



Blog-Based Writing Instruction in Fostering EFL Writing Performance: Students' Belief and Attitudes

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ABSTRAK

Keberadaan blog menawarkan sebuah inovasi yang mendorong gaya penulisan baru yang terintegrasi dengan teknologi. Namun tampaknya kelas menulis EFL di Indonesia yang menggunakan blog online masih belum banyak, dan masih sedikit penelitian yang dilakukan mengenai bagaimana persepsi siswa terhadap blog dalam menulis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis persepsi pelajar EFL Indonesia terhadap penggunaan Blog sebagai media praktik pembelajaran di kelas Menulis Bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian kualitatif dengan menggunakan kuesioner dan wawancara semi terstruktur. Selama 12 minggu, tiga puluh empat siswa berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini dengan memposting entri mingguan dari tugas menulis bahasa Inggris mereka di blog. Data dari angket menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas siswa sangat setuju dan setuju terhadap kegunaan, efektivitas, sikap, dan kepraktisan penggunaan blog pada kelas menulis bahasa Inggris. Artinya blog sebagai media pembelajaran sangat berpengaruh terhadap perkembangan proses belajar siswa. Hasil wawancara juga menunjukkan bahwa blogging online memberikan banyak keuntungan seperti mudah dioperasikan, tulisan dapat diakses oleh semua pembaca di dunia, menerima dan memberi komentar di blog teman, tidak perlu lagi menggunakan alat tulis, dan mendorong kreativitas siswa. menulis secara sistematis.

ABSTRACT

The existence of blogs offers an innovation that encourages a new writing style integrated with technology. However, it seems that there are still not many EFL writing classes in Indonesia using online blogs, and little research has been conducted on how students' perception of a blog in writing. This study aims to analyze the Indonesian EFL learners' perceptions toward the use of Blog as the medium of learning practices in English Writing class. This study use qualitative research involving a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used. For 12 weeks, thirty-four students participated in this study by posting weekly entries from their English writing assignments on blogs. The data from the questionnaire reveals that the majority of students strongly agree and agree with the usefulness, effectiveness, attitudes, and practicality of using a blog in English writing class. It means that blog as learning media is very influential in the development of students' learning process. The interview result also showed that online blogging provided many advantages such as being easy to operate, writing can be accessed by all readers in the world, receiving and giving comments on friends' blogs, no longer needing to the stationary, and encouraging the student's creativity to write systematically.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Discussions on blogging and its effects on learning have expanded in second-language writing due to increased access to technologies in the classroom. It quickly gained popularity among language learners supported by web designers and developers. In Malaysia, students in science classes use blogs as online portfolios to share experiences and post writing assignments and discussions conducted in the course (Fathi et al., 2019; H. J. Zou & Hyland, 2020). In Iran, students studying English use blog buddies for engineering classes. Students write down their learning outcomes on blogs and receive feedback from other students resulting in a significant improvement in students' writing abilities (Arochman & Yosintha, 2020). Furthermore, Vietnamese second-year English students post their writings on the blog and give and receive suggestions for revision through blog comments from classmates (Pham & Usaha, 2016). Likewise at Midwestern Universities in the US where regular interaction of students on blogs fosters collaborative skills by submitting reflections as journal/blog posts and commenting on their classmates' reflections (Thomas, 2017). In Indonesia, Since blogging is a useful tool for students to develop their English writing skills, an increasing number of EFL teachers have integrated blogging into their classroom activities (Fithriani et al., 2019; Rahayu, 2021).

The rapid advancement of technological growth with Web 3.0 has created numerous innovative and engaging learning opportunities. Students now have access to a variety of Web 2.0 publishing tools, including blogging, social bookmarking, virtual world activities, audio and video podcasting, social networking, and wiki writing. Approximately 81% of school students use the Internet for various purposes, among them blogging (L. Lee, 2017; Simamora, 2020). The number of studies on weblogs as useful teaching tools in higher education keeps growing. Many university professors are interested in giving students the chance to produce content in online forms as a way of presenting their understanding. The use of blogs in teaching and learning in higher education, notably in Malaysia, Indonesia and India showing that educational blogging is not a new phenomenon. Blogs have been used in foreign language instruction in recent years because they give aspiring to writers an authentic language environment to reach a wider audience, as well as a way for the teacher and other students to provide critique and encourage negotiation for meaning. Through educational blogging, of course it can use to increase the interest in using Web 2.0 technologies to support learning in higher education (Alsubaie & Madini, 2018; Shafira Lubis & Hamuddin, 2019).

In a teaching language classroom, blogging has long been considered a promising approach. This approach is popular in the field of teaching English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL) can increase the communicative potential of students and teachers and help expand learning opportunities. Language teachers can use it to teach English skills, such as writing, reading and speaking (Bahanshal et al., 2022; Murniati et al., 2018; Yeh et al., 2019). Furthermore, language learners can use it for various purposes such as discussions, reflections, sharing pictures, links and learning resources, vocabulary enrichment, grammar and paragraph writing (Garcia et al., 2019; Huang, 2016). Blogging in language classrooms have been outlined as "a more appropriate choice in language expression, giving new perspectives to the learner's thinking, and inspiring the awareness that one's voice resounds in distant area of the world and is heard by others" (Reinhardt, 2018; Villalba, 2022). In addition base on previous study results, blogs can be dynamic platforms that promote widespread practice, authorship, and the development of learning strategies (Prykhodko et al., 2019). By using blogs, teachers can upload information that is instantly available on the web and potentially attract comments from other users, including classmates and unknown bloggers.

Several ELT-related researches have demonstrated the efficiency of blogs in enhancing knowledge, motivation, and critical thinking in higher institutions. It is used as a publication medium which does not have to spend much money, as brand building and sharpening writing skills (Galvin & Greenhow, 2020; Zheng et al., 2017). It enables students to give feedback on each other's work and communicate ideas, which promotes a more informal, student-centered, and self-paced environment for reading and writing in the target language (Alsubaie & Madini, 2018; Zhang, 2021; H. J. Zou & Hyland, 2020). As a result of the tendency toward the use blog in educational setting, it increases the research attention on the usage of blogs in L2 writing classes. This platform enables students to engage in writing process which involves drafting, reading, revising, and giving feedback on other postings. Since textbooks could not provide all of the content necessary to teach the writing process, the weblog offers ways to develop writing abilities using less expensive tools and procedures. For example, students can publish their writing freely, share their challenges, and get feedback on their blogs. It encourages a collaborative setting where students can exchange ideas and information (L. Lee, 2020; Sulistyono et al., 2019).

Furthermore, numerous studies found that blogging has the potential to improve self-regulated and autonomous learning as well as learner motivation, engagement, and self-efficacy in L2 writing (Qiu & Lee, 2020; Wiederhold, 2018). The learners are more motivated to write because they are aware that their teacher, peers, and perhaps the world is reading their blog. It encourages students to develop and gain an understanding of the writing process. Peer feedback by blogging improves learners' grammatical accuracy and vocabulary, and it also helps them further their interlanguage development (Alsubaie & Madini, 2018; Tsao, 2021). That is a medium for individu to written expression, as a means of communication, as a platform for debate, and as a way to foster relationships in a real-world online community. The students have autonomy in trying to organize the entire content on the blog (Han, 2023; Yakut & Aydın, 2015). Student comments and the feedback they give and receive from colleagues in their respective blogs are very important in the language learning process. Through blog writing, the student enforces master writing ability, inspires writing activities, and effectively engages in social and real-world contexts.

Although blogs are popular in education, only a few English teachers use them to teach writing. Only a small amount of research, primarily qualitative in nature, has been done to examine EFL students' perceptions and attitudes toward blogs in the Indonesian context (Bahanshal et al., 2022; Fithriani et al., 2019; Hamuddin & Dahler, 2018). Several studies have used blogs as a platform for teaching writing to increase writing abilities through experimental research, but they did not look at students' experiences and perceptions after utilizing blogs (Arochman & Yosintha, 2020; Rahayu, 2021; Sa'diyah & Cahyono, 2019). Several studies tested the effect of blog integration on cooperative learning and suggested that peer feedback facilitated learning to write (Jeong, 2016; Kuo et al., 2017). However, there is still a lack of focus given to writing on blogs combining with peer feedback.

Peer feedback on blogs, in contrast to traditional face-to-face peer feedback, is an asynchronous computer-mediated communication (CMC) form. Online CMC modes don't involve face-to-face interaction, students may feel less pressure to offer critical feedback there. Reviews are permitted to have extended response times in CMC modes, and they can offer comments and correct writing errors at a convenient time and at their own leisure. Furthermore, previous study noted that as students are required to read critically when they are involved in the peer review process (Huang, 2016). Peer feedback has long been established as a collaborative activity that effective for L2 writing improvement. Peer feedback is advantageous for both those who give it and those who receive it. Peer feedback through blogs helps learners strengthen their interlanguage skills while also enhancing their grammatical accuracy and vocabulary (Alsubaie & Madini, 2018; Tsao, 2021). In the process of learning a language, student comments and the feedback they provide and get from peers on their personal blogs are important. Until now, a lot of teachers have utilized blogs as a teaching tool for writing classes, but few have added feedback from peers.

To address the aforementioned gaps, suggestions from previous research by providing peer feedback on blog's writing are developments in this research (Kuo et al., 2017; Nugroho et al., 2017). As a lecturer in English writing at IAIN Palopo, the researcher has been using blogs in writing classes for two semesters. Previous research only used blogs as a medium for writing and then checked by the teacher. Thus, in this study researchers as well as lecturer added new activities in the form of peer feedback. Students submit their written work on their blog and send the link to the WhatsApp group for the teacher to check. All students in the class can read their friends' work and write down their feedback. The teacher also provides feedback on student work. Peer feedback provides a valuable and unique perspective on overall student performance. Also peer assessment can motivate students to produce high quality work.

Related to the background, the present study is aimed to discover students' belief and attitudes toward the use of blogs as the media for the writing activity as well as the value of peer feedback. It is important to note that as a developing country, not all students and lecturer in Indonesia, particularly those at IAIN Palopo, where this research will be conducted, are familiar with the integration of ICT especially using blogs in their formal education. One of a teacher's main tasks is to work to improve students' digital literacy so that they can use ICT in the 21st century. The results of this study are expected to provide an overview to teachers about teaching models of writing through blogs and the students belief on using peer feedback on their blogs. Furthermore, the perceptions of these students will provide input on how blogs and peer feedback should be used for teaching writing. It is also expected to serve a model in teaching writing to be implemented by higher education especially in Indonesian universities.

2. METHOD

This study is an exploratory study adopting a quantitative and qualitative approach to investigate students' perceptions of the integration of blogs in the EFL writing class (Lassoued et al., 2020). The research was conducted at the end of the second semester of the 2022 academic year. The English writing course was held in 12 meetings for 2 hours. Writing activities are carried out using class blogs as e-forums by connecting student blogs to class blogs and teacher blogs so that students interact and discuss their problems with one another. The students through the blog were asked to write their draft on the blog and publish it for review by their classmates and teachers. They then exchange comments as feedback between members of the same class and their teacher via the class blog. The participants' research is on the fifth-semester students in the English Education department at IAIN Palopo totaling 34 students which were taken purposively. Participants consisted of 26 women and 8 men. This class was chosen purposively as the object of research because the students have studied academic writing for one semester. It used blogs to write their writing draft in ten different topics for one semester. So this participant already had sufficient experience in using blog based writing. The participants agreed to be investigated further about their experiences with online blogging. This study utilized a questionnaire to collect the quantitative data and semi-structure interview for qualitative data. All participants got open-ended questionnaires that ask for their opinions on the use of online blogging. The instrument is show in Table 1.

Table 1. Instrument Grid for Student Perceptions of Blog-Based Writing Instruction

Aspect	Purposes	Number of Item
Usefulness	To measure the main purposes of using blog as media of writing	4
Effectiveness	To find out the extent to which the efficacy of using blogs as a writing medium	3
Interest	To measure the interest and what activities the participant often do when using the blog	4
Practicality	to determine the level of ease and practicality in operating the blog	4

Base on [Table 1](#) the total statements in the questionnaire were 15 items, with 4 items for usefulness, 3 items for effectiveness, 4 items for interest and 4 items for practicality. The questionnaire data uses a Likert scale as a measurement scale. The items were responded by choosing one of four options provided i.e.: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree. An online questionnaire was distributed to find out the majority of student's perception of the utilization of blogs as learning media in English Writing Class. Additionally, semi-structured interviews with the fifteen students as representatives were undertaken as a follow-up. The purpose of the interview was to obtain additional information related to student blogging and to support the results of the questionnaire filled out by students. The researchers adopted stratified sampling to ensure the presence of a certain representative subgroup of the population under study ([Mackey & Gass, 2005](#)). The percentage of data from the questionnaire is calculated for each item and then sorted based on the tendency of the score for each item. The qualitative data obtained from the semi-structured interview were recorded, analysed, and coded using thematic content analysis based on Braun and Clarke's procedures of thematic analysis. The questions were specifically designed to collect information related to previous statements on the questionnaire and then encourage more opinions from each participant because the goal of the interview was to explore each participant's perspectives and experiences on the use of blog.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The researcher surveyed through a questionnaire to students blogging experience after implementing blogging for one semester. The researcher gets the data from the questionnaire as show in [Table 2](#).

Table 2. The Usefulness of Blogs in English Writing

	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Usefulness	1. As a medium for improving writing skill	68%	32%	-	-
	2. As a medium for self-expression	24%	46%	20%	10%
	3. As the information exchange	27%	40%	26%	6%
	4. As the social networking medium	12%	36%	23%	19%

The data in [Table 2](#) displays participants' perceptions of the usefulness of blogs in English writing. Using the blog as a medium for improving writing skills has the highest score followed by a self-perception medium, then as the information exchange, and last as social networking. It shows a large proportion (68 %) of them strongly agree and (32%) agree that blogs can be the learning medium for improving writing skills. 64% strongly agree and 34% used it as the writing medium for self-expression. Almost two third (67%) of the participants used it for information exchange. The last, a small minority (48%) agreed that the blog can be used as a social network medium. In general, the results reveal that the participants prioritized improving on writing skills. Approximately three quarter (91%) of the students either strongly agree or agree that their writing skills have improved since writing on the blog. Besides that, 80% strongly agree and agree that blogs can improve their enthusiasm for the writing process. Moreover, an insignificant minority (20%) choose to disagree. Lastly, 81% of students strongly agreed and agreed that they were motivated to write on the blog. Only a small minority (19%) disagree with it. The effectiveness of blogs in writing is show in [Table 3](#).

Table 3. The Effectiveness of Blogs in English Writing

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Effectiveness	1. Blog can improve my writing skill	67%	24%	9%	-
	2. I think the use of blogs can improve students' enthusiasm for the writing process.	55%	25%	20%	-
	3. I am motivated to write by the use of the blog.	44%	37%	19%	-

[Table 3](#) displays the participants' interest toward the blog. In general, the main activities on the blog are writing, uploading posts, and continuing to read and comment on posts by classmates. Overall, most participants show a positive response. For example, 85% of the participants strongly agree and agree that they like posting their writing on the blog. Similarly, 90% like reading their classmates' blogs. Even though 90% liked reading their classmates' posts, only 74% continued to comment on their classmates' posts. What was most impressive was that

99% of participants liked it when their lecturers commented on their posts. Interests toward the use of blogs in English writing is show in Table 4.

Table 4. Interests Toward The Use of Blogs in English Writing

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Interest	I like posting my writing on the blog	48%	37%	23%	8%
	I like reading my classmates' blog	35%	55%	10%	-
	I like it if my lecturer comments on my blog	96%	4%	-	-
	I like making comments on my classmates' blog	31%	43%	26%	-

Table 4 gives information on the practicality of blogs in English Writing. It is worth noticing that around half (56%) of students disagree and strongly agree that blogs can be used anytime and anywhere. Less than half (44%) agree and strongly agree that writing on a blog can be done anywhere. On the other hand, a large majority (90%) strongly agree and agree that a blog is easy to operate. Responding to the statement, "I am easy to edit and type my essay," 72% of the participants agreed. The last, more than half 68% have adequate internet access while the remaining 42% still do not have adequate internet access. Internet access is the main key to being able to interact well on the blog. The practicality of blog in English writing is show in Table 5.

Table 5. The Practicality of Blog in English Writing

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Practicality	The blog can be used anytime and anywhere.	13%	31%	42%	14%
	I think the blog is easy to operate	55%	35%	10%	-
	I am easy to edit and type my essay	48%	24%	21%	7%
	I have enough access to the internet network	27%	41%	21%	11%

Regarding the interview, the researcher also gets some information about students' perceptions of the blog. In this case, the researcher only interviewed 5 students as representatives. Based on the student responses, it can be seen that students like to write blogs because they only write using their phones, and all posts on the blog are open to the world reader. It is no longer a need to carry writing tools when learning to write. In contrast, some students give negative responses, some students find typing text to post a blog a major hurdle. They found writing in a more practical book much easier than typing. The students commented that the interesting thing was reading and commenting on other friends' posts; others responded that writing on a blog encouraged them to think critically so that their writing would be systematic. Some of the obstacles found in blogging are the responses above. The participant complained about the time spent on typing and editing, editing and posting on the blog requires internet access. It can be seen that blogs need to be applied in teaching writing because blogs can help teachers give assignments to students, and students can also do their assignments anytime and anywhere. Students can also learn more about blogs.

It is clear from the three opinions that peer feedback helps students improve their writing. Students try to minimize errors and are more careful in writing so that their writing is minimally subject to correction. Plus, it encourages them to think critically to check their friends' writing and improve their own writing. The comments above show that peer feedback on blogs makes it easier for students to edit and improve their writing. Peer feedback on blogs is more practical to respond to and correct because there is no need to write by hand anymore.

Discussion

This study investigated the students' perception toward the integration of blogs in English Writing Class. The results reveal that the majority of students may have positive experiences using the blog. The findings support the earlier claims previous researchers state that blogging-assisted language learning improves EFL students' writing abilities and supports up the early empirical data which shows that blogging fosters better learner attitudes (Alsamadani, 2017; Galvin & Greenhow, 2020; Lin, 2019; Samah A Alenezi, 2022). The frequent blogging supports the belief of other study who revealed that blogging is satisfying the students' self-expression and fulfilling the educational need for linguistic feedback. In addition, it provides bloggers with private spaces to express themselves freely, especially in writing (Al-Jarf, 2022; L. Lee, 2017).

Based on the questionnaire, the student's responses are overwhelmingly positive toward the use of blogs in English writing. It is proven that the blogging approach is suitable for EFL writing classes. In line with previous study insisting on the use of frequent blogging can improve the student's enthusiasm for writing (Lin, 2019; Sulistyio et al., 2019). Also, it is easy to operate and only uses a phone to write. Through blogging, students gain

control of the online community and the content they produce. The most desirable advantages is flexible to access any location and at any time, and can be updated and edited in terms of posting new articles, images, links, and videos (Alsubaie & Madini, 2018; D. Lee, 2022).

In the interview session, 5 students gave their perceptions about using blogs in English writing, which were very diverse. They are joyful with blog media because with mobile phones in their hands they can publish their writings for the world to read. They no longer need to prepare stationery to write. What they like the most is that they can do assignments wherever they are. Therefore, the implementation of blog media in teaching writing can be applied by teachers especially in teaching English writing. With plenty of interaction between the blog's writers and users, a blog's specific characteristics as an easily accessible online platform also increase readership. These findings support the claim made by previous study that blogging gives students responsible for the online environment and the work they publish, which results in a change from a traditional passive source of information (Fathi et al., 2019). All of the students remembered their blogging experiences as being pleasant, according to an interview that was carried out (Reinhardt, 2018; H. Zou & Hyland, 2019).

In the blogging process, students play the dual role of posting their own entries, and reading and then responding to each other's posts. Blogging is not just a process of practicing writing skills but also has a full social responsibility in which ideas are shared and exchanged with a global audience (Han, 2023; Rahayu, 2021). To support this function, network-based writing is needed so that it encourages students to pay attention to writer-reader interactions, and to think critically about how readers interpret their writing. As a result students will be careful in writing and giving responses because there is social responsibility. Posts that are archived in reverse chronological order empower students to use metacognitive skills to monitor and assess their own writing performance (Istiqomah & Siswono, 2020; Naghdipour, 2022).

In response to the aforementioned research findings, blog writing can be done in a variety of methods, including teachers can divide lesson materials, student tasks, and teacher feedback by creating many "class blogs" under one account. The other ways are each student is required to create a personal blog, as well as separate blogs that are solely accessible to professors and students and blogs that are public and each student is required to leave comments or ideas on their classmates' blogs in order to promote active learning. To control the students' progress, teachers are supposed to keep an eye on the growth of student blogs by giving comments and assessing the outcomes of their assignments. Finally, to encourage students, the instructor may offer rewards for the best blogs at the end of the semester s. These activities above are expected to be able to make blogging a highly effective method for assisting students in practicing and developing their language skills.

This study has implications for educators in taking to consideration of the use of blog writing combining with peer feedback. The advantages and disadvantages of using blogs as writing media provide an overview for educators to design the best way to cover these deficiencies and maintain their effectiveness of using blog. In this technological era, it is hoped that educators can integrate ICT in teaching, one of which is through the use of blogs. The use of blogs for students will provide a new, more meaningful experience in learning web-based writing. Additionally, policymakers should use these findings to organize teacher training programs and the rollout of the new ESL curriculum for enhancing teaching strategies in writing classes. It is hoped that future studies will focus on blogging for other language skills. This study has several limitations including the small number of participants and only assessing aspects of student perception. It is recommended for future researchers to use a larger sample and examine other aspects such as student engagement and the effectiveness of using blogs combined with peer feedback.

4. CONCLUSION

Blogging gives students a creative and communicative platform where they may communicate with each other and present themselves in a meaningful and positive way. The students have positive perceptions of using blogs in English writing. The questionnaire determines the usefulness, effectiveness, interest, and practicality of using the blog combining with peer feedback in English writing class. The questionnaire data shows that they strongly agree that they are superior to others. It means that blogs as learning media are very influential in the development of students' learning process. The interview result also showed that students' perceptions about using blogs in the learning process provided many advantages such as being easy to operate, the writing can be accessed by all readers in the world, can comment on friends' blogs, no longer need to the stationary and improve students' enthusiasm in the writing class. In addition the peer feedback in online blogging allows the students became the active agents in the evaluation process, which they believed had allowed them to improve their own writing and critical thinking.

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