



The Impact Of Blogging On Efl Students' Writing Development

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ABSTRACT

Weblogs, often known as "blogs" or "web logs," are currently among the most popular Internet apps. The current paper concerns the impact of blogging on the writing development of EFL students. This article also sought to understand the views of tertiary-level English language learners and examine the effects of blogging on academic writing. The questionnaire survey was sent to five tertiary education universities in Iran. The data has been taken from 43 participants. Six open-ended questionnaire items were measured. The method used was descriptive statistics and percentages gleaned from the data. The findings showed that students who utilized blogging in their academic writing saw a significant improvement in success scores, demonstrating that blogging helps students become better writers. Students also reported good views toward using blogs in their writing assignments, which, coupled with the results from the study, may suggest that students who have positive attitudes toward blogging are likely to develop into better writers.

Keywords: *EFL; Descriptive Statistics; Tertiary Education; Weblogs*

ABSTRAK

Semua siswa perlu beradaptasi dengan versi baru dari proses belajar dan mengajar. Penggunaan pembelajaran berbasis proyek di masa pandemi COVID-19 dapat membantu siswa yang kesulitan dalam berinteraksi dengan siswa lain. Pendekatan ini dapat membantu siswa sekolah menengah kejuruan lebih mudah memahami topik dengan menggunakan proyek yang berhubungan dengan tempat kerjanya. Proyek ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi suara siswa menggunakan pembelajaran berbasis Proyek dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di era pandemi. Studi kasus ini menggunakan wawancara semi terstruktur dengan mewawancarai lima siswa dari salah satu SMK di Jember yang sudah menggunakan metode pembelajaran berbasis proyek di masa pandemi. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran berbasis proyek adalah salah satu metode yang mungkin diterapkan guru untuk membantu siswa belajar bahasa Inggris. Kemampuan dan kreativitas bahasa Inggris siswa dapat ditingkatkan sambil mengembangkan proyek.

Kata Kunci: *EFL; Statistic Deskriptif; Pendidikan Tinggi; Weblogs*

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INTRODUCTION

Web logs, also known as weblogs and blogs, were first introduced to the public in the 1990s and are now a common CMC application. Blogs have the potential to be a transformative tool because they provide users the chance to create online communities and feel a feeling of belonging (Glogoff, 2005). Additionally, blogs can give students a user-friendly interface where content is immediately updated and distributed (Johnston, 2002). Additionally, blogs are a new technology that offers student-centered teaching methods that might foster learner autonomy. Sun, (2010). Oravec (2002). For language learners, blogs have several benefits, particularly for improving writing abilities. They provide authors a place online where they may speak freely and interact with other users. As a result, they function as a constructivist learning tool where students learn as they create knowledge from concepts and shared information from the works of other students, as described by Richardson (2006). According to Cequena (2013), students' writing abilities improved when they utilized blogs for essay writing and had a favorable opinion of the helpful criticism they received from their peers about their blog entries.

The blog, according to Akdag and Ozkan (2017), is a useful tool for students to develop their English writing abilities. This increased the students' motivation to write and encouraged independent writing. According to Nadzrah and Kemboja (2009), students think that utilizing blogs as writing tools in class is a good idea.

This has helped them write more successfully since blogging enabled them to be creative even if they had poor language skills. In his reading and writing course at the university level, Ward (2004) utilized a blog. He discovered that blogging offers a different approach to teach and assess real writing and reading abilities. He also discovered that utilizing blogs could boost student interest in their reading and writing. According to McDowell (2004), utilizing blogs in education can improve learning possibilities since they improved involvement and encouraged reflective activities among students, who also gave the use of blogs as learning aids a good review. Sun (2010) said that blogging might promote learner autonomy, improve students' motivation, and help them hone their writing abilities. Blackstone et al. (2007) report that students who lack self-confidence may be reluctant to let others read their views since blogs are available to the public, notwithstanding all these findings. With the help of blogs, students can organize their ideas and publish them online for everyone to see. In this way, blogs exhibit the traits of shared interests and support, which are seldom attainable in conventional classroom settings. In order to give Taiwanese students additional opportunities to practice writing in

English and improve their writing abilities, the current study proposes an alternate writing platform for writing lessons. Additionally, the paper gives pupils a chance to practice writing outside of the conventional classroom and develop into self-directed, motivated learners. The present paper sought to look into the impact of blogging on the writing development of EFL students.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Weblogs are a type of effective teaching tool that has been used in L2 instruction for a variety of pedagogical goals. A few studies have demonstrated the advantages of utilizing blogs to aid in students' language proficiency development. To determine if blogs are really helpful for education, it is critical to understand the findings of earlier studies on the impact of blogging on language teaching. Students' writing has a real audience when they use blogs, but they must carefully review their work before posting. Using blogs in the classroom can help students write in L2 more effectively (Downes, 2004), make them more reflective learners (Xie et al., 2008), and foster an L2 community of writers (Sollars, 2007). Smith (2005) recommended that educators use blogs into their instruction. Students who do this will no longer be living in the era of static web sites. Similarly, blogs give students a simple and welcoming setting in which to post their reflections and publish their work, as demonstrated by Ferdig & Trammell (2004). Blogs may be used effectively for both teaching and learning.

McGrail and Davis (2011) investigated how primary school pupils' writing development was impacted by blogging. Students' writing assignments from before and after they started blogging as well as their posts were used to gather data. The results demonstrated that the students learned to master the writing process as well as audience awareness and association. They also became active members of a blogging community. They felt sharper in their writing focus. Khampusaen (2012) investigated the potential benefits of student blogging collaboration on their ability to write essays. Teachers and peers offered feedback via blogging. The findings demonstrated that students' opinions regarding writing in group blogs were favorable. Students' writing abilities were enhanced by comments from the teacher and peers. The use of blogs in writing classes also helped students become independent learners. Similarly, Downes (2004) discovered that blogging in writing classrooms can enhance students' writing abilities. Additionally, Bakar and Ismail (2009) noted that when utilizing blogs, students create their essays with certain aims. Affective variables like attitude are crucial among the many characteristics since many experts think that learners' attitudes have a big impact on whether they succeed or fail at learning a language; they may either be a helper or a hindrance (Krashen, 2007).

Teachers, textbook authors, curriculum designers, and program assessors can all benefit from examining the attitudes of their students.

Numerous earlier studies have demonstrated that students' attitudes regarding utilizing blogs were favorable. For instance, Aljumah (2012) examined how students felt and thought about blogs and listed their benefits and drawbacks when teaching English writing to EFL majors at Qassim University in Saudi Arabia. Participating in the study were 35 English-majoring Saudi students. Questionnaires were used to gather information from the subjects. The results showed that students' attitudes and perceptions of using blogs in writing classes were positive. Students viewed utilizing blogs to boost motivation and interest in using English in interactions with classmates and teachers, according to the findings. In a similar vein, Jones (2006) investigated the teacher's and students' perspectives on the use of blogs in ESL writing classes. Five students' data were gathered. This paper's research questions will delve deeply into the following points: 1) Does writing extensively on a blog affect writing performance? What are the impacts of blogging on the development of writing fluency and improving attitudes toward English learning in a sample of Iranian college students studying EFL? 3) Does blog-mediated writing instruction significantly improve the writing performance of EFL learners? 4) Will the use of blogs help students improve their writing abilities? 5) What are students' attitudes towards using blogs in writing English? 6) What is the students' perception of the advantages of using blogs in writing English?

METHOD

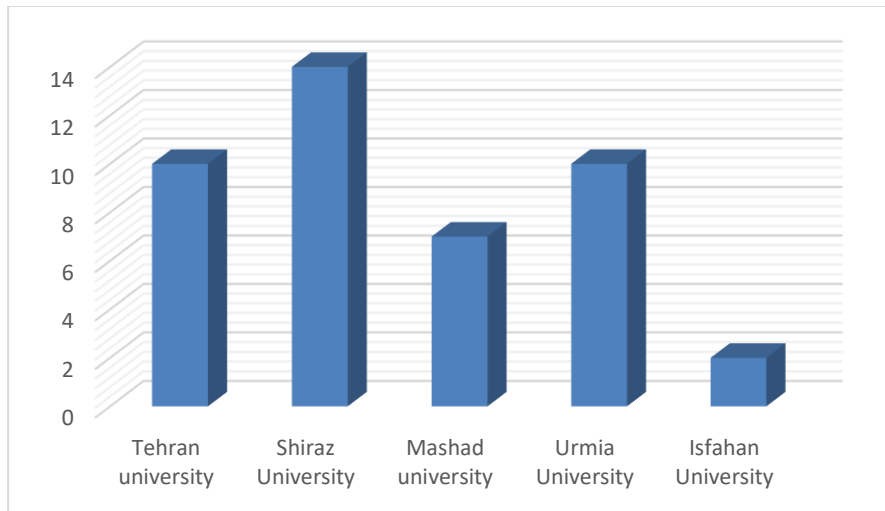
Demographic of participants

This research implemented quantitative research design and used descriptive statistic as its technique of analysis. Among the 43 students who participated in this research, 23.3% were from Tehran University, 32.6% from Shiraz University, 16.3% from Mashhad University, 23.3% from Urmia University and 4.7% from Isfahan University, the results of which are displayed in the table (1).

Table 1. frequency of students according to name of university

	Frequency	Percent
Tehran university	10	23.3
Shiraz University	14	32.6
Mashhad university	7	16.3
Urmia University	10	23.3
Isfahan University	2	4.7
Total	43	100.0

Figure (1) shows the frequency of students according to name of university.



FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The obtained results show that 51.2% of the participants were male and 48.8% were female. The corresponding results are shown in Table (2).

Table 2. frequency of participant's Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	22	51.2
Female	21	48.8
Total	43	100.0

The frequency diagram of participant's gender is shown in figure (2).

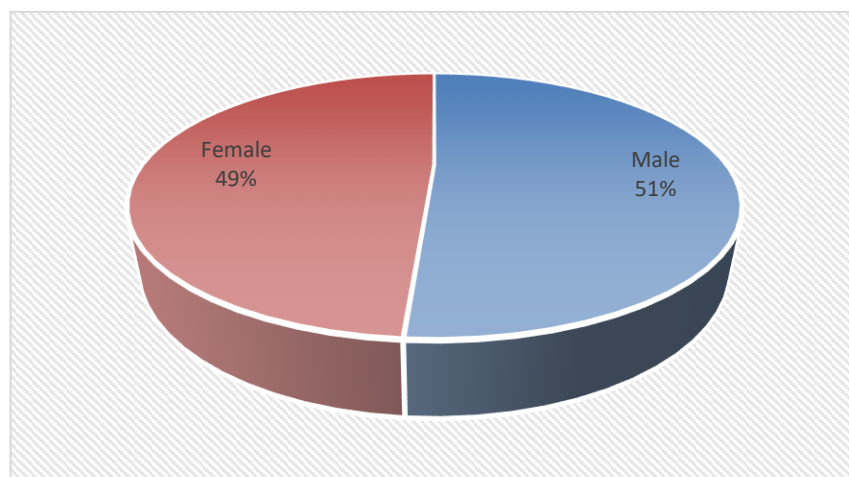


figure 2. frequency of participant's Gender

Also, 11.6 percent of the participants are in the age group of 20-25 years old, 25.6 percent in the age group between 26-30 years old, 39.5 percent in the age group of 31-35 years old, and 23.3

percent in the age group of 36 years old and older, the corresponding results are showed in the table (3).

Table 3 frequency of participant's age group

	Frequency	Percent
20-25	5	11.6
26-30	11	25.6
31-35	17	39.5
36 or more	10	23.3
Total	43	100.0

The related diagram to this table is shown in Figure (3).

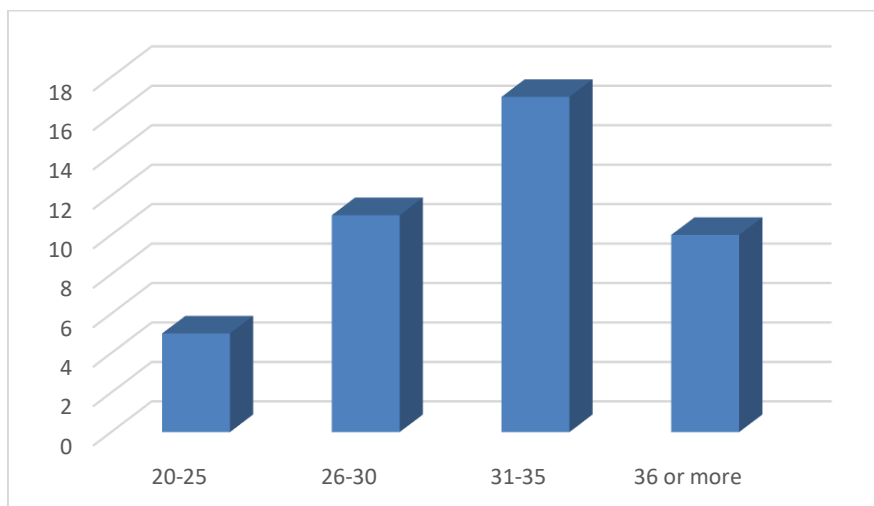


Figure 3. frequency of participant's age group

Among the 43 people who participated in this study, 16.3% have Diploma, 14% Vocational, 34.9% Bachelor's, 25.6% Master's and 9.3% Ph.D. that detailed results are presented in Table (4).

Table 4. frequency of participant's study level

	Frequency	Percent
Diploma	7	16.3
Vocational	6	14.0
Bachelor's	15	34.9
Master's	11	25.6
Ph.D.	4	9.3
Total	43	100.0

The related diagram to this table is shown in Figure (4).

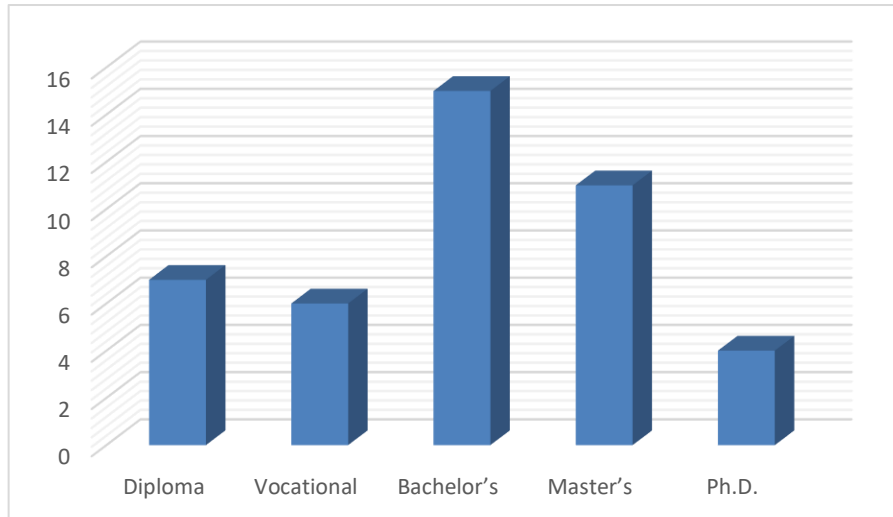


Figure 4. frequency of participant's study level

Among the participants, 25.6% studied in English Language and Literature, 30.2% in English Language Teaching, 25.6% in Linguistics and 18.6% in English Translation. The corresponding results are shown in table (5).

Table 5. frequency of participant's Field of Study

	Frequency	Percent
English Language and Literature	11	25.6
English Language Teaching	13	30.2
Linguistics	11	25.6
English Translation	8	18.6
Total	43	100.0

The corresponding diagram is shown in Figure (5).

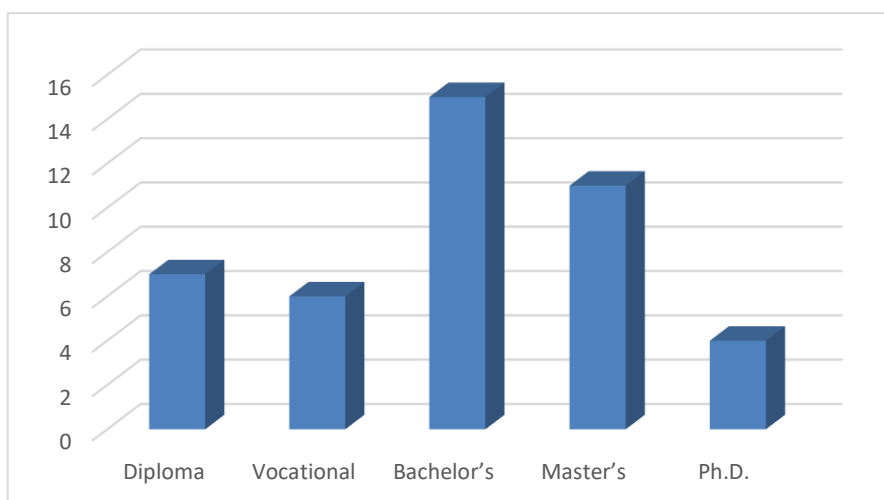


Figure 5. frequency of participant's Field of Study

The obtained results showed that 30.2% of the participants are engaged in learning English as second language in governmental institutions, 51.2% in private institutions and 18.6% in aided institutions. The relevant results are shown in table (6).

Table 6 frequency of participant's Type of Institution

	Frequency	Percent
Governmental	13	30.2
Private	22	51.2
Aided	8	18.6
Total	43	100.0

The corresponding diagram is shown in Figure (6).

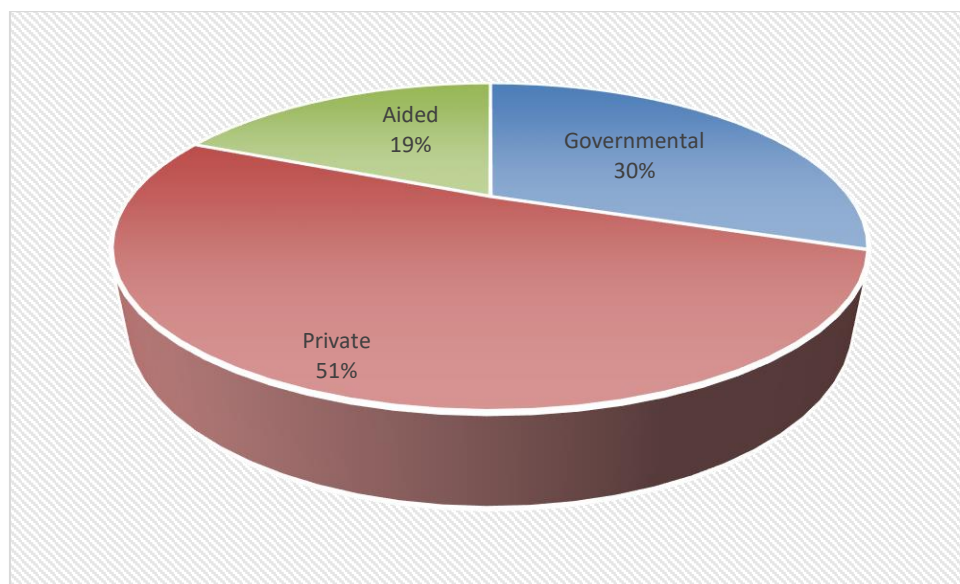


figure 6 frequency of participant's type of Institution

1. Does writing extensively on a blog affect writing performance?

Since writing a blog, regularly, makes a person spend an average 30 minutes a day on writing, therefore, in a sense, blogging can be considered an essential exercise to develop writing skills. One of participants states that:

“Every day, I have to devote part of my time to practice writing because I am interested in updating my blog regularly.”

Blogging creates conditions for a person to discuss routine life topics, specialized sports or scientific topics, explaining his goods and services, or interpreting books, which these materials and exercises cannot be found in any language training class, therefore that's why blogging can be considered a unique exercise in writing skills.

2. What are the impacts of blogging on the development of writing fluency and improving attitudes toward English learning in a sample of Iranian college students studying EFL?

The type of writing can be different depending on the blog's subject, for example, if the blog is about routines, presented scrip is very simple and has fictional elements, while if the subject of blog is a specialized scientific topic, the prepared scrip will have its own complications. Therefore, a unique answer cannot be given to the above question. One of the participants who has a specialized blog about software says:

"... I can't deny that blogging has had a very high impact on increasing my writing skills, but considering subject of my blog that is specialized field of, it has been able to significantly improve my scientific writing style only, while it has no significant impact on my routines writing. "

Formal writing and the use of scientific terms, along with the style of presenting scientific content, which is generally devoid of literary or emotional elements, makes the author of specialized blogs not experience a noticeable change in his general writing style, while general blogs which deals more with the writer's daily life has completely opposite results.

"...writing about daily issues in my personal blog provided a condition in which some words that I had not paid attention to before became important and I also learned how to use them and related terms..."

One of the participants said.

3. Does blog-mediated writing instruction significantly improve the writing performance of EFL learners?

Regardless of the blog's subject, it can be said that since writing requires more thinking than speaking, most of the participants have stated that writing has given them an opportunity to focus more on grammar and how to express content. Unlike Speaking in which they try not to lose the rhythm and speed of speaking, in writing they give themselves more opportunity to discover new forms of writing by replacing words and correcting written sentences. Also if they feel weak, they can study more in that field.

"Writing a blog has provided me with a condition to use more noble words in my expression"

One of the participants said. Also, the participants have stated that after starting blogging, their reading skills have also increased because they have to read more to improve their writing skills.

"I always try to read as much as possible about the topic before I start writing..."

Another participant has expressed.

4. Will the use of blogs help students improve their writing abilities?

As mentioned previously, blogging as an exercise to focus on what is being said on one hand and providing opportunities to correct possible mistakes on the other hand improves students' writing skills. Some of the students' comments are presented below:

"... I can clearly see my progress in writing since I started blogging till present, by looking at published content in my personal blog...."

"...blogging has significantly increased my writing grades in my English class"

"...Since starting the blog, I feel that my ability to use complex writing structures has increased, while before I was always criticized for simplistic writing."

5. What are students' attitudes towards using blogs in writing English?

The obtained results showed that students have generally shown a positive attitude towards blogging and the majority of them have evaluated this as a very effective exercise in improving their writing skills, but there are also factors that make students less enthusiastic about this matter such as:

"I haven't had free time to write in my blog, and this causes the blog to not be updated regularly, so I can't call it an exercise ..."

"I do not have expertise in a particular subject to be able to manage a blog"

"My ICDL skills are low and I can't manage a blog by myself."

"I am not interested in sharing my personal and family experiences."

6. What is the students' perception of the advantages of using blogs in writing English?

All the people participating in this research believe that regular practice of writing under any format and title can increase their writing skills, but there are differences of opinion on the issue that writing practice must be by using blogging. The following comments can be mentioned.

opponents believe

“The blog is seen by the audience, but its structural and even spelling mistakes are not reported, so a mistake may be repeated several times...”

“In addition to English literacy, blogging also requires IT literacy, which takes extra energy from a person”

“Along with all its advantages, blogging has its disadvantages, among which we can mention the increase in the expectations of the audience, which will cause protests if the blog is not updated.”

“Blogging increases daily expenses.”

And a supporter said:

“Since writing in the blog makes the exercise to be exposed to the public, more sensitivity will be considered for doing it.”

The blog also gave students a tool to track their development and view their progress (Istifci, 2011). According to the findings, utilizing blogs in a writing class is a fresh, inspiring, and exciting learning opportunity that improves students' capacity for both creative and critical thought. Students have the chance to experience a variety of social interactions through blogging, including those between students and professors, students and their peers, and students and audiences throughout the world. Using blogs in language classrooms is advantageous and suited for undergraduate students to improve their writing performances since students are active learners through the blogging system.

The benefits of blogging for writing instruction may be attributable to blogs' capabilities for connecting students with diverse audiences in context-rich learning environments (Noytim, 2010, Juida & Bee, 2011). Blogs have the ability to enhance classroom learning and student engagement by supporting L2 instructors' instruction (Churchill, 2009).

Students can submit both academic and non-academic messages on blogs, where they can then freely express their opinions or make comments on the work of their peers. Blogging appears to enhance the interaction between teachers and students (Song & Chan, 2008). Students who use blogs have the chance to read and write about topics that interest them, as well as receive response from other audiences (Aljumah, 2012). By doing this, the writing assignment—which was before thought to be uninteresting and difficult—becomes an easy activity. After being given a topic to write on, students worked in groups to come up with ideas and plan out their writing.

Each team member will work with the others to plan their essay. Up until they receive their finished paper, they exchange ideas, make comments, and offer criticism. Throughout the working process, students pick up knowledge and impart it to their classmates and teachers. Unexpectedly, using blogs encourages low-proficiency learners and timid, reserved pupils to participate more in class activities.

This is mainly due to the fact that they have more time to reflect before writing and responding (Sun, 2010). The fact that students recognized their colleagues in the group and their teacher read, examined, and corrected their written work contributed to the participants' score significantly improving. The findings are similar with other studies that suggested that blogs might improve students' writing abilities (Jones, 2006; Soares, 2007; Noytim, 2010; Aljamah, 2012). The students' overall writing skills appeared to greatly improve, notably in terms of mechanics and organization, even if they preferred to utilize simpler syntactic structure in their blog entries in the current research. The findings of this paper suggest that blogs may be a useful task-based setting that encourages genuine, intentional language use and improves the ability to write in other languages. According to the survey's findings, students reviewed and revised their blogs the most frequently. The findings are consistent with the claim that the open blogging environment enables students to keep track of their progress independently by reading and editing their own work even when teachers are not present or grading.

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CONCLUSION

The paper's findings demonstrated that blogging in writing classes can help students' writing skills advance. The utilization of blog activities seems to increase students' chances to develop their writing abilities. Writing often is likely to help students form effective writing habits, improve their language awareness, increase their sense of independence as learners, and boost their confidence and drive. The findings of this paper show that blogging can significantly improve students' writing skills; as reported in the findings, it piques our interest to write about blogging because it can easily help their writing and they may learn more new vocabulary through it. In other words, the blog-mediated training helped to strengthen the participants' integrative and inherently instrumental motivations for developing their L2 writing.

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