**USING BLOGS TO IMPROVE THE FOURTH SEMESTER STUDENTS ABILITY TO WRITE ARGUMENTATIVE TEXT AT TOMAKAKA UNIVERSITY**

Ainun Rafiqa Nur

[ainun\_nurkoe@yahoo.com](mailto:ainun_nurkoe@yahoo.com)

Muhammad Asfah Rahman

[asfah\_rahman@yahoo.com](mailto:asfah_rahman@yahoo.com)

State University of Makassar, Indonesia

Nurdin Noni

State University of Makassar

**ABSTRACT**

The researcher aimed to finding out (1) Is there a significant difference in the students’ writing ability who are taught through blogs and the students’ writing ability who are taught through lecturing of fourth semester students at Tomakaka University; (a) which components of writing essay can be improved when using blogs, (2) the students’ interest in learning to write argumentative text through Blogs. The researcher was carried out under the quantitative paradigm with quasi experimental design. The sample was chosen by applying saturated sampling technique. The data obtained through writing test and questionnaire then data collected were then analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics through SPSS 20 program. The research result showed that there is a significant difference in the students’ ability who are taught through Blogs and the students’ writing ability who are taught through lecturing and there was a positive correlation between the students’ interest in learning to write argumentative text and their writing improvement.

Keywords: Blogs, writing ability, argumentative text, interest.

**INTRODUCTION**

In learning English, there are four skills that have to be mastered; they are listening, reading, speaking and writing. However, the most interesting skill to be mastered by many people is writing because it conveys a meaning through thinking process to the reader. Everyone sometimes has difficulties in writing because it is often done in a limited time by the writer. Furthermore, writing is a complicated process that involves the cognitive process, the social context and the need for people’s routine life, so it is not an easy skill for ones/students to acquire.

Actually, writing ability is not acquired naturally; it requires the learner to be taught and practiced in the form of the academic environment. These may occur at school or university since they have not enough writing experience and focus on grammar and vocabulary in their daily activity. Consequently, they can write well.

the writer promotes a media in teaching called Blog in order to help the English teacher prevents, solves the problems, and improves the students’ writing skill. Blogs will be applied in order to lecturer and the students can interact or communicate through this media by opening a Blogs and then they put comments based on the topic that given by the lecturer/teacher. In this case, the lecturer/teacher asks the students to write at Blogs.

This media is believed by the writer as an effective media for the English teachers or lectures to improve the students’ writing ability. The writer’s conviction toward the use of Blogs in improving the students’ ability to write English is supported by some previous research findings. The first previous finding is found from a qualitative research under the title **“**Understanding class blog as a tool for English development”**.** In this research the researcher found that the students viewed Blogs as a learning tool for them to improve their English.

The second previous research findings that reinforces the writer’s belief toward class Blogs comes from an experimental study conducted by Aljamah (2012) under the title “Saudi Learner Perceptions and Attitudes toward the Use of Blogs in Teaching English Writing Course for EFL majors at Qassim University”. The result showed that students had a favorable perception and attitude towards the use of Blogs in their writing class. Findings also indicated that students perceived benefits of using Blogs to increase motivation and interest to use English. Of course, the two studies above become a source of theory related to Blogs.

**REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

***Blogs***

1. Definition

The Oxford English Dictionary Online defines the word Blog as, “2. A frequently updated web site consisting of personal observations, excerpts from other sources, etc., typically run by a single person, and usually with hyperlinks to other sites; an online journal or diary.” On the Internet, a blog is a personal or professional journal that is frequently updated and intended for general public consumption. The essential characteristics of the Blogs are its journal form, typically a new entry each day, and its informal style. Many Blogs include photo, audio, and video information.

1. Blogs in Education
2. The application of blog in education

Since 2000, when WeBlogs became widely available, a surprisingly wide variety of blog uses can be observed in the higher education and research areas. Researchers, academics, teachers, and students are excitedly embracing Blogs (Di Zhang in Imran, 2009).

1. Rationale for using blogs in education

There are numerous reasons for using Blogs in education, such as to provide a real audience for student writing, to provide extra reading practice for students, to increase the sense of community in a class, to encourage students to participate, to create an online portfolio of student written work (Stanley in Jarwan, 2005).

1. Using blogs for English writing

Based on the proposed possibilities for classroom application, one might expect Blogs to offer many reading and writing incentives for English learning and writing because blogging places emphasis on content, the possibility of speedy feedback, the option of working with both words and images, and the ability to link one post to another

1. The effectiveness of blogs in an English writing class

In a short blog posting titled “Do weBlogs improve writing?” Bernstein in Nurhayati (2004) advocated “Frequent writing improves writing”, “Writing for an audience improves writing”, “Writing that matters improves writing”, and “Writing on a computer improves writing”. However, to EFL learners, frequent writing may not necessarily improve writing. Nevertheless, it will definitely be helpful if students do not only write frequently but also look up English dictionaries or use Internet to help them express their ideas clearly and correctly. EFL learners’ writings will be more or less influenced by their first language. The improvement of writing will be questioned if EFL students write English frequently but present their thoughts with the style of their first language. And some students answer that they will look up an English dictionary or ask someone else when they don’t know how to express their ideas in English. To an EFL learner, it is a critical step to become a successful writer if whenever he is aware that something wrong with his writing, he can effectively find an answer from an English dictionary or Internet.

1. Three types of blogs in an English writing

Three types of Blogs have been described for use in English writing class by Campbell in Dalasari (2003): the tutor blog; the learner blog; and the class blog.

***Concept of Writing***

1. Definition of writing

Byrne in Dalasari (1998) stated that writing involves the encoding of a message of some kind: that is, we translate our thoughts into language. According to him in his book, writing is the way to channel ones thought by using graphic symbols that is letters combination of letters which relate to the sound made when someone speak. So, it can be said that writing process is the way for us to explore our own thought to express our feeling and to convey our opinion through writing activity.

1. Characteristics of Good Writing

Yarber in Muniarti (2006) says that an effective writer agrees that good writing has several important characteristics, they are:

1. Good writing is not boring; it keeps you interest by what is says and how to say.
2. Good writing is easy to follow a plan.
3. Good writing presents ideas that are fresh.
4. Good writing is free of serious mistake in grammar, spelling, and punctuation because those errors get in the way of the writers idea and distract the reader.
5. Good writing uses language that is right for the job formal when required and informal when appropriate.
6. The nature of writing process

According to Ghaith (2002), writing is a complex process that allows writers to explore thoughts and learning for, and to run the communication and make thought available for reflection. When thought is written down, ideas can be examined, reconsidered, added to, rearranged, and changed.

1. The importance of writing

There are a lot of reasons why writing is important. Some of them are stated by Heaton below:

1. Writing is a tool for discovering to stimulate one’s thought process by writing act into information and image to have the unconscious mind.
2. Writing helps someone to organize their ideas which can be arranged in coherent form.
3. Writing generates news idea by helping someone to make connection and relationship.
4. Components of writing

Composing a good writing should have some components that have to be considered not only the organization of ideas, but also the components of writing. Those components are:

1. Vocabulary
2. Language use
3. Organization
4. Mechanics
5. Content

***Argumentative Writing***

1. Definition

Since almost writing is persuasive, some experts categorize argumentative as the effort to use arguments in writing to persuade and convince others to adobt writer’s point of view Woodman in Nurhayati (2010:19).

1. Kinds of arguments

There are two kinds of argument which commonly employed in argumentative writing Woodman in Nurhayati (2010:19). There are the pro argument and the contra argument

1. Structure and expression used in pro and contra arguments

In structuring the pro argument, the ideas proposed should be arranged from weakest and strongest.

1. Assessing students’ argumentative writing

In assesing students’ argumentative writing, like the other kinds of writing there are five components of general ideas to be analized. They are; content, organization, vocabulary, structure and mechanics by jacobs at al (in Nurhayati 2010:22).

***Concept of Interest***

1. What is interest

Interest as preference of someone to love something, so she/he is already to give attention and mobilizing his/her energy, ideas, time and finance which might be developed by given more stimulant. In addition, Evans and Engelberg (in Eggen and Kauchak, 1997:201) states that interest usually refers to an activity that a person prefers to engage in, would not avoid and choose in preference to many other activities

1. Types of interest

Hansel *et al*(in Muhammad Chairil Imran 2011:37) categorizes interest into four types. They are expressed interest, manifest interest, tested interest, and inventory interest.

1. Interest indicators

Carillo (1876:66) mentions that there are a number of different ways to measure interest. The most frequently used indicators are expression of interest, manifestation of interest, test of interest, and inventories of interest pattern.

1. Factors of students’ interest

Harmer (1991:3) states that there are two factors that can affect students’ interest as well as their interest in learning namely: extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Extreinsic motivations are concerned with factors outside the learner while intrinsic motivations are concerned inside the learner. Extrinsic motivation consists of two menial types: integrative motivation and instrument motivation.

After stating some partinent ideas about writing and argumentative text, it is very important to site briefly the definition of the variables. The definitions of the variables may be seen as follows;

1. Writing is a part of language skills which requires and elliptical ability in order to construct a brief and good order of sentence. As one of the language skill in English, writing is used to express the student’s idea, opinion or comment which are conveyed in the written form.
2. Argumentative text is a text that use arguments in writing to persuade and convince others to adobt writer’s point of view.

**METHOD**

***Design and Samples***

Design of this research used quantitative approach and quasi-experimental design. the researcher used two groups they were experimental and control group. The experimental group was given a treatment of blogs and the control group was given a treatment of conventional method. Both groups were taught in eight meetings.

The selected samples were based on saturated sampling technique. It was because the population in the small size. The experimental group was the fourth semester students of Tomakaka University consist of only 13 students and the control group was also the fourth semester students of Tomakaka University and also consist of 13 students.

***Instruments and Procedures***

The researcher employed writing test and questionnaire as instrument. The questionnaire were 20 statements, 10 positive statements and 10 negative statements.

Procedure of collecting data was conducted by pre-test, treatment and post-test, treatment and post-test. The students’ prior knowledge of writing skill. The treatment was conducted into eight meetings. Post-test was given after doing a treatment. The post-test was used to know the improvement of students’ writing ability. After giving post-test, the experimental group was given a questionnaire.

***Data Analysis***

The data were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics measures of central tendency, variability, relative position and relationship while inferential statistics measures relationship of the difference score before and after treatment. The researcher used *t* test of significance, *paired sample test* while to know the relationship between pretest and posttest of experimental group of writing components. All the data analyzed used SPSS 20.0 version. And while to know the students’ interest was formulated by percentage technique.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

***Test of Significant***

Table 4.8 The Probability Value of t-test of the Students’ Writing Ability in Post-test Experimental Group and Post-Test Control Group

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **t-count** | **2 Tailed Value**  **(Probability Value)** | **(α)** | **Remarks** |
| Post-test in Experimental and Control Groups | 2.912 | 0.008 | 0.05 | Using blogs can improve writing ability of Alternative Hypothesis was accepted |

Table 4.8 show that the probability value was less than (α)=0.05 or P Value 0.08<(α)=0.05. it was indicated that there was a significant difference in the students’ writing ability who are taught through blogs and the students’ writing ability who are taught through lecturing.

After conducting treatment and post-test, the researcher analyzed t-test (test of significance) independent sample test. As it was for look for significant difference between two groups it was control group and experimental group. And Alternative Hypothesis was accepted explained that there was a significant different.

Table 4.9 The Probability of Paired Samples T- Test of The Students’ Writing Ability in Pre-Test and Post-Test Experimental Group

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Paired Differences | | T | Sig (2-tailed) |
| Mean | Std. Deviation |
| Pair 1 C2-C1  Pair 2 O2-O1  Pair 3 V2-V1  Pair 4 L2-L1  Pair 5 M2-M1 | 6.15385  3.69231  4.30769  5.38462  .38462 | 2.88231  2.25036  1.79743  2.66266  .50637 | 7.758  5.916  8.641  7.291  2.739 | .000  .000  .000  .000  .018 |

Table 4.9 indicates that all the components of writing of experimental group after treatment were improved it can be seen from Sig (2-tailed) or P Value of each writing components. In term of content, organization, vocabulary, and language use with P value are 0.000< (α=0.05) and for mechanics with P value 0.018< (α=0.05), it can be indicated that H0 was rejected or there was a significant difference after treatment . But in term of mean difference, it is only one component that the most improved, that is Content which have mean difference 6.15385.

***Data Description of the Students’ interest***

Table. 4.11 The Rate percentage of the Students’ interest

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Classification | Range of Score | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
| 1 | Very High | 85 – 100 | 5 | 38.5% |
| 2 | High | 69 – 84 | 7 | 53.8% |
| 3 | Medium | 52 – 68 | 0 | 0% |
| 4 | Low | 36 – 51 | 1 | 7.7% |
| 5 | Very Low | 20 – 35 | 0 | 0% |
| Total | |  | **13** | **100** |
| Mean Score | | **86.64 (Very High Motivation)** | | |

Based on table 4.11, it can be seen that a large frequency and percentage of the students at the experimental group have high interest in learning how to write argumentative text through Blog. In fact, 5 of 13 students (38.5%)are categorized as strongly interested, 7 of 13 students (53.8%) are indicated to be intersted and there is only one student (7.7%) who is low interested. The findings are also supported by the mean score of the students that is 86.64 hich is categorized as high interested.

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

***Conclusion***

Based on the research findings and discussion in the previous description, the researcher draws conclusion in the following statement:

1. The result of the analysis showed that there was a significant different of students’ improvement in posttest between experimental group and control (p Value 0.008 < 0.05 (α)).
2. In five components of writing the The fourth semester students of English department in Universitas Tomakaka Majene had increasing in their ability, but their ability in writing had significant increasing in vocabulary and Language Use components.
3. The fourth semester students of English Department in Universitas Tomakaka Majene were very interested in learning English by using Blog.

***suggestion***

based on the conclusion above, the researcher would like to give suggestions as follows:

1. It is suggested that the teacher use blog in teaching English as one of alternative media among other teaching media to gain students’ interest in learning English.
2. The teacher should give a wide variety of activities and media in teaching English to improve students’ learning achievement.

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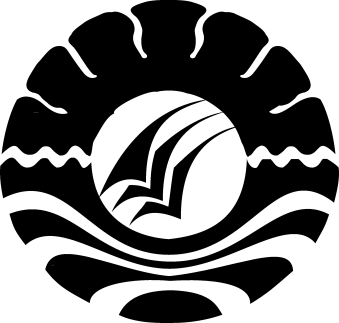
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***PENGGUNAAN BLOGS UNTUK MENINGKATKAN KEMAMPUAN MAHASISWA SEMESTER EMPAT UNTUK MENULIS TEKS ARGUMENTATIF DI UNIVERSITAS TOMAKAKA***

**AINUN RAFIQA NUR**

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