the first sight. Until now, we had broken up, but I really forgot her, but I can't forget those days.

Vocabulary range: Good emotional language and phrasal verbs e.g. on foot. B2

Vocabulary control: Generally good but some confusion on meaning e.g. all the road. B1

Grammatical accuracy: ‘We had broken up’ means that you had broken up but you are now back together. In this case use ‘Now, we have broken up’. Good use of tenses (past perfect and past continuous). Days is plural so the plural of that is those B1

Coherence: Progression of the points is good and you link your writing well by using conjunctions like ‘but’ and ‘because’ correctly. B2

Orthographic control: Remember to use a capital ‘I’ when talking about yourself e.g. I went home. Good punctuation but some minor spelling mistakes e.g. standing. B1

Thematic development: an emotional story with an interesting conclusion. B2

Luke Post 2

One place makes me scaries made me the most scared was the road which led to Lao Xa village, located in Ha Giang provide of Vietnam. It is a snaky road going along mountains mountains between an abyss and a cliff. Everything started from our trip after the first nine months away at university. My friends and I made a plan to visit some nice places in Ha Giang by motorbike motorbike from Hanoi. It would be was very good, we took a lot of pictures and watched saw landscapes until we had got lost on the road which led to Lao Xa village. The more further we went, the more serious the problem became. The road get went from bad to worse with a lot of potholes and big rocks. After nightfall, we couldn’t almost almost couldn’t see anything because the headlights of our motorbikes were not enough brightness bright enough. Although the night sky was so beautiful with and full of stars, everybody felt very tired and nervous, and did not care about that. The scariest moment was happened when one motorbike motorbike of from our group deviated from the direction, and nearly fell into the abyss. Finally, It took us 2 hours, we had gone to the planned place to relax and eat food. All people Everyone felt safe and sounds and laughed very loudly when re thought about remembering what were happened.

Vocabulary range: A very good range e.g. abyss and from bad to worse. B1

Vocabulary control: Very good and appropriate words are selected. B2

Grammatical accuracy: ‘Re thought’ is incorrect, instead say ‘we remembered’ or ‘when we were remembering’. The past tense of fall is fell. Say ‘everyone’ or ‘everybody’ instead of ‘all people’. When saying there is not enough of something don’t use a comparative of superlative. Correct examples: The road wasn’t wide enough/ the motorbike wasn’t fast enough. Focus on choosing the correct verb and the correct tense to show what you mean. B1

Coherence: The timeline of the story is presented well. B1


Thematic development: Sufficient descriptions with good supporting details. B1

Overall: A very good piece of writing: B1.
Family is always the most important thing in everyone's life. Of course, it is true for me. Our family is not very large, we are a family of four: my father, my mother, my elder brother and I.

My mother's name is Ngoc, she is 52 years old and that is the same age as my father. Her job is an accountant. It is said that she is a very nice, kind and clever woman. My father's name is Thuy. He used to be a soldier and joined the South West war of Vietnam in 1979. After that, he had had a lot of jobs which made him very good at using tools to fix things or make things. Now, he is retired. He has experienced war which led him to be a man of strong character.

The third person of my family is my brother. He is the pride of my family after becoming a pediatrician after six years of hardship at Hanoi medical university. Besides, he is a person who has affected so much from my childhood. I love him very much. The last person of my family is me. I am graduating from the academy of finance and getting my qualification in August.

Like other normal families, we are a very good family with loving and caring who love and care for each other very much. In the holidays, when all the members of our family get together after long days of work and study, we like to watch TV, to prepare dinner, to talk about different things and to discuss all of our problems together. It is rare precious moments because my brother and I have grown up, we must go far away from our hometown for job and studying so we have a little time for our family.

The last thing I want to say that I love my family with all my heart and soul.

P.s: it is photograph of my brother and I at his graduation on his graduation day.

Vocabulary range: of a medium level in comparison to the topic. B1

Vocabulary control: consistently appropriate. B1

Grammatical accuracy: good use of tenses, remember to use the relative pronoun who when you are talking about a person/people you have already mentioned e.g. 'we are a very good family who love and care for each other.' Also, remember the noun will be plural when you use the pronoun 'all' because all means more than one in this case. Likewise, when moments is plural you must use 'These are..'. B1

Coherence: follows a typical progression through describing family members. B1

Orthographic control: good use of commas and one spelling mistake. B1

Thematic development: good description of individual family members and they how they are as a family altogether. B1

Overall: To improve be careful to notice if the noun should be plural and how this changes the sentence. A good piece of writing. B1
Today, I want to talk about the film what that I love best the most- Forrest Gump.

Forrest Gump is a 1994 film starring Tom Hank's who is my best favorite actor and it was directed by Robert Zemeckis. The film is based on the novel of the same name which was written by Winston Groom. It had been nominated for 13 Academy Awards nominations and won six. The film is the tale of a good natured but simple minded man who has the same name as the title of the film. Despite all the hard things that had happened in his life, he had accomplished great things and been present during significant historical events. In each case, far exceeding what anyone imagined he could do. He proved that determination, courage and love are more important than ability.

In the film, the most moving scene what made me that I will never forget is the moments he talks to Jenny at her grave. It was so emotional. He said: "I don't know if we each have a destiny or if we're all just floating around accidental like on a breeze, but I think maybe it's both. Maybe both is happening at the same time."

Vocabulary range: quite diverse and relevant to the topic. B2

Vocabulary control: superlative difficulty i.e. confusion of best with most and favourite. Some clumsy language e.g. what made me never forget. B1

Grammatical accuracy: Remember to use the past simple tense, not the past perfect, when you are talking about things that happened in the movie. History is a noun so we use 'historical' as the adjective to describe an event i.e. a historical event. We use that to link our opinion/memory to an event, e.g. 'something that I will never forget' or 'It was a brilliant movie that I will always love'. Plural mistake with moments and present simple tense error with talks. B1

Coherence: the structure is very good and links points effectively. B2

Orthographic control: very good use of punctuation and no spelling errors. B2

Thematic development: sets a factual intro, builds into description of the plot and successfully intertwines your own emotional response with a fitting conclusion. B2

Overall: I really liked this piece of writing. It is genuine and from the heart. High B1
Luke Post 5

The most life changing experience. There are have been a lot of special events in my short 22 years but the most changing experience of my life is the period of time before graduating university. I have changed myself so much at in that period of time. That was time period after I and ex-girlfriend my ex-girlfriend and I had just broken up. I loved her so much so that I tried to change myself to be suitable for her. Unfortunately, she did not appreciate it and had had a new boyfriend after that. *LOL*. I almost got mad and felt so hurt.

At that same time, I had to prepare for a period of practical experience in the sector relating to my field of study that was call called an internship for completing my course at university. These things made me fell so exhausted and tired. With so much troubles and terrible feelings, my life had become too hard for me. Luckily, when living in the "real world" at where I interned, I met a lot people, and witnessed so many things. I realized I had been too soft and enervated. I need to change for my future. With the purpose of restarting myself, I tried to learn new things such as reading a new book, playing the guitar, playing some sports, studying harder... Besides, I added friends with a lot people who are so interesting and older than me to learn their experience.

After passing that hard period, there were many great things that I gained from my trying to improve. No longer being a young boy, I have been a man. I became stronger, lighter and found out what I need to do in order to make my life meaningful, and find people who are truly interested in me.

P.s: The photo on top have been was taken where I had so much unforgettable memories .......in a GOOD DAY.

Vocabulary range: diverse lexis and expressions e.g. ‘real world’, enervated. B2

Vocabulary control: generally appropriate with some inaccuracy. The phrase is ‘to break up’ or have ‘broken up’ when talking about the end of a relationship. B1

Grammatical accuracy: Be careful when choosing between past simple and past continuous tenses e.g. ‘the photo was taken’ because the action of taking the photo started and ended in the past. Troubles is a difficult one because we can say ‘I am in so much trouble’ but when trouble is plural we must use many e.g. so many troubles. We also say that someone has ‘become a man’. If you use ‘have been a man’ it means that you were a man, but now you are not. B1

Coherence: linear progression and linkage of ideas. B2

Orthographic control: accurate punctuation and some spelling errors, Feelings = feelings, exhausted = exhausted, ligh = light, had = hard. B1

Thematic development: Excellent building of an emotional story with a good structure. B2

Overall: It’s a really good piece of emotional writing with a solid structure. High B1
Nowadays, technology has greatly improved as time has passed. Scientists are continually working in order to develop useful products, in which facilitate lives’ quality improving our quality of life. Your everyday items will be getting an upgrade. When do you ask yourself if how far usual items would be advanced by technology in 20, 30, even 50 years from now? In this essay, I want to describe my thinking of a future device that is called "synthetic device" after 30 years from now. The first side that I want to mention is about its physical shape. Its shape can be like the a watch with a touch surface, it is small size but it has a large battery capacity compared to the device at present. Besides, the most special thing of about this device is that it can be controlled by your voice.

The other side is about its functions that are combined with by creating innovative smart textiles. The major functions of the "synthetic device" are accessing the internet, communicating with others and taking photographs every time at any time and everywhere you go. Moreover, with new technologies and sensors, it will take care your life by monitoring your health, reminding good behaviors and choosing suitable food based on your health. Imagine that you will not need check your health at hospitals where which are always crowded and take you for a long time of waiting (have long waiting times).

To conclude, I think it is truly a useful device in the future. With significant growth of technology, I hope it will be produced as soon as possible with the purpose of helping the human and making society to be better.

Vocabulary range: generally diverse in relation to the topic. B2

Vocabulary control: poor word choice on occasion and some clumsy expressions e.g. ‘take you for a long time of waiting’. A2

Grammatical accuracy: Remember that ‘it is = it’s’ but when we are using ‘it’ to talk about ownership there is no apostrophe (’ ) because it is irregular. It is correct to say ‘its physical shape’ or ‘its functions’. I underlined ‘take you for a long time of waiting’ because the grammar is ok but it would be better to say ‘have long waiting times’. To improve be careful to remember to use plurals when necessary (e.g. sensors, hospitals, humans) and when to use it’s or its. Some articles mistakes. B1
**Coherence:** good use of cohesive devices and transitional phrases. B2

**Orthographic control:** There are some small spelling mistakes: Nowadays = nowadays, photogs = photographs, producted = produced. Otherwise, punctuation is good. B1

**Thematic development:** good progression, analysis and structure. B2

**Overall:** Strong coherence, thematic development and vocabulary range but let down by grammar and vocabulary control errors. B1
Yesterday, my best friend asked me whether salary was the most important thing to decide on a job. So today I want to discuss about this point. The idea of whether salary is the most major concern when deciding a job is currently debated widely. While I side with those who contend that choosing a career with a high salary could bring a number of benefits, I disagree that it is the most crucial concern. In my opinion, other factors are of the same importance.

On the one hand, there are several benefits when choosing a job with high salary. Firstly, a stable salary could help people to meet their basic needs. A person with a high income can likely afford essential demands of life such as living expenses. Therefore, their living standard would probably be enhanced by high earnings. Secondly, a job with high salary might create strong motivation to succeed. People who have high wages have a tendency to devote more of their time and energy since they have clear targets. In addition, individuals could improve themselves because a well-paid job often requires many skills to work such as communication and technical skill.

On the other hand, there are other factors that are equally important. Primarily the working environment should also be taken into consideration. Working conditions, relationships with other colleagues and pressure might have certain impacts on a person's working spirit and efficiency. Moreover, passion is also a key factor that determines an individual's career success. When people work for what they love, they have a tendency to work effectively. For instance, there are many people who have become successful thanks to grand passion such as Bill Gates and Steve Jobs.

In conclusion, I believe that the power of money can have some influences on our choice of career, but it does not outweigh other factors.

**Vocabulary range:** evidence of a broad lexical repertoire. B2

**Vocabulary control:** consistently accurate, one example of redundant language e.g. might probably. B2

**Grammatical accuracy:** high grammatical accuracy overall. When we talk about 'high earnings' the word 'earnings' is always plural. Be careful when using prepositions and articles e.g. 'thanks to', 'the working environment'. 'Relationships' should be plural because colleagues is plural. B2

**Coherence:** Good use of various cohesive devices e.g. firstly, on the other hand. B2

**Orthographic control:** some spelling errors: Dissagree = disagree, creat = create, enviroment = environment. B1

**Thematic development:** a well presented and balanced argument with an effective conclusion. B2

**Overall:** a strong piece of writing with minor grammar mistakes. B2
Luke Post 9

Imagining in the future, if I become a millionaire, the house which I want to build for myself is a small cozy residence with full facilities. Because of wanting to combine modern with traditional values, my house will be designed with modern architecture from traditional materials. It will be located near a residential area in the suburb of the city where I am working.

Its area will be about 1,000 square meters, including 250 square meters in the center of the land for the residence, a small swimming pool with an area of 60 square meters which is on the right hand side of the residence and a small lotus pond behind the house. Around the house is surrounded by tall trees.

The most significant point of the house is the garden on the right of the house where I will teach my children to plant vegetables and many kinds of flowers. I want them to know the value of working. Now, about the designing of the residence, it is a two story house, consisting of three light and airy bedrooms with two rooms overlooking the yard and the other overlooking the pond. There is a spacious and air conditioned living room which we will often gather in, watching TV and having good times together. In addition, there is a fully fitted kitchen and a dining room decorated with a lot of paintings made by my little daughter. :D

That is all about what I want to have in my future house: A happy family with a beautiful and cozy house.

P.s: The purpose of the photo is only illustration. ^_^

Vocabulary range: broad lexical repertoire but little exhibition of idiomatic language or connotative meaning so cannot attain C levels. B2

Vocabulary control: consistently used in the appropriate context. B2

Grammatical accuracy: sentence structure is generally varied and accurate. Primarily errors regarding prepositions and articles. ‘Values’ is plural because there are two of them, traditional and modern values. Be careful to remember articles when talking about the residence. Saying that the trees are high is not wrong but it is better to say ‘tall trees’. It is correct to say, ‘living room which we will often gather in’ or ‘living room where we will often gather’ but you cannot use ‘where’ with ‘in’ in the case. High B1

Coherence: logical progression and linkage of ideas. B2

Orthographic control: excellent punctuation and only one spelling error: Plan = plant. B2

Thematic development: engaging description and concluded appropriately. B2

Overall: a strong piece of descriptive writing but too many grammatical errors to achieve the next level. High B1.
The most major thing that has happened in the historical history of the world is the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 August and 9 August respectively. With respect to history, this event creates a landmark in the Second World War. After the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, there are nearly 120,000 people died immediately and tens of thousands more would later die of radiation exposure which led to Japan’s unconditional surrender on 15 August 1945. The Axis became disintegrated. Many colonial countries were liberated and gained independence for their nations, such as Korea, Philippines, Vietnam and Laos.

With respect to science, this fact claims event marks the beginning of the nuclear century. With There are many benefits of using nuclear resources, and a lot of drawbacks are existing on the same feature. On the one hand, the nuclear energy is the renewable energy which the humans can use for a limitless time. In addition, there are applications of nuclear science in the fields of medical, space science and industry. On the other hand, there is so much doubt of over using nuclear energy with the for bad purposes because of its great power. For instance, producing atomic weapons to prepare for war. Moreover, the leakage of radioactive substances affects significantly on the environment. It can be threatening to the survival of humanity.

In conclusion, I hope the humanity will not witness the a second Hiroshima and Nagasaki event in the future. Mankind could take should decide the advantages of using nuclear energy that outweighs its drawbacks.

P.s: my subject which I choose seems very hard. I hope I’ve made few mistakes.

Vocabulary range: wide-ranging and allows detailed discussion of points. B2

Vocabulary control: some confusion of noun and adjective forms e.g. disintegrated, historical but correct usage of other high level vocabulary merits B1

Grammatical accuracy: Remember to use past simple tense when you are talking about something that started and ended in the past e.g. this event created a landmark. Several unnecessary or missing articles. Nuclear energy, renewable energy and humans don’t have articles (a/the) before them when talking about them in general (non-specific). The correct prepositional phrase is ‘doubt over using’ e.g. I have some doubt over using soap to brush my teeth. B1

Coherence: Ideas are clearly linked in a logical progression with good use of cohesive devices. B2

Orthographic control: standard layout and punctuation conventions are followed and any spelling mistakes occur due to lexis confusion or grammatical mistakes. B2

Thematic development: Effective overall structure and opinionated conclusion. B2

Overall: a good piece of writing which shows original thought and effective discourse organisation. The vocabulary control and grammatical accuracy prevent a higher grade. B1
Thomas Post 1

The first real English exam of my life was the school-leaving examination at the end of secondary school. Deriving from the fact I had never taken any serious exams before that, I was pretty stressed. The wide variety of required topics also contributed to the anxiety.

The corridor was full of anxious candidates, but I was trying to flick through my notes calmly. When the teacher called my name I became fairly nervous. However, by reading the exam topics I realized there was no use worrying. I found the topics interesting and I was full of ideas. Before the exam I had been anxious about the additional questions the examiner might ask, but since my speaking was much longer than required, she didn’t ask anything. She just indicated that I could stop, and in the end she contentedly said that she had found my oral exam spellbinding.

I must say the exam was rather enjoyable. I consider it as my favourite school memory because of the special feeling I experienced after the positive feedback.

**Vocabulary range:** evidence of a broad lexical repertoire C1

**Vocabulary control:** All words are used appropriately. C1

**Grammatical accuracy:** Only a couple of minor errors. When using ‘any’ the noun it refers to must be plural, you could say ‘a serious exam’ or ‘any serious exams’. C1

**Coherence:** The writing has a clear flow. C1

**Orthographic control:** Very good layout and use of punctuation. C1

**Thematic development:** very good description with a fitting conclusion. C1

**Overall:** An excellent piece of writing with few errors. C1
Lindsey Stirling is a 27-year-old American violinist, dancer, performance artist and composer. She presents spectacular violin performances both live and in music videos. She grew up in Gilbert, Arizona, and attended Brigham Young University and studied therapeutic recreation. She is a classically-trained violist who became interested in music by attending free community concerts of famous artists, and she started to attend violin lessons at the age of five. As she was also deeply interested in dancing, she continued to practice violin and dance and won some state and national competitions. Around 2007, she participated in the America’s Got Talent show. After being assessed in a humiliating way on the show, she decided to ameliorate her music and gain popularity through the internet, using her YouTube channel. Without a doubt, rejection simply strengthened Stirling’s resolve to be herself. She said that her musical style was a reflection of her personality. She performs songs in a wide variety of styles, including rock, pop, classical music and the ground-breaking dubstep. She organized her first European tour in 2013 which brought a sweeping success and increased her popularity worldwide.

Her first self-titled album was released in 2012, containing 12 songs. The second album, “Shatter me” debuted in 2014 and gained the 2nd place on the Billboard Top 200 album chart. What made me particularly engrossed is her unique ability to play the violin and dance simultaneously. That’s why she is often called a hip-hop violinist. Besides, her inspirational character also contributes to her popularity. She intends to encourage people to believe that everyone has unique skills which enable them to fulfil their dreams and overcome obstacles in life.
reader already knows what is being talked about i.e. ‘It is her unique ability to play the violin and dance simultaneously which made me particularly engrossed.’ B2

**Coherence:** smooth flow, well connected and organised points. C1

**Orthographic control:** Small mistake with comma use in lists of three, otherwise excellent. C1

**Thematic development:** an elaborate narrative leading to a conclusion which draws it all together. C1

**Overall:** an excellent piece of writing: C1
The town Gyor, which is situated in the North-West of Hungary has a famous historical city centre. No stay in Gyor would be complete without walking through the picturesque cobbled pedestrian streets and looking at the ancient monuments and beautiful buildings most of which were built in baroque style. The area called “Káptalan hill" is bordered by the Danube and Raab rivers and has the longest history. Here you can find one of the most famous tourist attractions of the city: the Cathedral. The history of the city is perfectly introduced by the famous museums located in the city centre.

Another place worth visiting is the building of the Natural Theatre of Győr, with impressive painting on its façade. While walking along the historical city centre, it’s worth entering one of the restaurants providing Hungarian specialities together with a spectacular view on of the river. It’s the most ideal to choose a sunny day for your visit if you want to take a long walk in the city centre. Because of the beautiful sceneries detailed above, it would be a good idea to take a camera and take impressive photos. What I particularly love about my city are the architecture and the special atmosphere the city provides with its lighting in the dark.

Vocabulary range: a diverse repertoire. C2

Vocabulary control: consistently appropriate. C2

Grammatical accuracy: The only small mistakes involve prepositions and articles. Do you mean that the restaurants are ‘on the river’ e.g. a boat or that they provide a view ‘of the river’? Unfortunately, a lot of the time for prepositions there is no general rule and you must remember whether it is on/at/of for individual things. C1

Coherence: highly controlled use of cohesive devices and organisational patterns. C1

Orthographic control: no errors. C2

Thematic development: an elaborate narrative with a solid conclusion. C1

Overall: an excellent piece of writing but attention is required regarding prepositions and articles. High C1.
Thomas Post 5

It was almost 10 years ago when I started Latin-American and ballroom dancing. I've decided to take up this new hobby because I had previously visited numerous dance shows and competitions which I found definitely spellbinding. It’s always been immensely inspiring to see dance couples moving together exquisitely. The first few dance lessons triggered enormous enthusiasm. Having the adequate diligence, me and my partner and I soon started to attend local and international competitions, some of which resulted in memorable achievements.

I consider dancing as a life changing experience because it has significantly influenced my personality through the numerous things I’ve learned. Not only did this improve my self-confidence, but I’ve also learned how to keep my enthusiasm to work hard and outstrip my own skills from time to time. Additionally, the companionship of the other dancers enabled me to gain several friends with similar personalities. I firmly believe it’s a unique sport because it teaches perseverance, diligence, sophistication and it involves a lot of joy and success.

Vocabulary Range: Excellent and a very diverse. C2

Vocabulary control: Great. I have underlined ‘definitely’ because it is technically correct but it may be more appropriate to use undeniably/ positively / absolutely. C1

Grammatical Accuracy: Use ‘I decided’ and not ‘I’ve decided’ because the action to take up dancing was started and completed in the past. Remember to use ‘my partner and I’, however this is a small mistake and it is common for native speakers to say ‘me and my partner’. Personalities is plural because friends is plural. C1

Coherence: The writing has a clear flow and meaning is always shown effectively. C2

Orthographic Control: Punctuation is excellent and spelling errors occur due to tense mistakes. C1

Thematic Control: Great descriptions and there is a clear beginning, middle and conclusion. C1

Overall: An excellent piece of writing. C1
Nowadays we could hardly imagine our lives without those essential gadgets which we carry everywhere because they **strongly belong to us** (are ingrained in our daily routines). Owning a mobile or a notebook doubtlessly **make** **makes** a lot of things easier in certain respects. In fact, the greatest benefit of them in daily life is their significant role in social contacts. They assure limitless **opportunities** to be accessible **wherever** whenever you are and to improve your relationships by getting to know more and more new people.

Another point is that thanks to these smart devices you can even organize your imminent meetings whenever you are while dealing with anything else, consequently the current level of multitasking would only be a dream without the easily portable gadgets. A huge choice of gadgets **at** **at reasonable prices is given and they enable us to stay up-to-date. As far as it can be predicted from the cutting-edge trends, it's likely that the size of smartphones will decrease further or we will use smart watches instead of mobiles. Several types are already being produced. Besides, scientists **have** embarked on developing some ground-breaking ideas like eye-controlled computers.

**Vocabulary Range**: Excellent overall. I have underlined ‘**strongly belong to us**’ because it is grammatically correct but it does not feel like a genuine English phrase. I understand what you mean to say but perhaps there is a more appropriate way to express this. C1

**Vocabulary control**: Excellent no errors. C1

**Grammatical Accuracy**: Two small tense mistakes (make/ have embarked). Remember **wherever** is about a place and whenever is about a time. Limitless applies a huge amount of something so opportunities is plural. Also we buy/sell things ‘at’ a reasonable price. C1

**Coherence**: Writing is clear and well structured. C1

**Orthographic Control**: Layout and punctuation are excellent, no spelling errors. C1

**Thematic Control**: The writing builds well and offers an appropriate conclusion. C1

**Overall**: An excellent piece of writing with only minor errors. C1
The growth of online shopping has greatly improved life for the consumer. Online shopping clearly has a substantial role in consumer society. As the internet became widespread more and more people have discovered its advantages regarded to purchasing goods without going anywhere.

The huge choice of online shopping opportunities doubtlessly enabled people to get hold of new products in a remarkably quick and convenient way. The greatest benefit of online shopping lies in quickness and efficiency. After placing an order you can expect the consignment to be delivered within one week and you save a lot of time by comparing the goods in your armchair. However, the same guarantee is provided and special packages prevent your products from damage during their journey from the furthest countries in the world. Additionally, tracking opportunity for observing the consignment’s current location is also provided. Finally, most of the commodities are definitely cheaper if you place orders via the internet.

On the other hand strong arguments suggest that online shopping has unfavourable effects on domestic market markets, because people discover that numerous opportunities are given for finding goods with better quality from abroad. Consequently, domestic producers have to put a strain on selling their commodities and the problem can lead to a fall-back in economy. Another drawback is that online shopping changes people’s attitude toward society. By not being forced to spend long hours with shopping and talking to the sales assistant, people tend to become less sociable.

In my view, online shopping has profoundly improved life for consumers. Even if it has its own drawbacks, the advantages I outlined above make it definitely promising.

Vocabulary range: Excellent and used appropriately. C1

Vocabulary control: Excellent but two small mistakes: To ‘spare time’ is to give your time to someone but because online shopping gives you more time to yourself it is said to ‘save time’. Life is the noun and live is the verb form. C1

Grammatical Accuracy: You must always say ‘the internet’. Markets should be plural i.e. markets of have ‘the’ in front of domestic. C1

Coherence: A well-structured argument with deep analysis of both sides. Also a fitting conclusion. C1

Orthographic Control: Excellent. No errors. C2

Thematic Development: Elaborate descriptions which support the overall themes and topics well. C1

Overall: Another excellent piece of writing with very small mistakes: C1
The best of me – Nicholas Sparks „The best of me“ is an emotion packed romance novel written by Nicholas Sparks. The novel covers the story of a couple (Dawson and Amanda) who fell in love irrevocably during their school years in North Carolina. After spending (how many?) beautiful months together, their relationship encountered unavoidable barriers which tore them apart.

25 years later, the man who adopted Dawson and supported their relationship in the past dies. Due to the last will of the elderly man, they travel back to North Carolina to fulfil his last wishes. Since they haven’t met for 25 years and both have started new life lives with separate families, they’re surprised to see one another in the old town. One night Amanda and Dawson talk while having dinner together in Tuck’s house and they confess their love for each other. After Returning back to her family, Amanda plans to abandon her unhappy marriage, but before this could happen, Dawson is attacked and killed by a man. Meanwhile, Amanda’s son was in an accident and receives a heart from a donor. At the end, Amanda receives a call from his her son in which he reminds her of his doctor telling him that a year after his heart replacement surgery it is possible to check from whom he had received his new heart. The donor was Dawson. I found the novel extremely touching and thought-provoking.

Vocabulary range: A fantastic and diverse range of vocabulary. C2

Vocabulary control: Excellent again, all words are used appropriately and give a vivid description. C2

Grammatical accuracy: Very good. When you say ‘beautiful months’ you should give the reader an idea of how many e.g. a few beautiful months, many beautiful months, 6 beautiful months. ‘Life’ should be the plural because you are talking about both Amanda and Dawson. You should give an indication of when it happened for talking about Amanda returning to her family.

Be careful of his/her, although I know this was only a small mistake and you know this point well. You need an article (the/an) for an accident. When someone receives something you usually need ‘from’ to show who they got it from or how they got it. B2

Coherence: The story builds very well and I felt very interested as a reader. C1

Orthographic Control: Superb, no errors. C2

Thematic development: Fantastic, the themes and overall story are described well and a good conclusion is present. C1

Overall: Another fantastic piece of writing. It is excellent that you are taking on different topics and it show cases your ability, unfortunately grammar could have been more accurate this time. C1
Today I was asked to describe my house I would have in the future if I were rich. The topic is really intriguing. I could imagine the following house:

It is a perfectly situated detached house in the outskirts of the city (maybe in England). The house is about 180 square meters with 2 floors and it provides a friendly atmosphere. 4 rooms can be found on the 1st floor: A kitchen, a dining room, a spacy, bright living room with huge windows and a bathroom. The kitchen is separated only by a countertop from the dining room from which it is possible to enter the terrace through a balcony door. The colour of furniture provides a perfect harmony with the colour of the walls and curtains.

On the 2nd floor there are 2 bedrooms, a bathroom, a workroom and an entertainment room. The aim of the entertainment room is to provide a place where I can relax after hard working days. In this room there's a huge LCD TV with a 5.1 sound system that enables me to watch films or listen to music. Deriving from the fact I love Lindsey Stirling’s music, this room would be decorated with her posters, which are already signed.

A smaller garden belongs to house, which contains some fruit trees and flowers. There is the possibility to barbecue and organize parties in the garden. Since I love playing tennis, there’s a tennis court right behind the garden. Besides, there’s a garage next to the house where our car can be stored. (Please note it's just a future imagination:)

**Vocabulary range:** Excellent and diverse. C2

**Vocabulary control:** Excellent, one minor error. ‘outskirts’ is plural because it is non-specific i.e. we do not know what area or side of the city it is on. C1

**Grammatical Accuracy:** Nearly perfect, 5/6 errors involve articles so be careful. I changed my to the because you can either say, ‘describe my house in the future if I were rich’ or ‘describe the house I would have in the future if I were rich.’ You cannot use both. C1

**Coherence:** First-rate, the discussion builds logically. C1

**Orthographic control:** Also first-rate, no errors. C2

**Thematic development:** Elaborate descriptions are given and an appropriate conclusion. C1

**Overall:** A great piece of writing with very few errors. C1
Thomas Post 10

It is a widely controversial question what the most important invention is in the history. I consider the invention of the personal computer one of the greatest things that has happened in the history of the world. My opinion is based on the fact that the device has profoundly altered the daily lives of humans.

Computers were invented in the 20th century and are being utilized both in business and in our daily lives. As for business, the manufacturing industry would have never developed so far if computers weren't used in the production process. They are able to execute tasks without the continual intervention of people, therefore ensuring quickness and efficiency. The invention of the computer has also established jobs for people in the field of science, which has triggered remarkable growth in the labour market.

As regards our daily lives, computers have made everything undoubtedly easier. Not only are they indispensable for our work, but we also use them for entertainment by watching films, listening to music, connecting people on social networks to catch up with the latest news and purchasing necessary products through e-commerce (B2C connection). It is clearly evident for me that since a computer enables people to execute several tasks simultaneously, people are getting accustomed to the concept of multitasking.

I must admit I could hardly imagine my daily life without using a computer for numerous purposes.

**Vocabulary range:** Excellent and diverse as usual. C2

**Vocabulary control:** No errors. C2

**Grammatical Accuracy:** Very good as usual. It is correct to say, ‘has happened in the history of the world’ because the history of the world is not over and therefore it is not definite that it is the greatest thing that happened in the history of the world. Be careful of articles, when referring to the general idea of the computer as an invention, it is correct to say ‘the computer’ but when talking about what a computer does say, ‘a computer’. It is correct to say ‘in the field of science’ and ‘in the labour market’. B2

**Coherence:** Well-structured and points are well linked. Less reliance on basic cohesive devices to move argument along which exhibits a high level of ability. C1

**Orthographic control:** No errors. C2

**Thematic development:** Discussion builds effectively and a memorable conclusion. C1

**Overall:** An excellent piece of writing with a few small grammatical mistakes. C1
One of the most memorable parts of my school days was the my primary school. As any child I was so excited. I counted the days to my first lesson. One day before we bought flowers for the my first teacher.

On the first of September, there were so many people, pupils just like me). I cherish the memories of that those days, So many happy and smiling faces. When you think that it is one of the most important steps in your life towards adolescence)It seemed like you did something big)

Vocabulary range: sufficient to express meaning and some higher level terms e.g. cherish. B1

Vocabulary control: basic terms are used appropriately. B1

Grammatical accuracy: be careful to use articles (a, an, the) in the right places. If we are talking about something that happened or will happen on a certain date we put ‘On’ before it e.g. On the first of September. You used tenses really well e.g. past simple and present simple. A2

Coherence: a basic flow can be found, however it is not always clear. A2

Orthographic control: punctuation is ok, incorrect use of brackets. A2

Thematic development: points follow a linear progression but they could be better presented. A2

Overall: an interesting story. A2
I can **will** speak of **about** family. Without doubt our family plays a pivotal role *(in what?)*. There are prominent reasons for **that this.** First and foremost, they gave a birth, sacrificing with their own dreams; **and rest and to name but a few.**

There is so much to be said about *(about what?)*. Parents encompass many things such as love, supports **support**, and so on. Their love and care entail considerable influence on our life. With **our** parent's support and love we became who we are.

**Vocabulary range:** reasonably diverse e.g. pivotal, considerable, foremost. B1

**Vocabulary control:** mostly used in the correct context with some minor slips e.g. rest, entail. B1

**Grammatical accuracy:** Remember to include a subject, or an object if needed, in all your sentences. E.g. our family plays a pivotal role *(in what?)*. There is so much to be said about *(what?)*. The plural of ‘support’ is ‘support’ when we talk about it in the way people give help to each other. A2

**Coherence:** quite disjointed at times and points can be poorly linked. A2

**Orthographic control:** good spelling but incorrect use of commas and full stops. A2

**Thematic development:** inconsistent but perhaps too short a piece to draw conclusions. A2

**Overall:** A decent piece of writing but confusing at times. A2
Appendix 7: Pre-pilot Interview Schedule

Part 1: Learner Background

1. What is your native language?
2. How old were you when you began to learn English? Where did you learn it and how?
3. What methods have you found to be the most successful in helping you to learn English and why?
4. Why did you begin to learn English and have your reasons changed?
5. Where and how often do you usually use English?
6. What parts of the English language do you find most difficult and why?
7. Have you completed any English language exams before e.g. IELTS? What score/level did you achieve?

Part 2: Instagram and Social Network Site use

8. How often do you use Instagram or other social media websites? Why?
9. How important are using Instagram and other social media sites to your daily routine? Why?
10. How often do you post on Instagram or other social media sites in English? Why?
11. How is posting on Instagram and other social media websites in English different to posting in your native language?

Part 3: Attitudes towards Instagram

12. How did using Instagram affect your writing ability? Why?
13. What did you find easy and difficult about using Instagram? Why?
14. Will you continue to post on Instagram in English? Why? How often?
15. How did using Instagram affect your motivation to learn or use English? Why?
16. How did my position as an online teacher affect you when using Instagram? Why?
17. Which did you prefer, choosing your own topics or writing about the topics I provided? Why?
18. How did you feel posting comments on other’s posts affected your English ability or motivation?
19. How would you improve using Instagram as a language learning tool?
Appendix 8: Employed Interview Schedule

Part 1: Learner Background

1. What is your native language?
2. How old were you when you began to learn English? Where did you learn it and how?
3. What methods have you found to be the most successful in helping you to learn English and why?
4. Why did you begin to learn English and have your reasons changed?
5. Where and how often do you usually use English?
6. What parts of the English language do you find most difficult and why?
7. Have you completed any English language exams before e.g. IELTS? What score/level did you achieve?

Part 2: Instagram and Social Network Site use

8. How often do you use Instagram or other social media websites? Why?
9. How often do you post on Instagram or other social media sites in English? Why?
10. How is posting on Instagram and other social media websites in English different to posting in your native language?

Part 3: Attitudes towards Instagram

11. How did using Instagram affect your writing ability? Why?
12. What did you find easy and difficult about using Instagram to learn English? Why?
13. Will you continue to post on Instagram in English? Why? How often?
14. How did using Instagram affect your motivation to learn or use English? Why?
15. How did my position as an online teacher affect you when using Instagram? Why?
16. Which did you prefer, choosing your own topics or writing about the topics I provided? Why?
17. How did you feel posting comments on other’s posts affected your English ability or motivation?
18. How would you improve using Instagram as a language learning tool?
Appendix 9: Interview Transcripts

David's Interview Transcript

Part 1: Learner Background

1. **What is your native language?**
   Vietnamese

2. **How old were you when you began to learn English? Where did you learn it and how?**
   I graduated from my university in 2008 after 3 years and then I started to learning English because my university… we have to learn Russia language. So I didn’t learn any English in my university but… when I went to work I thought English is very necessary for my job so… I found V4D in fan page so I went there on… in 2012 and I only studied at V4D.

3. **Why did you begin to learn English and have your reasons changed?**
   I learn for my work and so I can talk with foreigner.

4. **Where and how often do you usually use English?**
   I often use English at the V4D house and a… now I work with some Japanese people and when we work we often talk English together.

5. **What parts of the English language do you find most difficult and why?**
   I think it is maybe about writing… so yea writing because when I write I only use some simple words and so sometimes… when I write a report my boss he didn’t understand what I… what I mean.

6. **What methods have you found to be the most successful in helping you to improve your English writing ability? why?**
   I think the method to… help me to improve my English is translate some Vietnamese newspaper to English and write some you know letter to my friends or chat on some social network.

7. **Have you completed any English language exams before e.g. IELTS? What score/level did you achieve?**
I haven’t finished any language exam. I am about to study for IELTS… I will have an exam in 6 months so my goal is getting IELTS 6.

**Part 2: Instagram and Social Network Site use**

8. **How often do you use Instagram or other social media websites in your native language? Why?**

I often use social network when I (2) have free time because in social network I can how can I say (2) social network is one of most popular in Vietnam. You can post some your photo or sharing something on social network and so… I … on social network I can find many… a lot of my friends and I will have a fantastic time. And I will be able to mix

9. **How often do you post on Instagram or other social media sites in English? Why?**

Honestly I never post anything on my social network because I found some disadvantage of social networking. If I post something on my Instagram or Facebook and someone can you know copy it, my photo and forward to others. There are a lot of people on Facebook or Instagram and you don’t know about them. If I often post my subject on my social network I will spend a lot of my time to do it and ignore everyone around… me.

10. **How is posting on Instagram and other social media websites in English different to posting in your native language?**

I don’t know (2) maybe… because I can talk to foreigner if I post in English.

**Part 3: Attitudes towards Instagram**

11. **How did using Instagram affect your English writing ability? Why?**

I think Instagram can help me… to improve my English skill if I often post some English writing on Instagram and some of my friends they can give me some review or comment… I can realise some my mistake. (3) I think my writing is better now, better than before… before I post on Instagram because of my friend he help me how to correct my writing. And after tests writing I thought my writing is getting… is going up. But 2 days ago when I have a test at IELTS English centre I have to write about what is the most important…
about computer and yea I write it one time before but when I write it again my
teacher she (2) watch my writing and say it need some review, yea my
grammar is good but I never use academic words I only use simple word it is
difficult for IELTS writing.

12. What did you find easy and difficult about using Instagram to learn
   English? Why?
   What I think is easy is…grammar so some foreigner post. Something on their
   Instagram and I can read and… I can understand what they write. It quite
easy to study English if I following them. But if I have a lot of Vietnamese
   friend on my Instagram… Vietnamese we only write Vietnamese on my
   Instagram so difficult for me to improve my English.

13. Will you continue to post on Instagram in English? Why? How often?
   Yea I think I will still post something what I write on my Instagram and… some
   of my friend they can correct and give me some review. They can help me.

14. How did posting on Instagram affect your motivation to learn or use
   English? Why?
   Normally I don’t like writing you know some… and a… writing about some
   topic in English but now with Instagram when I write some… when I write
   something and post on Instagram I know my friend they will give his correction
   so that is motivation for me to write. I know the first time if I write something I
can have a lot of mistake but you know day by day when I write a lot… a lot a
   lot… I think my writing is getting better.

15. How did my position as an online teacher affect you when using
   Instagram? Why?
   Honestly I wouldn’t post any English on Instagram because I never… I have
   never used Instagram before I only use Facebook but Instagram is not
   popular in my country. So most my friends don't use Instagram so when you
   give me a task and I… download Instagram on my phone and I started to
   write and post on Instagram and… that is the first time I used Instagram and I
   have to use google to find out how to use Instagram on the phone.
16. Which did you prefer, choosing your own topics or writing about the topics I gave you? Why?

Honestly I like if you give me a topic because if I... if I choose the topic I often choose the easy topic and... or simple topic and if you give me a topic I thought, I think that is a amazing topic and I can't...I can't... (2) I don't do some topic what you give me if I choose by myself.

17. How did you feel posting comments on other's posts affected your English ability or motivation?

English ability or motivation?

It did not help my motivation... for me but it can help my writing because... if I use my review or my comment I have to write or understand what they write so yea it can help my writing and reading. It will improve. It was helpful. (2) When someone give me some comment on my post I know they take care and read my post and em... when they give me a review and I know them we can to be a friend and we can talk together on Instagram.

18. How would you improve using Instagram as a language learning tool?

I will still post some my something on my Instagram and then I still leave some comment... to my friend when they post some English on their Instagram and yea if they have free time I can chat to them and (3) some foreigner my friend if they stay in Hanoi we can go out... for beer and talk to each other and I can improve my English.

Probe: Would you like to say anything else?

Instagram have some advantages, the first... you can take a photo picture of yourself and then post on Instagram and it very easy and (2) this is a beautiful way to share your life with friends and family. (1) You can even post on Facebook or twitter. You also can find many friends and you can share your picture about your favourite food, or animal or something and you can talk each other easily. If you have some business and you have some shop you can take some picture and post it on Instagram and people can see and someone can buy it.
**Probe: Which do you prefer, learning English in a classroom or learning English on Instagram?**

I prefer learning English in a classroom because Instagram I only write and read... I can't talk with... to people so... Instagram I only improve my skill to writing and reading. If I want to improve my English skill I need to improve my four skill, reading, writing, listening and speaking.

**Probe: Which do you prefer, learning reading and writing in a classroom or using Instagram?**

I prefer learning... writing and reading on Instagram.

**Probe: Why?**

Because if I do it at my classroom... you know classroom often have a lot of people so when you write something when I write something my teacher doesn’t have time to correct for me and eh... she often correct very fast and sometime... I don’t understand I ask her... what I often... get the answer maybe 2 or 3 days later... because normally we often have 2 classes a week so...
Sam’s Interview Transcript

Part 1: Learner Background

1. **What is your native language?**
   Cambodian

2. **How old were you when you began to learn English? Where did you learn it and how?**
   I began to learn English when I was 16 years old… I learned it in the international school… called Our Objective Organisation.

3. **Why did you begin to learn English and have your reasons changed?**
   I started to learn English because I want to travel… to other countries and I want to work at in a job… in a company…to speaking English with the workers you know. Especially I want to travel to other countries… it is my focus.

4. **Where and how often do you usually use English?**
   Ok… for me I use English only during the weekend (2) when I go to my university. I only speak English with my teacher and my friends during the weekend.

5. **What parts of the English language do you find most difficult and why?**
   Ok for me I think reading is very difficult for me…because when I read a book or a story it is very hard for me to understand the meaning… so reading is the most difficult part for me.

6. **What methods have you found to be the most successful in helping you to improve your English writing ability? why?**
   To improve my writing I learned many ways to write… I learn from my teacher in high school how to organise the topic like what topics to write about and then we prepare about the topic and the controlling ideas to help organise it… so it help a lot to my writing skills.
7. **Have you completed any English language exams before e.g. IELTS?**
   **What score/level did you achieve?**
   Yes I have… I did a lot of English examination while I was studying and I got a very good score in an English examination… in my work the teacher correct for me and my score was very good. Higher than other students and sometimes I first in the year.

**Part 2: Instagram and Social Network Site use**

8. **How often do you use Instagram or other social media websites in your native language? Why?**
   I often post on the Instagram or the Facebook for 3 days a week or between one and three days.

9. **How often do you post on Instagram or other social media sites in English? Why?**
   Ok most of the time when I post I always use English… I never write in my language. I think all the people in the Facebook or Instagram maybe they can understand English and I write English to improve my writing.

10. **How is posting on Instagram and other social media websites in English different to posting in your native language?**
    When I post in English I think that it is very good for foreigners to understand because in other countries they can understand also…

**Part 3: Attitudes towards Instagram**

11. **How did using Instagram affect your English writing ability? Why?**
    I think I improved a lot using Instagram… you know I started to use Instagram the first time my topic… it was not very good. But the next topic… the other topic I think it was very good and I got to improve a lot in writing because when I write a topic then I can learn some mistakes or my errors from the correction from the teacher.

12. **What did you find easy and difficult about using Instagram to learn English? Why?**
Ok I think using Instagram is not difficult it is easy…it is very important…if we don’t have a lot of time for writing we spend only one hour writing and correct it and get it back

13. Will you continue to post on Instagram in English? Why? How often?
Yes I will post Instagram in the future using English… I think it is good for me

14. How did posting on Instagram affect your motivation to learn or use English? Why?
It help a lot for my writing skills… it help me write well I can always use Instagram to help me improve a lot… my writing skills

15. How did my position as an online teacher affect you when using Instagram? Why?
Having an online teacher is very important… I… you know it help me a lot when I can write about a topic and especially when the teacher online can help to correct the topic I can learn from mistakes from the online teacher.

16. Which did you prefer, choosing your own topics or writing about the topics I provided? Why?
I like when you gave me the topic because you know I can think of topics myself but your topics you give me are very good…

Why?
Because you know you give me a good topic to write and I can think very well of my writing and also it is possible if I can choose my own topic

So, is it easier to write about the topics I gave you?
Most of them are very easy and not difficult for me… I think the final topic is very difficult… more difficult than other topics

17. How did you feel posting comments on other’s posts affected your English ability or motivation?
I think posting comments on Instagram is very useful but I didn’t comment because I didn’t have free time… I just got a new phone. I think if all the students are writing on each other’s posts on Instagram it help a lot. (2) You
know I think it can help me a lot in my writing when I go to my university my
teachers always say that my writing is good because I learn from you… the
online teacher how to write English well

18. How would you improve using Instagram to learn English?
I learned to improve my writing by Instagram as I choose my topic to write
posts on Instagram and help from online teacher and correction made me
improve.

Repeats question
I think I will make my own topic to write on Instagram… I choose my own topic
and carefully to write and post on Instagram and then the teacher online to
correct it… to make the corrections. So I think it may help me a lot if I make a
lot of topics and if I choose a lot of topics to write about. I think…it is good to
choose topic and get topic from the teacher.
Luke’s Interview Transcript

Part 1: Learner Background

1. **What is your native language?**
   Vietnamese

2. **How old were you when you began to learn English? Where did you learn it and how?**
   I started learning English… early from I… from I was at primary school but in my country (2) education program is very low… I don’t know it is… I started learning English from when I go to primary school.

3. **Why did you begin to learn English and have your reasons changed?**
   I think I want to learning English because English is very useful language in the work… I can go everywhere with English… that’s why.

4. **Where and how often do you usually use English?**
   Sometime I go to…um (3)….landscape or to an… attractive place where there are so many foreigner go to there… when I was here in Hanoi I met some… so I can communicate with them.

5. **What parts of the English language do you find most difficult and why?**
   I think… for me is speaking (3) because I get nervous

6. **What methods have you found to be the most successful in helping you to improve your English writing ability? why?**
   Well I use… the internet, and I sometime read English book such as a novel (2) and listen to the English speakers.

   **How do you use the internet?**
   I have used the internet recently because… when I was at high school my parents don’t permit me (3) use the internet because they worry if…um… I use the internet can affect badly to my exam in school.

7. **Have you completed any English language exams before e.g. IELTS? What score/level did you achieve?**
No I… have never done a exam… sometime I have an exam from my teacher in high school or in university but not… IELTS

**Part 2: Instagram and Social Network Site use**

8. **How often do you use Instagram or other social media websites in your native language? Why?**
   I think I post a… two or three picture on… Instagram a week…to share my friends

9. **How often do you post on Instagram or other social media sites in English? Why?**
   I post a picture with English description on…. Instagram… never before meet you

10. **How is posting on Instagram and other social media websites in English different to posting in your native language?**
    Of course it is easier to post in Vietnamese because I am Vietnamese…

**Part 3: Attitudes towards Instagram**

11. **How did using Instagram affect your English writing ability? Why?**
    I think my writing have improved very much…time to writing is more…. I like to talk about the picture

12. **What did you find easy and difficult about using Instagram to learn English? Why?**
    I think it is… help me very much in… improving my writing because… I feel comfortable when I write and post on Instagram.

**Was there anything you didn’t like?**
It’s always that I … feel not confident when I must write English because … I am afraid of making mistakes…

**Is it different when you make a mistake on Instagram?**
Yes… I’m afraid of making mistake when I writing on Instagram and everyone can see it… I’m not confident.
13. Will you continue to post on Instagram in English? Why? How often?
Yes... of course because I think it good method for me... I have improved my English very much... I feel more confident and my English was better than before.

14. How did posting on Instagram affect your motivation to learn or use English? Why?
Well (2) I think... it improve my writing... only writing... my speaking or listening (2) they are very bad... also my writing can be improved... (3) I think this method... make me... to be interested in English because (3) I ... am interested.

15. How did my position as an online teacher affect you when using Instagram? Why?
There are so many teacher who teach me in the past... but they never... never... make me feel comfortable to learn English... this research make me a different feeling (2) it make me a... feel... relax. (3) I think I prefer my writing on Instagram than in classroom because I (2) can... do it every time, everywhere because of my phone.

16. Which did you prefer, choosing your own topics or writing about the topics I provided? Why?
I think eh... both are... both are... my topic or your topic you gave me... they are... both is ok for me (2) I think they are equal.

17. How did you feel posting comments on other’s posts affected your English ability or motivation?
It is interesting method to make friend with international... friend and eh... improve my talking in real life... but I ... I don’t know them a long time... I haven’t known them a long time so I’m very afraid of the writing comment to their picture...

18. How would you improve using Instagram to learn English?
I think will post more picture and more description about the picture… with more… words and more structure sentence to improve my writing.

… = brief pause

(2) = pause in seconds
Thomas’ Interview Transcript

Part 1: Learner Background

1. What is your native language?
   Hungarian

2. How old were you when you began to learn English? Where did you learn it and how?
   Well I think I was about 12 years old when I started English... it wasn’t compulsory for the first time because at the primary school I originally learned German and there was an opportunity to learn English as well. We had only 2 lessons per week but I really loved it and realised it was easier than German. So yes I was 12 I think.

3. Why did you begin to learn English and have your reasons changed?
   Well I started learning English because... when our teacher offered this opportunity at primary school...I asked my mother’s opinion and my mother is and English teacher and she said that it would be a good opportunity, it is of use for me and she can also help me if it’s necessary then I started it and I realised it’s useful for several reasons, for example in order to be able to communicate with foreign friends or foreign partners in the workplace and to understand things on the internet and to place orders via the internet. So it’s useful for everything.

4. Where and how often do you usually use English?
   Fortunately I have to use it almost every day at my work place because we are an international forwarding company but the only problem is you know it’s not at high level because we have to communicate mostly with Germans and English is mostly a foreign language for Germans as well so they are not native speakers and I can’t really use the advanced vocabulary because you know they can’t understand this probably. But basically I use it every day.

5. What parts of the English language do you find most difficult and why?
   Most difficult... I think the grammar is not difficult... maybe pronunciation and fluent speaking.
6. What methods have you found to be the most successful in helping you to improve your English writing ability? why?

Well... when I started learning English and the beginning I wasn’t too good at writing and I was afraid of writing tests… but when I started to learn with a private teacher… she showed me some methods for example… when there is a writing task in an English exam there are points that you have to include. She suggested me to write… to start with those points which are the most easiest for me you know… and she advised me to try to use expressions and grammatical structures which I can use confidently in order to avoid the possible mistakes and many other useful advice.

7. Have you completed any English language exams before e.g. IELTS? What score/level did you achieve?

Well the most difficult exam I completed was Cambridge CAE, it was a really complicated exam, before that I also attended another type of advanced level English exam and scored C1 and intermediate business English exam.

Part 2: Instagram and Social Network Site use

8. How often do you use Instagram or other social media websites in your native language? Why?

Well to tell the truth I hadn’t used Instagram before we started this project but I think I will use it in the future because I really like it. There are numerous interesting photos and useful posts and I can communicate with foreign friends as well and I use for example Facebook every day.

9. How often do you post on Instagram or other social media sites in English? Why?

Well almost every day because you know there are some friends of mine abroad and some foreign friends and Facebook is perfect for the communication.

10. How is posting on Instagram and other social media websites in English different to posting in your native language?
Well sometimes when I share some quotations or some intriguing posts I find myself writing in English because it’s better and also it’s understandable for my foreign friends. It is quite different but I think people should… people should try to use their English knowledge on social network sites it is more useful because you know some people are just browsing Facebook all day and they do not post anything they are just pressing the like button which is not so useful.

**Part 3: Attitudes towards Instagram**

11. **How did using Instagram affect your English writing ability? Why?**
   Well it was… I feel it was very useful for me because all of this writing… eh tasks were assessed and I got useful advice for my writing. Interestingly, the tasks were from different… different prospects like my other teachers… I mean you gave me a lot of advice on how to use it in the real life in order to sound more lifelike and you corrected some mistakes which are not strong mistakes but they for example don’t sound too good or something like this. So it was very useful and I actually the posts shared by the others were very interesting for me.

12. **What did you find easy and difficult about using Instagram to learn English? Why?**
   Easy and difficult… I found it a little bit difficult only because sometimes it required some time to collect ideas for different topics because you know… not all of the topics are used every day but eh… I find it easy because it’s a good… Instagram is a good platform, it’s easy to use, it’s very convenient and … it’s good.

13. **Will you continue to post on Instagram in English? Why? How often?**
   Yes I think so… definitely. If I consider Facebook I do not share posts too often but I think… I usually share posts maybe once or twice a month.

14. **How did posting on Instagram affect your motivation to learn or use English? Why?**
   My motivation was already strong but it strengthened it further…because I could connect with more people.
15. **How did my position as an online teacher affect you when using Instagram? Why?**

Well I really liked it because your advice were really useful and I think it’s much better to learn from the native teachers because… they have real experience of how to use the language and how the language is used abroad and for a … I think it is always better, for example at the Cambridge exam all the examiners were native speakers and for the first time I was afraid but then I realised it is much better. I think a lot depends on the topics for example these topics were determined by you were quite interesting for young people like the thing about inventions and computers and in the classroom you know sometimes papers contain very out of date tasks… and very out of date topics or topics which are too difficult for the given age group, sometimes these pre-determined topics are irritable for foreign people and that makes it difficult.

16. **Which did you prefer, choosing your own topics or writing about the topics I provided? Why?**

Well I think it was perfect that you mixed these two things because you know if you… let us to post what we wanted always then maybe we would have written about the same topics always but it’s very good not all the topics were pre-determined. I like both.

17. **How did you feel posting comments on other’s posts affected your English ability or motivation?**

I think… um (2) substantially improved my motivation, I really enjoyed it you know writing comments to one and other was similar to talking to one and other and exchanging ideas and opinions and I thought it was very useful and I liked it.

18. **How would you improve using Instagram to learn English?**

I think for… maybe people should be requested to post more comments, maybe they should be encouraged to communicate more with one and other so besides sharing posts they should make more comments or maybe you could open some debates… I don’t know if it’s possible on Instagram. Debates are always useful.
Alice’s Interview Transcript

Part 1: Learner Background

1. What is your native language?
   Russian

2. How old were you when you began to learn English? Where did you learn it and how?
   I started to learn English when I started the primary school... and actually I didn’t study very well (2) you know that it was focus only on grammar. Just on grammar and that’s why I couldn’t say that I knew at that time English very well.

3. Why did you begin to learn English and have your reasons changed?
   One of the main reasons why I’m learning English is that... I wanted to study abroad and I want to attain a degree in England... master degree and to get a good job in my country.

4. Where and how often do you usually use English?
   As I’m currently studying English in England I’m trying to speak with my classmates and I share a house with my... my other Kazakh students... it’s very hard to speak with them in English so we speak in our mother language. So the only way I can speak English is in school.

5. What parts of the English language do you find most difficult and why?
   I think maybe speaking... because it is hard to practise.

6. What methods have you found to be the most successful in helping you to improve your English writing ability? why?
   I think reading can really help you to improve your writing skills. Lots of reading from... newspapers...

7. Have you completed any English language exams before e.g. IELTS? What score/level did you achieve?
Yes before I came here I took IELTS exam and my score was... my first score was 4.5 and my currently score is 6.

**Part 2: Instagram and Social Network Site use**

8. **How often do you use Instagram or other social media websites in your native language? Why?**
   I use every day and especially Instagram and Facebook.

9. **How often do you post on Instagram or other social media sites in English? Why?**
   Not often...is difficult

10. **How is posting on Instagram and other social media websites in English different to posting in your native language?**
    Well first of all the language...it's easier to me to write in my native language rather than English but now I can say that I can... read English posts and understand... maybe native person

**Part 3: Attitudes towards Instagram**

11. **How did using Instagram affect your English writing ability? Why?**
    It help because there are good opportunities for learners to improve your writing because if you want to improve your writing the best way is eh... to write a lot (2) sorry I did not post more

12. **What did you find easy and difficult about using Instagram to learn English? Why?**
    I think... I dunno... I think... I didn’t find any difficulties

13. **Will you continue to post on Instagram in English? Why? How often?**
    Yes I think so... but short posts (2) is easier

14. **How did posting on Instagram affect your motivation to learn or use English? Why?**
    I think it help (2) but I am pre-sessional student now... I have essays, deadlines, homeworks... so I’m sorry, sometimes I cannot post in English. I want to take conditional offer from the university I need to progress in my
current pre-sessional course (3) so there (4) everything is ok, I think is good research.

15. How did my position as an online teacher affect you when using Instagram? Why?
   It was good and I like getting topic... to write about

16. Which did you prefer, choosing your own topics or writing about the topics I provided? Why?
   I think maybe given topics... is better

17. How did you feel posting comments on other’s posts affected your English ability or motivation?
   N/A

18. How would you improve using Instagram as a language learning tool?
   Maybe we can... add some practice... maybe practice task
Tuesday 30th June

I received ethical approval to begin data collection today and so immediately contacted the potential participants I had identified. Most were able to post as required today, although some commented on my example post. I told them it is ok this time but to post on their own profile next time.

Friday 3rd July

6 Saudi Arabians dropped out leaving me with only 6 participants. I have since recruited one more to make it seven and will hopefully get 2/3 more. I feel this will be ok in week 1 but I must continue with whoever I have from week 2 onwards.

Now that the research is in progress the literature I have read makes more sense. I think I have overlooked the community aspect most researchers advise. I can counter this by asking participants to follow each other and comment on pictures after 2 weeks. I will allow the initial 2 weeks for them to familiarise themselves with the app and the research. This practice will feed into research concerning the creation of new social networks versus the idea users only operate within existing social networks.

The levels of participants range from A2-C1. This is the range I had hoped for and each level can benefit from the study in different ways e.g. maybe C1s can identify fossilised areas and B1s can improve their grammar and vocabulary. These different levels will also be good when interviewing as it may indicate that SNS sites work better for different levels or students of different abilities use them differently.

Participants’ reactions to having their worked viewed and graded are extremely positive so far. Some are requesting two topics within the one day. I’m not quite sure how to deal with this as I don’t want to restrict those who are keen but I don’t want the research to lose its structure.

I have had significantly more contact with participants through via email than I had anticipated. However, it is the first week and students have to comprehend the research in their second language so guidance is required. I anticipate less interaction in the coming weeks.
General positive comments so far ‘I am so eager to write’ ‘thank you for helping me improve my writing’.

Monday 6th July

Still no confirmation that I can speak to international house classes. More determined now though as it could be great to have 6 learners who are separate (Vietnam, Hungary etc) and 6 learners who have established real life social networks/community through international house. Contrastive analysis could be interesting.

Second assignments are all 180+ words. Great as I had not expected students to write so much. First post word limit was 80 and then 120. I may set 150 for 3rd post. Alice is dragging her heels about posting. I need to contact her.

Both writing tasks have been set in the past. Students get to choose their own topics this week but I will encourage them to write in the present or future tenses.

As I am still recruiting after some participants have posted twice the cycles of 2 and the following 3 weeks, become more important.

Thursday 9th July

5/6 have made the 3rd post. Alice’s was very short and she posted under my picture after I had asked her to post on her own profile. This could be interesting to probe in the interview as she may not like the public nature of posting the writing on her own profile.

Writing appears to be of a higher standard for this round, probably due to students picking topics they have written about before and are comfortable with e.g. family. I should ask in the interview if students consciously chose topics this way.

Laura has confirmed she will join and Ken has said he will recruit students. Unsure if I should make new comers complete all previous topics. Sunday must be the cut off for all new participants as the second phase will begin.

Friday 10th July

5/6 wrote over 250 words for the 3rd assignment. I asked for 150 minimum so it’s a good sign of high motivation. I don’t feel Alice is as engaged as the rest, important to
ensure she finishes as her interview data could be interesting. Length of posts could indicate preferences when comparing given to self-directed topics.

2 learners have used emoticons in their writing, perhaps I should add a small mention in lit review. This very informal language use is relevant as all English users use them on social media, phone messaging etc. and they are in effect a communicative device.

I’m going to introduce community aspect i.e. 2 comments a week on others postings. Laura has since said she will not participate.

**Thursday 16th July**

4/6 are still posting regularly and on time. 2 have begun to comment on each other’s posts as I have asked. The reaction to my request that they comment on each other’s posts was very positive overall and initial comments appear positive and engaging.

I received my fellow teacher’s grading of the writing samples and they are consistent with my own. Participants seem to post quicker when given a topic. Also, they post at different times and on different days. I initially tried to structure it as postings on Tuesday and Friday but it is much easier to ensure students post twice within each week. I think they prefer this to as it allows them to fit the research into their daily lives easier. Is there a link to be made between this and leaners dictating their own paths?

**Tuesday 21st July**

At the moment I can only consider 4 participants as active. However, they have been reliable from the start and complete everything asked of them.

The introduction of comments has been a success with some genuine conversations among learners e.g. Luke got many messages of support after he wrote about a relationship break up. David has been conversing in the comments with a native English speaker of his own accord. What does this say about the open nature of the learning environment?
The move to requiring 2 posts over the week rather than posts on Tuesday and Friday has been a success. David posted 2 in the space of an hour. Further evidence of learners dictating their own learning paths?

This environment also means different levels of learners can interact i.e. C1 and B1. Possibly creating a ZPD or are a few comments too insignificant to draw conclusions from? Probably but it definitely raises a question.

I have a strong relationship with the 4 most regular posters (David, Luke, Sam and Thomas) and they regularly give me positive comments. I feel I am cultivating a successful and more prominent teacher-student relationship than I anticipated. This emboldens the notion of action research taking place.

**Friday 24th July**

I have less contact with participants now because they fully understand the processes involved and have less questions. The research has become more efficient, it is unfortunate that I can’t extend it for another few weeks but it is not feasible within the current submission timeframe.

**Tuesday 28th July**

David has finished the research. Luke, Sam and Thomas have 3, 3 and 2 more posts. The Instagram posting is due to finish this Sunday but I will let it continue until all four are done.

Comments are going really well with some great conversation among participants. I think there will be rich data from the comments but it is limited due to the small number of posts overall and the comments are only within a 3 week timeframe.

I have just considered the difference between some participants. Did they agree to take part in the research to help me or to help themselves? I can only say with confidence that 2 agreed to take part to further their own language acquisition as they have constantly asked me for topics in advance etc. However they may just be exhibiting traits as autonomous learners.

Is my social relationship with some of the participants a limitation of the study?

**Friday 31st July**
Luke, Thomas and Sam have one more post to make. I begin interviews on Sunday and must prepare my equipment. I participated in an interview for a classmate’s research. This was valuable experience as I put myself in my interviewees’ position and could anticipate any difficulties. I feel I have a greater appreciation for making the interviewee feel at ease because it is probably not a fun time for them. I think it is very important that I establish a friendly relationship with my interviewees from the very beginning. I feel my interview schedule needs some revision before I use it.

**Sunday 2\(^{nd}\) August**

First interview completed and it went well, my initial impression is that there is plenty of meaningful data. I added 2 questions to the schedule beforehand as I now have a greater understanding of exactly what I want to find out after completing the literature review and methodology.

**Monday 3\(^{rd}\) August**

First interview transcribed and David mentioned that he chose a topic he found easy when allowed to choose his own writing topic. This may be an interesting point to probe with other participants based on their answers.

Also, based on David’s answers it seemed relevant to probe whether he preferred a classroom environment or Instagram, and more specifically which he preferred to use when developing his reading and writing skills. These probes will be added to further interviews to aid validity and reliability i.e. consistency.

**Tuesday 4\(^{th}\) August**

As I’ve compiled the image copies of the Instagram posts I’ve noticed that Sam has significantly less comments on his posts than other participants. I think this was due to the erratic nature of his posting, at one stage he was 2 posts behind the others. Also, he did not post for over a week at one stage. This can be linked to the theory of regular participation to be successful in a community. Furthermore in the context of this study it appears those participants who followed the structure commented on each other’s posts more, perhaps this can be linked to the need for a facilitator/instructor and not complete learner autonomy?

**Monday 10\(^{th}\) August**
All interviews and data collection complete. Luke informed me after the interview that he wants to make international friends and I am their 1\textsuperscript{st} international friend. Possibly something to consider as a similar motivation to other interviewees who said they liked having international friends who could see their posts.