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The Use of Social Media Text-Based Exercises to Promote University Students' Knowledge of Non-Academic and Academic English Language

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Abstract
In this digital era, students tend to write more for non-academic purposes on social media platforms by using informal language. Consequently, they become familiar with the informal writing style and use non-academic language in academic writing. This research, therefore, aims to discover 1) what are the results of using the social media text-based exercises developed by the researchers in promoting university students' knowledge of non-academic and academic English language, and 2) what are the students' attitudes toward the use of social media text-based exercises. The instruments included four sets of social media text-based exercises, a pre-test, a post-test, and an open-ended questionnaire. Participants were 96 third-year English major students enrolling in the Academic Writing course, sections 1, 2, and 3 in the 1st semester, the academic year 2021 of a university in Thailand. The findings showed that the social media text-based exercises were effective in promoting the students' knowledge of the non-academic and academic language. Questionnaire respondents expressed great attitudes toward the exercises. They believed the materials enabled them to analyze and identify distinct features of the registers in non-academic and academic writing. Additionally, they mentioned that learning through the exercises was interesting, enjoyable, and understandable. The study also provided suggestions for improving the exercises.
Keywords: Academic English language, non-academic English language, social media, social media text-based exercises

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Introduction

For learning English at all levels of education, students are required to learn four primary skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, Walsh (2010) stated that writing is essential for tertiary education and profession. Writing for Educational and professional communication can be done through proposals, essays, reports, memos, e-mails, and applications. When the students do not know how to express their thought and ideas in writing, they cannot communicate well with teachers, classmates, colleagues, employers, and customers.

In education, writing that students perform to meet the requirements of school subjects or university courses is considered academic writing. Academic writing is also known as writing tasks published and read by teachers and researchers or presented at conferences. A very prevalent meaning of academic writing can include any writing tasks assigned to the students in an educational context. Common academic writing types include notes, reports, projects, essays, dissertations or thesis, and papers (Bailey, 2018; Whitaker, 2010). In short, academic writing is writing activities writers perform in an educational setting to achieve their academic goals.

According to Bailey (2018), academic writing is clear and purposive. It mainly aims to describe the research findings, answer some questions, discuss some topics and convey writers' messages. Additionally, Whitaker (2010) explains that academic writing has three primary purposes: persuasive, analytical, and informative. A persuasive academic paper aims to convince readers to agree with the responses to a question. To do so, the writer selects one answer to a question and supports their opinion using some reasons and evidence so that the readers change their viewpoint about the topic. Analytical academic writing aims to explain and evaluate possible answers to some questions, then choose the best answer(s) based on the writer's criteria. The analytical writing tasks usually examine causes and effects, evaluate the effectiveness of something, assess the solutions to specific problems, investigate the relationships between different ideas, or analyze others' arguments. Finally, informative academic writing aims to describe possible answers to the selected questions or give the readers new information about the chosen topic. The purpose of informative writing is different from analytical writing. A writer does not push their points of view on readers but instead expands the readers' perspectives. Sowton and Kennedy (2017) state that the register or language style of academic writing is formal, complex, and precise. Academic writing tends to avoid using language similar to speaking such as phrasal verbs and contractions. Based on the abovementioned, academic writing uses formal language styles. Academic writing is essential for students because it is usually a requirement to achieve their educational goals.

Apart from writing for academic purposes, outside the school context, students write to satisfy their personal needs. This writing practice is called non-academic writing. It is not related to subjects, courses, projects, or any assignments in school or college (Amicucci, 2013). Rosinski (2017) also proposes that the writers produce non-academic texts because they want to do. They are not assigned to do for their school or university requirements. Non-academic texts include personal journal entries, social media posts, blogs, videos or memes, fiction, and letters to friends or family. Students may write non-academic texts on paper (e.g., notebooks and sticky notes) and on digital platforms (e.g., social media). Likewise, the GeeksforGeek website (GeeksforGeeks, 2020) states non-academic text means a piece of writing that does not focus on an academic topic

and is not for academic readers. The nature of this text type is personal, emotional, or subjective. Some examples of non-academic texts are magazine articles, personal or business letters, websites, short stories, novels, and text messages. Non-academic writing employs informal language used in speaking. Its features include colloquial, first and second personal pronouns, and contractions (Sowton & Kennedy, 2017). In conclusion, non-academic texts are for personal purposes rather than academic objectives.

Recently, in a non-academic setting, students write or text more using social networking sites (Yancey, 2009). Writing for school and social media is different in terms of purposes and language types. However, there has been empirical evidence showing that students face problems in academic writing practice due to their familiarity with the non-academic writing mode. Texting on digital platforms resulted in a change in people's writing styles. There is evidence from the studies showing that when students chatted with others, they omitted subject pronouns and articles. They also misspelled words when they communicated on social networking sites. These features hindered academic writing ability when they wrote academic work such as term papers, essays, or other writing assignments (Hezili, 2010). Moreover, Banda (2017) and Finley (2014) discovered that students confronted difficulties in academic writing because of the lack of awareness of the differences between non-academic and academic language. As a result, they used non-formal discourse patterns and sentence structures in school writing. In other words, they used spoken English in writing their essays Using informal language reflected low writing proficiency in the academic context. Betal (2014) also found the students used word shortening and ungrammatical sentence structure in formal writing. This writing style on social media made them familiar with these language types and used them in formal writing.

However, the previous studies suggested that non-academic texts could help students identify different linguistic features between academic and non-academic settings (Okada (2010). The students in the study of Amicucci (2013) admitted that they could apply the practices in non-academic digital literacies to writing courses. Some participants suggested that non-academic digital literacies should be integrated more into the classroom because they realized the possibilities of such practices in promoting their academic writing.   Moreover, Idrus and Abdul Muijib (2014) compared and analyzed the samples of students' writing assignments and their posts on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. The findings showed that the students' non-academic literacy practices supported English academic writing. Furthermore, Derakhshan and Hasanabbasi (2015) insist on social networking sites as practical learning tools to improve students' writing skills.

It could be seen from the previous studies that there is a connection between non-academic and academic writing. Non-academic writing on social network platforms has adverse effects on academic writing. On the other hand, social media writing practices can help students to improve academic writing skills. These findings confirm that non-academic texts are beneficial for teaching English in school. Therefore, to help students to gain more fundamental knowledge of the non-academic and academic language and differentiate the two styles of writing, the researcher incorporates non-academic texts written on social media into academic English writing exercises. This study applies the term non-academic texts in line with the definition proposed by Rosinski (2017). They are the texts produced based on the writers' personal needs, not an educational

requirement on social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter posts and text messaging. The underpinning concept of using social media texts as authentic materials in English language learning was employed. Authentic materials are produced by real authors for a real audience to deliver a real message in the real world (Gilmore, 2007). Although they are not created especially for the classroom, authentic materials are splendid learning tools because they bridge the classroom to the outside world. Teachers can engage students in learning activities by bringing authentic materials into class, and asking students to learn and discuss several aspects such as cultural perspectives and language features (Ianiro, 2007).

This study developed exercises using social media texts to enhance students' knowledge of non-academic and academic English writing. The exercises focused on different writing styles, along with using contractions and full forms of verb, non-academic and academic vocabulary, and phrasal verbs and academic verbs. Additionally, the study investigated their effectiveness by comparing the students' pre-test and post-test scores and explored their attitudes towards using the exercises. The study's contribution can be examples of creating English lessons for academic English writing from social media texts. It can guide other teachers to utilize authentic texts produced beyond the classroom in designing teaching materials. Moreover, the findings can prove the effectiveness of using this kind of text to improve students' understanding and knowledge of academic writing. The research questions were as follows:

1. What are the results of using the social media text-based exercises developed by the researchers in promoting university students' knowledge of non-academic and academic English language?
2. What are the students' attitudes on using the social media text-based exercises?

Literature Review
Academic writing

White (n.d.) defines academic writing as a formal writing mode that students in schools and colleges are required to compose for their classes, and teachers or researchers write for academic publication. There are different types of academic writing since writers produce it for various reasons. Also, Oshima and Hogue (2007) state that academic writing is the writing mode employed in educational institutions. According to Whitaker (2010), students do academic writing to complete their courses in university. Common academic writing could be reports, projects, essays, dissertations or thesis, term papers, abstracts, research proposals, research papers, journal articles, conference papers, or textbooks (Bailey, 2018; Oshima, & Hogue, 2007; White, n.d.; Whitaker, 2010). In sum, academic writing is writing activities that scholars or students perform in the educational setting to achieve their academic goals.

Due to the formal feature of academic writing language, a writer should avoid using slang and contractions, and the writer should pay attention to the correctness of sentence structures and the logical organization of ideas (Oshima & Hogue, 2007). The register in academic writing is more precise and uses technical words, more formal phrases, and transitional words (Sowton & Kennedy, 2017). Although this writing mode has a particular structure for each type of writing and a specific style in each area, the typical structure of academic writing requires a writer to

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categorize similar ideas in one paragraph or section (Rogers & Wilkin, 2013). For instance, the structure of essay writing composes of introductory, body, and concluding paragraphs.

Academic writing is clear and purposive. This kind of writing commonly aims to report the results or findings of the research that writers conducted, provide answers to a question that the writers are given or selected, discuss some topics and express the writers' points of view, and synthesize studies done by other researchers (Bailey, 2018). Additionally, Whitaker (2010) describes that academic writing has three purposes: persuasive, analytical, and informative. A persuasive academic paper aims to convince readers to agree with the writers' responses to a question. To do so, the writers select one answer to the question and support their opinions using some reasons and evidence so that the readers change their viewpoint about the topic. Persuasive writing assignments can be argumentative and position papers. Analytical academic writing aims to explain and evaluate possible answers to some questions, then choose the best answer(s) based on the writers' criteria. Analytical writing tasks usually examine causes and effects, evaluate the effectiveness of something, assess the solutions to some problems, investigate the relationships between different ideas, or analyze others' arguments. Analytical assignments can be analytic papers and critical analyses. Finally, informative academic writing aims to describe possible answers to chosen questions or give the readers new information about the selected topic. Writing for this purpose is different from analytical writing in that the writers do not push their points of view on the readers but expands the readers' viewpoints instead.

Non-academic texts

Non-academic texts refer to different forms of texts that are not relevant to any courses or projects at the writers' school or university (Amicucci, 2013). Rosinski (2017) also proposed that the writers produce non-academic texts because they want to do. They are not assigned to do for their school or university requirements. Non-academic texts include personal journal entries, social media posts, blogs, videos or memes, fiction, and letters to friends or family. Writers can write on paper (e.g., notebooks and sticky notes) and digital platforms (e.g., social media). According to the GeeksforGeek website (GeeksforGeeks, 2020), the non-academic text means a piece of writing that does not focus on an educational topic and is not for academic readers. The nature of this text type is personal, emotional, or subjective. Some examples of non-academic texts are magazine articles, Personal or business letters, websites, short stories, novels, and text messages. In conclusion, non-academic texts are written for personal purposes rather than academic objectives.

Social media language

Texting on digital platforms resulted in a change in people's writing styles. There is evidence from the studies showing that when students chatted with others, they omitted subject pronouns and articles. Also, the language used in communication on social networking sites could misspell. These features hindered academic writing ability when they wrote academic work such as term papers, essays, or other writing assignments (Hezili, 2010). Abbasova (2019) found that writing on social media has changed the typical writing styles. Adolescents often used general emojis that were difficult to understand, and they tended to usually use shortening forms of words such as LOL = lots of love or laughing out loud, WTF = what the fuck, and BFF = Best friends forever. Moreover, social media users delete some letters, such as vowels, and use numbers with

the letters and punctuation marks to show that the sentence is complete. Also, letter and number homonymous abbreviations have evolved. Letters or numbers are used to replace a word having the same pronunciation. For example, the phrase 'See you' was written 'CU', or the phrase 'for u' was written '4 u'. Rosinski (2017) mentioned the texts posted on social media are one kind of non-academic text. This study, therefore, employs produced by the students based on their personal needs on social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter posts and text messaging.

Authentic materials

The underpinning concept of this study is using authentic materials in English language learning. According to Gilmore (2007), "An authentic text is a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort" (p. 98). Ianiro (2007) defines authentic materials as print, video, and audio materials which learners face in their routine. The materials are divided into two main groups: print and auditory. The printed authentic materials can include street signs, newspapers, magazines, websites, menus, and greeting cards. In contrast, authentic audio materials can be phone messages, radio and TV programs, movies, and podcasts. Although they are not created especially for the classroom, authentic materials are splendid learning tools because they connect the classroom to the outside world. Teachers can engage students in learning activities by asking them to bring authentic materials into class, and learn and discuss several aspects such as cultural perspectives and language features.

Based on the definitions mentioned above, the texts written on social media platforms are authentic materials because they are written by real-world authors for a real audience. The students can find this kind of authentic text in their daily lives. Yancey (2009) suggests that the texts students write on social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, and blogs are informal. These texts are different from academic texts written for academic purposes in school. However, Derakhshan and Hasanabbasi (2015) insist social networking sites as effective learning tools to improve students' writing skills.

Methodology
Participants

The participants of this study were chosen by using purposive sampling with the criteria. The determining criteria were the students who enrolled Academic Writing course in the 1st semester, the academic year 2021 of a university in Thailand. Based on the criteria, the participants were 96 third-year students majoring in English who were randomly assigned to three intact groups (e.g., sections one, two, and three) by the Division of Educational Services of the university. All participants participated in the experiment, and 42 out of 96 participants gave responses to an open-ended questionnaire.

Instruments

Social media text-based exercises

In this study, the teacher-researcher created four sets of exercises. All social media texts and words or phrases used to develop the exercises were from posts, comments, and chatting on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook Messenger by English major students who enrolled in an Academic English course at the University of Phayao in the 2nd

semester, the academic year 2020. They were willing to bring the research their texts. The researcher used the compiled social media texts, academic texts collected from some textbooks, and samples of students' essays in the previous semester to develop the materials.

The social media text-based exercises developed and used in this study were as follows:
Exercise A: Identifying non-academic and academic writing

This exercise required the students to analyze the features of non-academic and academic language. The students should write N for non-academic statements and write A for academic statements. Also, the students needed to highlight the words or phrases in each statement that showed the features of non-academic or academic writing. Exercise A comprised 20 items, and it aimed to raise awareness of the different traits of non-academic language used in social media and academic language used in writing assignments.

Exercise B: Rewriting the sentences by using full forms of verbs to replace contractions

For exercise B, the students needed to rewrite ten sentences by replacing the contractions in each sentence with full forms of verbs. The purpose of this part was to remind students that they should not use contractions in academic writing.

Exercise C: Matching informal words or phrases to the appropriate academic words
Exercise C had students match 25 informal words and phrases on the left column to academic terms in the right column. This exercise focused on promoting students' academic vocabulary range.

Exercise D: Using academic verbs to replace the phrasal verbs
The last exercise required students to replace the phrasal verbs in ten sentences with the correct academic verbs in the box. The exercise aimed to extend students' academic vocabulary range and demonstrate that they should avoid using phrasal verbs when writing in an academic context.

After the development, the social media text-based exercises were evaluated by three experts in the fields of English writing teaching by using the item objective congruence index (IOC). The IOC scores of exercise A ranged from 0.67–1.00, and every item in Exercise B had a 1.00 score. For exercise C, the scores were from 0.67 – 1.00, and all items of Exercise D obtained 1.00. The total IOC score for four exercises was 0.98. The results showed that all items of the social media text-based exercises gained acceptable IOC scores and had content validity.

Next, the pilot study was conducted with 26 students who enrolled in the Academic Writing course in the summer of the academic year 2020 at a university in Thailand. The post-test scores of the pilot group were significantly different from the pre-test scores at the significant level of 0.05. The results pointed out that using social media text-based exercises to enhance the ability to differentiate between non-academic and academic English language was feasible.

Pre-test and Post-test

The pre-test and post-test consisted of four main parts. Part one was about matching informal words and phrases to the appropriate academic language. Part two required students to rewrite given sentences using the full forms of verbs to replace the contractions. In part three, students selected the correct given academic words to replace non-academic words or phrases in given sentences. Finally, in part four, they were asked to identify seven informal words or phrases in the given text and replace them with the given formal (academic) words or phrases.

The pre-test and post-test were verified validity by three experts in the field of English writing teaching using the Item Objective Congruence (IOC). The IOC value of the pre-test was 0.96, and IOC index of the post-test was 0.95. Next, the tests were tried out with 42 second-year English major students to calculate the difficulty level (p) and discrimination power (r).

The difficulty level of the items in the pre-test ranged from 0.20 - 0.78, which was a reasonable level, and discrimination power varied from 0.23 – 0.76, which showed fair, high, and very high discrimination ability. Similarly, the level of difficulty of the post-test ranged from 0.21 – 0.79, and the post-test had fair, high, and very high ability of discrimination with 0.21 – 0.69 value. Based on the index of difficulty and discrimination of Whitney and Sabers (1970), the items of pre-test and post-test had an acceptable level of difficulty and discrimination power. They, therefore, were applicable.

After the verification of difficulty level and discrimination power, the pre-test and post-test were verified the reliability by examining parallelism using a t-test and correlation using Pearson's correlation coefficient. There was no statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test at a significant level .05. This meant the tests had parallelism. The Pearson's correlation coefficient score of the pre-test and the post-test was 0.826 at a significant level .05. According to Nettleton (2014), the value of the correlation of 0.70 and higher pointed out a significantly positive relationship between the two variables. Hence, it was shown that the pre-test and the post-test had parallelism. The tests could be able to evaluate students' abilities similarly. The analysis of the t-test and Pearson's correlation signified that the pre-test and post-test are reliable and applicable.

Open-ended questionnaire
The open-ended questionnaire required the students to reflect on their thought about the effectiveness of the exercises. Also, it asked them to provide suggestions for improvement of the materials. The questionnaire comprised three questions: 1) How can the social media text-based exercises promote your knowledge of non-academic and academic writing? (2) What do you think about the social media text-based exercises? and (3) What are your suggestions for improving the social media text-based exercises?

The questionnaire was evaluated by three experts in the field of English writing teaching using the Item Objective Congruence (IOC), and the IOC index was 0.95.

Data Collection
The data were collected during the 1st semester, the academic year 2021, after the ethical approval of Ethical Considerations Involved in Research on Human Subjects of the University of Phayao Human Ethics Committee. The participants participated in the study through the MS

Teams platform. At the beginning, the researcher introduced background information about the study including the research title, the research objectives, and the research procedure. Afterward, a consent form was used to obtain the informed consent, and the pre-test was administered for 40 minutes. Next, the social media text-based exercises were implemented in unit one of the course. Then, the post-test was undertaken for 40 minutes. Finally, the participants who were willing to provide information about their attitudes on the exercises gave responses to the open-ended questionnaire.

Data analysis

      1. The pre-test and post-test scores were compared using mean, standard deviation, and t-test.

      2. The data on the participants' attitudes toward the social media text-based exercises from the questionnaire were analyzed using content analysis. The participants' responses were translated into English, and the data were categorized based on the specific words or phrases in the responses. Next, each category was assigned the code using a number. Then the researcher read the data line-by-line and coded them based on the designated number. Finally, the data in each category were read carefully to check if the results of the analysis were consistent.

Results

RQ1: *What are the results of using the social media text-based exercises developed by the researchers in promoting university students' knowledge of non-academic and academic English language?*

      The results of comparing pre-test and post-test scores were presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Comparison of students' pre-test and post-test scores*

Tests	n	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	t	p.
Pre-test	96	18.00	8.77		
Post-test	96	26.84	6.71	11.66	0.000

$P < .05$

      Based on Table 1, the mean score of the post-test (^-X = 26.84, SD. = 6.71) was higher than the mean of the pre-test (^-X = 18.00, SD. 8.77). There were statistically significant differences between the pre-test and the post-test scores at the significant level 0.05. This indicated that the social media text-based exercises could promote the knowledge of non-academic and academic writing styles, using contractions and full forms of verb, non-academic and academic vocabulary, and using phrasal verbs and academic verbs.

RQ 2: What are the students' attitudes on using social media text-based exercises?

      There were 42 out of 96 participants who voluntarily responded to the open-ended the questionnaire with three main questions: (1) How can the social media text-based exercises promote your knowledge of non-academic and academic writing? (2) What do you think about the social media text-based exercises? and (3) What are your suggestions for improving the social media text-based exercises?

How can the social media text-based exercises promote your knowledge of non-academic and academic writing?

All respondents believed the social media text-based exercises could enhance their knowledge of the language used in non-academic and academic contexts. First, the exercises provided them with an understanding of two language styles used in two writing contexts, so they gained more knowledge of non-academic and academic writing. In addition, the students thought the social media text-based exercises enabled them to practice analyzing the features of the academic and non-academic language. Therefore, they improved their ability to distinguish the register in two writing modes. Finally, the exercises contained understandable examples of vocabulary, sentences, and statements on the digital platforms they have found in their daily life and were familiar with. As a result, they were aware that they should not use informal language on social networking sites in academic writing assignments. The exercises could help them to select the appropriate words for the writing contexts. For example, they stated:

> "This is the first time I have learned that I should not use informal words in academic writing. The exercises help me to differentiate formal and informal words and provide me with new knowledge in academic writing."

> "The exercises provide me with a chance to practice analyzing the language used in non-academic and academic writing."

> "Doing these exercises help me a lot because the sentences and texts in the exercises are from social media which I frequently use in my daily life. I think that some words and texts are academic languages. After doing the exercises, I've learned that I misused them:

In brief, students' knowledge improvement was because of acquiring more knowledge of two different writing modes, having a chance to practice analyzing different features of non-academic and academic language, and learning differences between academic and non-academic language from good and understandable examples from real-world texts.

What do you think about the social media text-based exercises?

Most respondents (40 out of 42) expressed positive attitudes toward the social media text-based exercises. The exercises were not complicated and easy to understand for them. The sentences and statements in the exercises were taken from social media which the students frequently used in their real life. Furthermore, they believed that these teaching materials were very beneficial for learning new words and sentence structures. They had a chance to analyze the language features in both non-academic and academic contexts. Additionally, they could apply the examples in the exercises to writing on social networking sites. They also could apply knowledge to academic writing to meet the course requirements. Finally, the exercises were engaging since they were created based on social media texts. Thus, the students enjoyed learning by using these exercises. As an illustration, they mentioned:

> "They are good exercises. They are easy to understand. I can see examples of social media texts used in everyday life, and I can clearly classify the types of language in writing."

> "I think I can apply the knowledge from the exercises to writing to communicate with others on social media and select the appropriate language style for academic and non-academic writing, so I like them."

> "The teacher took the examples of social media texts, so the exercises are interesting and help the students to notice the differences in words and sentence structures used in formal and informal writing."

Conversely, two respondents perceived that the exercises were difficult for them. It was because the materials contained some unfamiliar words. They described:

> "The contents of the exercises are difficult to understand because they have both academic and non-academic language."

> "There are new words, expressions, and sentences that I am unfamiliar with, so some parts are difficult for me."

In summary, most respondents had great attitudes towards the materials because they were understandable, effective, and engaging. They also believed they could apply the contents of the exercises to writing in their real life both for personal and academic purposes. However, some of them felt that the exercises were difficult as they were unfamiliar with the contents of the materials.

What are your suggestions for improving the social media text-based exercises?

Most respondents were satisfied with the exercises. However, certain students suggested that the teacher should provide more explanations and examples to help them understand the contents clearer. In addition, the format of Exercise C should be changed from matching non-academic words in column A with academic words in Column B to choosing the correct academic words from multiple choices to complete the sentences. They also suggested that the teacher should add more items with a variety of commonly used words and statements so that the students could learn the non-academic and academic vocabulary and sentences from the exercises. Interestingly, they recommended that the exercises should be changed from paper-based to online materials so that the exercises would be more interesting and engaging. The respondents suggested that:

> "The teacher should provide more obvious examples and explanation before having the students do the exercises. This could promote students' understanding."

> "The teacher should add more samples of vocabulary and sentences. They could help students understand clearer."

"In exercise C, there were 2 columns with 25 words each. When matching informal words with their academic words, I get confused because there were too many items. I think it would be better if the teacher could change the format from matching to multiple-choice a, b, c in each item."

"The teacher should integrate online technology into the exercises to make them more exciting and interesting."

Discussion

The t-test analysis discovered that after using social media text-based exercises, the participants' post-test scores were significantly higher than the pre-test. Therefore, the exercises are productive in promoting students' knowledge of non-academic and academic writing. Songxaba and Sincuba (2019) suggest that the teacher could use the texts on social media platforms (i.e., WhatsApp) to empower the development of teaching materials. The social media texts would help the students to be aware of the mistakes and avoid making them when they write their academic work such as an essay. Wil, Yunus, and Suliman (2019) confirmed that using authentic texts on digital platforms and academic texts could support students' learning. They acquired knowledge from examples of two writing modes and differentiated the features of the academic and non-academic language. Consequently, students understood the differences between the two writing contexts better.

The qualitative data findings from the open-ended questionnaire aligned with the analysis of pre-test and post-test scores. The respondents reported that the exercises were effective because they could learn more informal and formal vocabulary, expressions, and sentence structures. They understood that some words and phrasal verbs they are familiar with should be substituted with academic words or formal structures when they produce essays or papers. Also, the materials made the learning environment enjoyable since they were understandable and interesting. The exercises contained the real-world texts written on the social media platforms they found in their daily lives, so they could understand and notice the differences between non-academic and academic texts. Even though there were some unknown words or expressions, they were enthusiastic about learning the meanings to understand how to use them correctly and reduce the errors when they practice academic writing. They also believed they could apply the knowledge acquired from the exercises to writing in real situations, both in academic and non-academic settings.

Although there were differences between social media language and formal language in academic writing, social media texts could be used as a catalyst to improve students' knowledge of academic writing. Social media texts are authentic materials connecting the classroom to the real world. They can enable students to learn language features (Ianiro, 2007). Furthermore, Okoda (2010) found that using academic texts in coursebooks and non-academic short stories could improve students' linguistic knowledge of grammatical structures and vocabulary. They could notice and be aware of their differences. This reaffirmed Amicucci (2013)'s study. The participants in the previous study perceived that they could apply non-academic digital writing to academic writing at their university, and they could improve their academic writing ability by using non-academic digital literacies. Therefore, they required the integration of non-academic written

practices into the classroom. Likewise, the study of Idrus and Muijib (2014) showed that non-academic literacy practices could enhance English academic writing.

However, from the perspective of two respondents, the socitooal media text-based exercises were not easy for them because of their unfamiliarity with the social media words used in the materials. This could occur with some Thai EFL learners. In the EFL context, the learners mainly practice English skills in the English classroom. They do not commonly use English in routine communication because they can use their mother tongue as a primary language. Some learners may not write on social media in English, so they are unfamiliar with the language styles of this register. In countries where English is used as a foreign language, not the first or official language, English is not essential for daily communication. The EFL non-native users have a chance to expose to English in the classroom and workplace only, so they rarely use English in social interaction (Chuenchaichon, 2014; Iwai, 2011; Peng, 2019).

Conclusion

The present study examined the effects of the social media text-based exercises developed by the researcher to enhance the university students' basic knowledge of the academic and non-academic language. Also, the study explored the students' attitudes toward using the exercises. The t-test analysis discovered that after using social media text-based exercises, the participants' post-test scores were significantly higher than the pre-test. The pre-test and post-test score analysis was in line with the qualitative findings. The interviewees confirmed that the social media text-based exercises provided them with the opportunities to analyze the features of non-academic and academic writing and enabled them to learn both informal and formal vocabulary, expressions, and sentence structures. Hence, they could differentiate between non-academic and academic language. Also, the exercises were interesting and understandable, and they enjoyed learning. Nonetheless, two respondents reported that the social media text-based exercises were difficult for them because they were unfamiliar with the social media texts used in the exercises.

The findings of the study offered some recommendations. The exercises should be improved by integrating online technology. Moreover, to expand students' learning experience, the teacher should add more samples of vocabulary and statements written on social media platforms. For further research, the student's academic writing tasks should be examined to see whether there are features of non-academic writing on social networking sites in academic writing after using the exercises.

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