

A STUDY OF HOW STUDENTS UTILIZE WEBLOGS IN DEVELOPING WRITING SKILL

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Abstract: This study sought to find out how the Fourth Semester Students of English Language Education Study Program of FKIP Untan who kept maintaining their weblogs after accomplishing *Teaching Learning with ICT* course use weblogs in developing writing skill. This research is a case study. Students' experience in utilizing weblogs was elucidated with critical incident and netnography technique to find out the authenticity of students' involvement in autonomous learning. The data derived from the questionnaires, individual in-depth interview with 7 voluntary participants, and online observation. Three themes emerged; they are *blogging activities leading the students to English language learning, positive attitude toward the use of weblogs, and blogging aspects contributing in writing process approach*. The findings revealed that the process of blog writing determined students' improvement in writing skill. English language teachers are recommended to incorporate weblogs into their course syllabus to engage students in an academic atmosphere of interaction outside the classroom.

Keywords: Weblogs, writing skill, autonomous learning

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan cara mahasiswa semester empat pada program studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FKIP Untan yang masih mengaktifkan weblog mereka setelah menyelesaikan mata kuliah *Teaching Learning with ICT* memanfaatkan weblog untuk mengembangkan keterampilan menulis. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan metode studi kasus. Pengalaman mahasiswa memanfaatkan weblog diuraikan melalui teknik *critical incident* dan *netnography* untuk mengetahui keterlibatan mahasiswa pada pembelajaran mandiri. Data diperoleh dari kuisioner, wawancara secara individu dengan 7 mahasiswa yang bersedia diwawancarai, dan melalui pengamatan online. Empat tema yang muncul dari penelitian ini yaitu *aktivitas blogging yang mengarahkan siswa pada pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, sikap positif terhadap penggunaan weblog, dan aspek-aspek blogging yang berkontribusi dalam proses menulis*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa proses ketika menghasilkan tulisan di blog berperan dalam peningkatan keterampilan menulis mahasiswa. Direkomendasikan bagi para pengajar Bahasa Inggris untuk menerapkan penggunaan weblog dalam rangka mengikutsertakan siswa pada interaksi beratmosfer akademis di luar kelas.

Kata kunci: Weblog, keterampilan menulis, pembelajaran mandiri

The proliferation of internet is becoming an important issue among the practitioners of education to maximize its use for the learners' progress. It offers many chances to update the ways of language learning (Alm, 2009, p. 204). Blog is one of many options which is very popular among the internet users. Year by year, weblogs show their fast development of the existence (Holmes & Gardner, 2006, p. 161; Raith, 2009, p. 275). Weblogs gain popularity because today various blog platforms provide free and friendly-user services. The opportunity to have global audience in blogging is another reason for their popularity. Equally important, students can also be triggered to be more active and motivated to learn through weblogs (Embi, 2011, p. 2; Fiorello, 2013).

Several publications have appeared in recent years documenting the benefits of using blogs to improve students' skill in English language learning. Amir, Ismail, and Hussin (2011, p. 537) have proved that blogging is contributive to help students develop collaborative writing. They point out that weblogs assist the educators to make learning more personalized, more interactive, and more dynamic. The findings emphasized that weblogs helped students to distribute information effectively. Fleta and Sabater (2010, p. 773) reveal that the use of blogs in the classroom has been successfully improving students' writing skill. The study specified that writing for specific purpose has encouraged the students to produce language more fluently. The students also become more concerned on the language correctness. Foundational to this, blogs are considered as the potential tool for the development of language skills. Therefore, they infer that weblogs contribute to their students' writing motivation.

Weblog, recognized as blog, is an asynchronous chronological collection of personal or institution postings. Blog postings can be in written, audio, or video forms. Winer (2003) describes weblogs as hierarchy of text, images, media objects, and data, arranged chronologically, that can be viewed in an HTML browser. Blog is used both as a noun and a verb. It is a new tool for communication through writing and bridging interaction in various languages around the world (Galien & Bowcher, 2010, p. 6). Bartlett-Bragg (2003, p. 2) states that blog is a website where entries are written and published. It is easy to use because it does not need sophisticated technical knowledge to create and to maintain. Additionally, he affirms that blogs are primarily personal journal and opinion entries, which enhance a feeling of social interaction. Among the various definitions of blogs, all of them agree to number of features that define the characteristics of blogs.

The format of a weblog is the common ground which all bloggers share (Bausch, Haughey, & Hourihan, 2002, p. 10). Posts on blogs are presented in reverse-chronological order, so that the blog visitors can be easily reading the latest information on the blog page. Bausch, et al (2002, p. 12) also assert that blog has the distinguished features: a date header, a time stamp, and a permalink. The name of the author or in blogosphere usually called as a blogger, usually appears at the end of each post. Another feature that is positioned close to the blogger's name is comment link. The comment link is one of the interesting features of blogs. It allows readers to respond the post (Wan & Tan, 2011, p. 2).

Zhang (2009, p. 65) explains that Weblogs have some uniqueness and features which are powerful to make people endure managing it. Weblogs do not require sophisticated software or knowledge of computer programming. Everyone can participate with a variety of different easy-to-use, free blog accounts available on the

internet. Additionally, weblogs disregard the status of users. All users are equal. Another feature of weblogs is in the entries. They are generally written like a letter to someone: oriented to an audience, informal, first person narrative. It often reflects the author's perspectives on issues. Comments to posts can act as a form of discussion.

Used as a tool of ESL, a blog can be categorized into tutor blog, learner blog, and class blog (Campbell, 2003; Dudeney & Hockly, 2007). The tutor blog is an online journal created by a teacher himself/herself whose objectives are to encourage students to read by providing texts written in casual and natural way native speakers write, to promote exploration of web resources related to lessons, to encourage verbal exchanges where students can provide feedback or comments on blog entries, to provide information about syllabus, and to encourage self-study by providing links like online quizzes, audio and video files for ESL listening exercises.

The learner blog, on the other hand, is owned by individual learners. This can be an avenue where students can keep online journals for their writing practice by posting either their reactions to reading texts or their responses to writing assignments. The last type is class blog, which is a product of collaborative entries in which students can post messages, discussions, and images related to classroom lessons. In this way, students can better understand lessons in class since they are further discussed and elucidated through online forums in a class blog. Blogs in language learning as combined by Campbell (2003) and Dudeney and Hockly (2007) is shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Blog Application According to Campbell (1) and Dudeney & Hockly (2)

Tutor blog	Class blog	Learner blog
Provides daily reading practice to learners (1) Reading/listening material (2)	Facilitates project-based learning (1) and class projects (2)	Journal for writing practice (1) Extra writing practice on class topics (2)
Promotes exploration of English websites (1)	Free-form bulletin board (1)	Free form template for personal expression (1)
Encourages online verbal exchange by use of comments (1)	Virtual space for international classroom exchange (1)	Posts on class reading (1)
Provides class or syllabus information (1) Set homework (2)	Reactions to a film, article, class topic, current issues (2)	Regular comments on current issues (2)
Resource of links for self study (1)	Things learners like/don't like doing in class (2)	Personal and family information (including photos) (2)
Provide summary of class work (2)		A photoblog on learners', country, last holiday, town (2)
Question and answer (e.g about grammar, class work) (2)		Research and present information on a topic (2)
Examination/study tips (2)		Publication of links (1)

In *Teaching Learning with ICT* subject in English Language Education Study Program, Teacher Training and Education Faculty, Tanjungpura University Pontianak, the use of weblogs is incorporated into the course syllabus. The students must create a blog as their term project. In a group consisting of two students, they have to find articles in websites and post their reviews of the articles they have read. The steps of writing the review is considered as the part of English language learning process, especially in reading as they would try to comprehend the articles they have found from the websites; and writing skill which they produce text-based language product to convey their idea. Hillocks cited in O'Malley and Pierce (1996, p. 136) states that there will be at least four types of knowledge that the students are going to rely on when they write. They are knowledge of content, procedural knowledge to organize the content, knowledge of writing conventions, and procedural knowledge required to the three other types of knowledge in composing a written product.

The present study is aimed at investigating how students of English Language Education Study Program of Tanjungpura University Pontianak utilized weblogs to support their English language learning, particularly in developing their writing skill. The uniqueness of the present study lies on the selection of the participants for this research who have positive attitude on the use of weblogs for language learning because they keep maintaining their weblogs after accomplishing *Teaching Learning with ICT* course and on the attempt to investigate the critical incidents (Weatherbee, 2010, p. 247) when the students maximize the best use of Weblogs. The participants in the previous researches in the same field utilized weblogs to fulfill their compulsory task (Armstrong & Retterer, 2008; Fleta & Sabater, 2010; Jones, 2006). The present study also fills in the gap between the previous researches on the same field and the research conducted by Yulian (2014) which only focused on students' perspectives on the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in English Language Learning. Hence, to address the gap missing in the research body, this study pays particular attention on students' real life experience when utilizing weblogs in developing writing skill.

Researching how the students function their weblogs for English language learning is considered worth-doing because engaging with internet has been familiar with their daily life. Students' ingenuity in utilizing weblogs for English language learning is explored through the present study by doing online observation to the students' blog entries through netnography technique, or known as virtual ethnography developed by Schutt (2014, p. 335). Students' activities which are reflected through their weblogs are substantial as the evidence of their self-directed study which leads them to English language learning. Alm (2009, p. 203) asserts that learner autonomy is a crucial part of successful English language learning and weblogs are the potential tool to support the creation of learning environments that may foster autonomous English language learning.

Based on the significances mentioned above, it becomes worth investigating how the students who keep maintaining their weblogs after accomplishing *Teaching Learning with ICT* subject make use and get benefits of the tools in developing their writing skill. In addition, the present study is expected to contribute to the continuity of weblogs utilization by students to other subjects. Embi (2014) claims that the 21st century educators are ideally maximizing the technology to encourage the students to

publish their works instead of handing them in. Equally important, the present study is also significant to promote the advancement of the writing quality due to their exposure to online learning resources.

METHOD

This research is designed with case study method to find out the blogging activity which leads the students to English Language Learning, to elaborate how weblogs contribute to their writing skill improvement, and to find out blogging aspects which are useful for the students in writing process approach. Yin cited in Duff (2008, p. 22) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. The data for the present study were collected from survey questionnaires, in-depth individual interview, and online observation of the students' weblogs entries. The selection of the participants for the study is based on purposive sampling which allows the researcher to choose information-rich participants for in-depth study (Cresswell, 2007, p. 125).

The researcher did a pilot study regarding to the use of weblogs for English language learning by administering questionnaire to the fourth semester students of English Language Education Study Program, Teacher Training and Education Faculty, Tanjungpura University in Academic Year 2014/2015. The students have accomplished Teaching Learning with ICT subject in the second semester. The total number of the students in this batch is 94 students, but only 77 students attended when the questionnaire was distributed. Among the students who participated in the preliminary research, 28 students who claim to keep maintaining their weblogs for English language learning were purposively taken as the participants of this study in consideration that they meet the requirements of this research purpose. Of 28 participants, 2 students did not attend when the survey questionnaires were distributed which makes the participants of the study become 26 students.

Of 26 participants, 7 agreed to be interviewed. The participants are of various background category of writing ability and technology literacy as the spectrum proposed by Jones (2006, p. 107). After examining the consent form (Appendix F) and checking their questionnaires, 7 students agreed to join in One-on-One interview to gain in-depth information for the study. Two students categorized themselves 'expert' in technology literacy and five others considered themselves 'some experience'. In English writing ability, one student categorized himself 'very good' and the rests are 'good'. Three students categorized 'fairly good' in English language proficiency in speaking and writing in general and 4 participants are 'good'. Table 2 sums up the background all of the participants from their technology literacy, English writing ability and English language proficiency in speaking and writing.

Table 2
Students' Background in Technology and English Writing Proficiency
(*Interview participants)

Participants	Technology Literacy	English Writing Ability	English Language Proficiency in Speaking and Writing
Student 1	Some Experience	Good	Good
Student 2	Some Experience	Good	Good
Student 3	Some Experience	Fairly Good	Fairly Good
Student 4	Some Experience	Fairly Good	Fairly Good
Student 5	Expert	Good	Fairly Good
Student 6	Expert	Fairly Good	Fairly Good
Student 7	Expert	Good	Fairly Good
Student 8	Some Experience	Good	Fairly Good
Student 9	Some Experience	Good	Fairly Good
Student 10	Expert	Very Good	Fairly Good
Student 11	Some Experience	Good	Fairly Good
Student 12	Some Experience	Good	Very Good
Student 13	Expert	Very Good	Fairly Good
Student 14	Some Experience	Fairly Good	Fairly Good
Student 15	Some Experience	Good	Very Good
Student 16	Expert	Good	Good
Student 17	Some Experience	Good	Fairly Good
Student 18*	Expert	Good	Good
Student 19	Some Experience	Good	Good
Student 20	Expert	Good	Good
Student 21*	Some Experience	Good	Fairly Good
Student 22*	Some Experience	Good	Good
Student 23*	Some Experience	Good	Good
Student 24*	Expert	Very Good	Good
Student 25*	Some Experience	Good	Fairly Good
Student 26*	Some Experience	Good	Fairly Good

Survey questionnaires were divided into two types: (1) Students' background with technology and English writing proficiency, and (2) Students' experience in utilizing weblogs for English language learning. The items and the questions in the survey questionnaires for this study are modified from Jones (2006, p. 265) to suit the present study. The one-on-one interviews were recorded and participation is voluntary. Interview technique proposed by Bassey (1999, p. 81) was used. The interview is intended to confirm and probe the information answered by the participants via the questionnaire, how they find weblogs useful for their writing performance and productivity, what happened during specific aspects of the writing process approach, and to unravel some factors that may or may not have encouraged them write or motivated them to write.

Online observation was conducted to evaluate the congruity to the students' claim in taking the advantages or disadvantages of using blog in English language learning.

Online observation notes were prepared and the items are formulated based on the view from Baecher, Schieble, Rosalia, and Rorimer (2013), Dudeney and Hockly (2007), and Richardson (2010). Netnography technique was used in online observation (Schutt, 2014, p. 335). The data were presented with critical incident of how the students take benefits from using weblogs. Critical incident is a compatible method to “explore particular types of events or incidents” (Weatherbee, 2010, p. 247). Critical incident is useful for ensuring that the incident is considered in its entirety, from multiple perspectives. Thus, to concede the data that disclose how students’ get benefits from weblogs for their English language learning, critical incident analysis were applied.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The data derived from the questionnaires revealed that blogging activities bridging the students to English language learning are classified into six. They are the process of writing, blog-layouting, sharing the entry to other social media, labeling the blog post, blog-walking, and making the blog as personal diary. Figure 1 shows that 22 students choose the process of writing as the activity that mostly accommodate them to writing development.

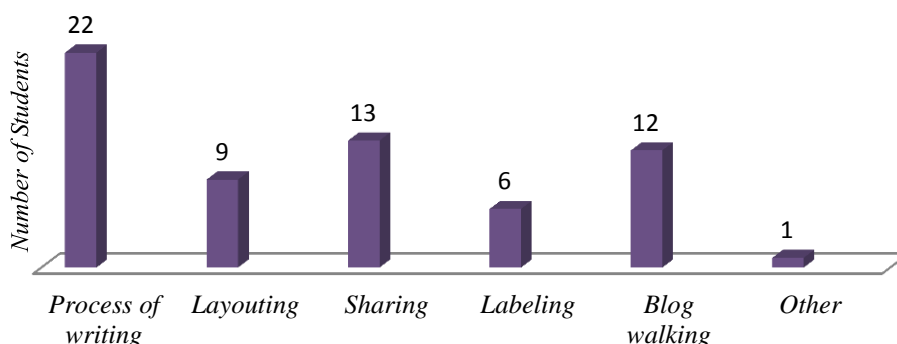


Figure 1 Blogging Activities leading the students to ELL

Process of writing as the blogging activity includes drafting, editing, revising, and using newly learned vocabulary words and idiom. Sharing the blog posts with the audience to their social media was opted out by 13 students as the blogging activity that led them to English language learning. Another blogging activity was blog walking which include visiting others’ weblogs, giving and replying comments was mentioned by 12 students to be the blogging activity leading to English language learning. Layouting the blog was also mentioned by the students, followed by labeling the blog post and making the blog as personal diary.

Generally, the process of writing as the main stage of blogging activity galvanized the students to enrich their vocabulary by looking up the online dictionary or the dictionary in form of application available in their gadgets (laptop, notebook, or smart phone). The following is students’ comment on the process of blog writing to improve writing skill:

I think the process of writing is the blogging activity that can lead me to English language learning. I get new vocabulary when writing the post, and also when I try to find something in blog, I can search the information in Google, so I get something new for writing the post. (Student 18, interview)

The similar event was also experienced by Student 21. The process of writing had her find out new words because the draft she prepared was initially written in her first language. Consequently, when writing the post to be published to blog, she frequently consulted to online dictionary and rearranged the sentence. One of blog entries of Student 21 is shown below.

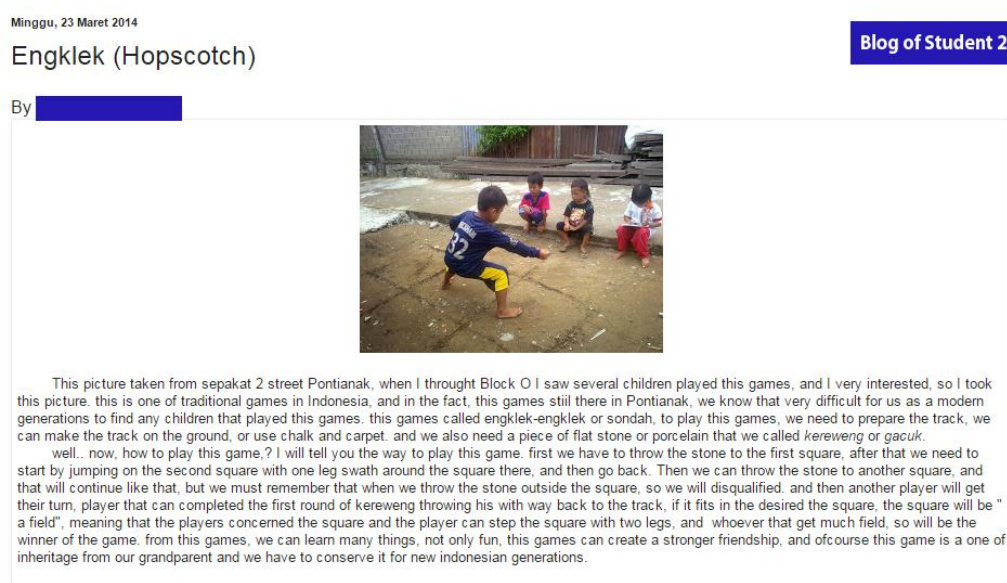


Figure 2 Blog Entry of Student 21

The entry of Student 21 as shown in Figure 2 can be categorized as meeting the standard. Despite of some errors she produced, the blog post is somewhat comprehensible, developed, focused, and showed a good amount of thinking about the topic. The student also inserted one photo to show the authenticity of the events she wrote as the entry. Using the interjection 'Well', as in the sentence "Well.. now, how to play this game?", it is inferred that the students used netspeak (Baecher, et al., 2013, p. 12) or non-academic as the writing style.

The use of online dictionary when having the writing process was also experienced by Student 24. He claimed that one of the reasons he keeps maintaining his blog is as the media to publish the short story which he wrote by himself hence he needed online dictionary when writing the story. The online dictionaries he used were Google translate and www.sederet.com. He mentioned that the preference of Google translate was because the simplicity. He used the online dictionaries for helping him translating some words. However, he claimed that he only used the online dictionary to translate one or two words instead of translating a paragraph. The screenshot of one of Student 24's blog entries is presented in Figure 3.

The Lore of Knight Prince Maliq of Astora

In the ancient age, lived a man, a knight of the Royal Family of Hounthor. He was born from the royalty of his family. His name was Maliq, well-known as the Knight Prince Maliq of Hounthor, which is a territory of Astora. Therefore, he was also known as Maliq of Astora. Famously, he was also known to be kind, caring, honest, brave, and just. In battle however, he was also known to be a man who disregards honor when it comes to war; that he would do everything for victory without harming the innocence from both sides, but when he fought in a duel, he preferred a fair fight. He was confident in his skill in fighting that he preferred to wield no shield. Most of the time, he was given a shield from his father, the king of Houndoor himself, but he refused to use it. He was also a man who likes to go against the rule and tends to do things alone instead of relying from others. Due to this, he was then known as a Rebellious Prince. As a warrior knight, and as a leader, he was known to be a man who really cares for his men, he appreciated them more than himself in battle, even though he preferred to fight his battle alone without any troops. He once single-handedly defeated 300 troops by himself with his pure fighting skill, combining his strength and agility, even though end up having a lot of wound on his body.

One day, he went to a land, venturing to the wild, for the sake of freedom. He looked for freedom so he would not have to lead an army, or be the next King of the kingdom in Hounthor. He also refused to marry a maiden from his country which in his opinion, it'd led him to a boring life, making an endless circumstance of the family, even if he is to marry a very beautiful and stunning maiden. He rather married someone outside of the country or non-noble maiden, like maiden from Vinheim, Carim, the Great Swamp, Zena, Catarina, Thorolund, and even a daughter of a farmer. In other words, he began his journey in purpose of a mere adventure, looking for a true freedom, where he can find a challenging life and even build a new life by finding a wife that is worthy to be his. Therefore, his journey, seeking of adventure, had just begun, from Houndoor.

Figure 3 Blog Entry of Student 24

Cross-checking via Google was completed to find out whether the entry as shown in Figure 3 above was plagiarism or genuinely composed by Student 24. The data from Google showed that the entry was originally written by Student 24, for the short story was merely found in his blog. Observing the entry by using the rubric to evaluate students' blog writing, Student 24's blog post can be categorized as exceeding the standard. The writing he used is considered as an academic writing style because the entry he posted was a short story.

The preliminary research for the present study revealed that the whole participants had positive attitudes towards the use of Weblogs as the tool for English language learning. In the present study, students' positive attitude has an important role in contributing the improvement of students' writing skill. The data derived from the analysis of the questionnaire, interview, and students' weblogs entries provide details of the positive attitude owned by the students. Generally, the students pondered that using blog for English language learning is interesting and useful. They utilize their blog to improve their writing skill, to enrich their vocabulary, to share their thoughts about certain issues, and to build their confidence. The students responded positively when questioned about their thought when the lecturers assigned them to create weblogs as the course project as can be seen in the following extract.

It's actually good way of convincing student to express anything they want to in English. Since blog focuses more on writing, students, who are poor in speaking skill may express their arguments in writing. And unlike speaking, writing has more times in correcting grammatical errors so we can edit the blog if we find a grammar mistake or to on it. (Student 24, student survey)

The positive responses to weblog utilization were influenced by the students' literacy in using technology. During the semester, they experienced that using blog is

easier because they are familiar with technology. As shown in Figure 4, none of the participants categorized themselves as novice in technology literacy. Majority of the students (17 participants) counted their technology literacy to ‘some experience’ that indicates they are able in word processing typing and using the internet to search, and e-mail. The rest (9 participants) chose ‘expert’ as their technology literacy.

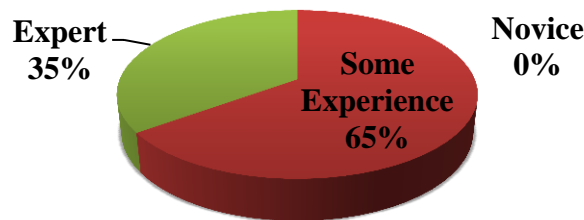


Figure 4 Students' Technology Literacy

Despite their technology literacy, some students claimed that they somewhat found difficulties at several blogging components such as designing the blog template, layouting the blog, and starting to compose writing. Nonetheless, the implementation of groupwork for the course project helped them to solve the problems. Harmer (2001, p. 132) claims that groupwork facilitates broader skill of cooperation and negotiation among students. Regarding the difficulty in composing writing, they opted out doing more practice, thus using weblogs became easier during the semester.

The students achieved the harmony of opinion that Weblogs utilization in English language learning has a great potential to foster their English writing ability. This notion is supported by ample of studies (Kitchakarn, 2012; Pop & Martinez, 2006; Tu, Chen, & Lee, 2007; Vurdien, 2011; Ýnceçay & Genç, 2014; Yunus, Tuan, & Salehi, 2010). The students discover weblog as a helpful and useful tool for them to English language learning. Blog entry of Student 13 is provided to verify the statement (Figure 5).



Figure 5 Blog entry of student 13

With the purpose of making the blog as a personal entry, instead of using academic writing style, the student employed text-based communication for the posting as shown in Figure 5. The style of the blogging language that was used by Student 13 is conformed as netspeak or textspeak (Baecher, et al., 2013, p. 12). An example from Student 13's blog entry demonstrates this point: "My sister saw me crying after her fight with her bf". In this example, the student used the term "bf" which stands for boyfriend, a typical and time-saving convention used in text messaging, online chat rooms, and other forms of Internet communication. Regardless of the writing style employed by the students in their blog entries, the process of writing the post has facilitated the students to pay more attention to their quality of writing.

Weblogs as e-portfolio was demonstrated by Student 2 through one of her blog entries (Figure 6). She posted a video which was assigned as the project for *Speaking* subject to her blog, completed by two paragraphs as the introduction to the video. This activity indicates that the student tried to integrate one subject with another; hence she accomplished one project to be submitted to two different subjects.

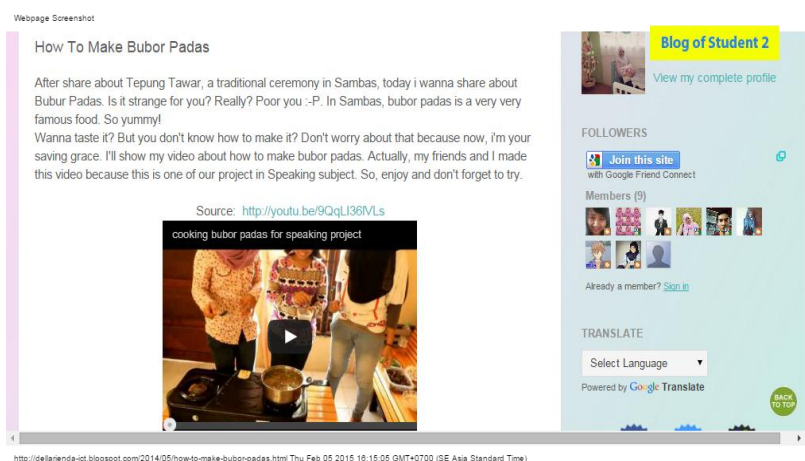


Figure 6 Speaking Project of Student 2

From the perspective of the writing process approach, there were several benefits the students got from blogging aspects. The blogging aspects identified to be useful were: easy word processing for writing, editing, and revising, commenting tool, public access of blogs, blog content ownership and a web page format for text and visual expression for publishing. In this section, the blogging aspects mentioned are discussed based on the students' experience in utilizing their weblogs for writing improvement.

In general, the students obviously viewed blogging as the writing activity. The part that makes blog writing different from writing with pen and paper is that the accomplishment of blog writing is online so it offers wider opportunity to be accessed by a lot of people. The easy word processing for writing, editing, and revising provided by the blog platform turned blog writing is somewhat considered as "more interesting" activity compared to traditional writing style.

Blogging is easier than writing with pen and paper, we can just type anything, then edit it, and post it, or just make draft. When we write with paper and pen, yes we can write

anything, but I think it's not as easy as blogging when we would like to revise it. (Student 5, student survey)

The word processing aspect in blogging was also helpful for students in terms of giving them practicality when writing. The characteristic of weblogs in archiving the data in cloud storage of the internet also became another consideration of the students to make the good use of weblogs as the media to draft their writing. In addition, the tool such as grammar spelling checker in word processing of weblogs is similar with the tool available in word processing like Microsoft Word which they usually use so they were accommodated to detect the mistyping and errors in sentence structure. The word processing offered them with some suggested words to replace the mistyped they made.

The second blogging aspect contributing to the writing process approach was commenting tool. The comment box available in weblogs allowed the students to create an interaction that based on the entries posted on the blog. However, despite of having good attitude towards this blogging aspect, students revealed that their weblogs were somewhat rarely even almost never given feedback online by the audience, including their lecturers. The online observation was accomplished to check their claim. Some interaction in the comment box of their post happened, but none of the students got responses regarding their blog post from the lecturers. Students stated that their lecturers did give feedback, but on the classroom when they presented their weblogs.

The next blogging aspect contributing to writing process approach is the public access of blogs. This aspect is associated the other blogging aspects namely blog content ownership. The students persistently mentioned that weblogs facilitated them to write better because posting their writing via weblogs increased the chance to be accessed by wider audience. The blog content ownership aspect plays the role for this activity because the students were the owner who decided to publish their writing or only saved it as draft. The blog content ownership could also grow the students' awareness of their errors, particularly when they did proofreading. As experienced by Student 22 who stated that with this blogging aspect, she was able to revise her writing.

One aspect of blog that is useful for me in the writing process approach is the content ownership. I can edit the writing anytime I want. (Student 22, interview)

The last aspect of blogging contributing in the writing process approach is a web page format for text and visual expression for publishing. As the part of writing, the students inserted the hyperlink of the references they got from several websites. They also put some pictures to support their writing and to attract readers to read their blog. The pictures in the blog entries were considered as the essentials elements to avoid the audience felt tedious when accessing their weblogs. Additionally, the students reported that the pictures sometimes described better than words.

Discussion

The students' activity when blogging which directed them to participate in the process of English language learning and contribute to their writing improvement was accomplished through several blogging activities. Majority of the students were prone to be helpful in the process of blog writing. They experienced that this blogging activity

played the most important role in improving their writing. Prior to making the entries, the students prepared materials through reading online resources, books, and their own experiences related to the topic they chose. When writing the entries, the students did not only write but also looked up to dictionaries in order to manage the organization of their writing. Through this activity, the students were led to enhance their vocabulary because they were still influenced by their first language hence they needed to find out the appropriate words for their blog writing before publishing it to their weblogs. This process was interconnected with the weblogs' characteristic which open access, thus the students consider preparing their best writing for the audience of their weblogs (Godwin-Jones, 2006, pp. 10-11).

The next blogging activity contributing to the students' improvement in writing is blog walking. The data of the present study corroborate Zhang (2009, p. 68)'s theory who suggested that blog walking bridged the students to learn the writing style of others and compare their ideas particularly with their peers. Weblogs through the blog walking activity, consequently, stimulated the students to be critical thinking (Martin, 2013). The students were encouraged to value others' point of view while learning several things such as acquiring new vocabulary and get new idea from reading and commenting others' blog entries. Additionally, the present study also disaffirms Andergassen, Behringer, Finlay, Gorra, and Moore (2009) who mention that weblogs users who do not like having people reacted on their blog posts tend to stop blogging.

Having the positive attitude toward the use of weblogs also contributes to the writing improvement. This point unravels the detail grounds that the students stand to the positive attitude of weblogs utilization in English language learning. Some factors yielded the positive response from the students to the use of weblogs. Technology literacy of the students becomes one factor that determined how students took weblogs' benefit. The students utilized weblogs as the media for their self-expression while improving their writing skill and bridging their creativity as precisely described in Zhang (2009, p. 68) and Nardi, et al (2004, pp. 43-45).

It must also be noted that students make use of weblogs for knowledge enhancement. Given the character of weblog of which access is open to public, the students were motivated to enhance their interest on a particular subject (Richardson, 2010, p. 27). This distinct feature led the students to the exposure of online learning resources. The research findings also discovered that the students utilized weblogs as an online portfolio. The students pondered using weblogs as the ongoing assignments media and testify their claim through their weblogs entries. Hence, they preferred submitting their projects so that they could compare their idea to their peers and other bloggers. It is akin to the ideas of Embi (2014) that suggested the students of 21st century should submit their works instead of handing them out to the teachers. The creation of online portfolios on the web amounts to a showcasing of their works over the development period of their learning (Zhang, 2009, p. 68).

Another essential point from weblogs aspects which the students employed was labeling their posts into specific categories. In regards with this, the blog owner has the privilege to set the blog topic or category (Holmes & Gardner, 2006, p. 161). Based on the syllabus course of Teaching Learning with ICT subject, the students were required to decide one theme for their weblogs. To link the blog theme with each blog entry, students decided the writing topic and must be creative deciding the appropriate blog

labels. Given the topic to their blog entries, the students were prompted to write. Hence, the finding of the current study reinforced the study of Higginson (2011, p. 54) who mentioned that the writing topic is considered as a motivational factor for students to keep writing. It also a proof that the students go through the various phases of writing (Pennington, 1996, p. 98)

Blogging aspects contributing in writing process approach is the next emerging theme to discuss. The students got the benefit when drafting the writing in the Weblogs page through the easy word processing aspect. As weblogs provide grammar-spelling tool to ensure the accuracy of the students' writing, hence they utilized the facility to have precise words and sentences before publishing their writing to public. Commenting tool provided by weblog platforms was also facilitated the students in writing process approach regarding their effort in developing their writing skill. Regardless the fact that the lecturers did not give any course credit for the students if they put comment on their classmates' blog entries, the students initiated to create a learning atmosphere outside the classroom (Dudeney & Hockly, 2007, p. 92).

Public access of blog and blog content ownership were the next blogging aspects accommodated the students' in writing process approach. Weblogs offers the internet users with no time and space boundaries (Salam, 2001, p. 36), hence the students make a good use the aspects of public access of blog that related to blog content ownership. They utilized their weblogs as the media of writing practice. The students also explored the aspect of blogging namely Web page format for text and visual expression for publishing. They inserted pictures, links to the online sources, and emoticons in their entries with various intentions such as to attract audience to visit their weblogs, to describe their writing with the pictures, and to give the detail of their blog entries. Overall, the execution of the blogging aspects made the weblogs were categorized and applied as the learner blogs in language learning (Dudeney & Hockly, 2007, p. 90).

After all, the themes emerged in the present study were presented with critical incident as it sought to explore students' experience in utilizing weblogs for developing their writing skill. It is akin to the purpose of critical incident analysis which is to explore particular type of incidents as suggested by Weatherbee (2010, p. 247). A particular students' activity becomes the basis to be valued because the event has contributed to language learning and the development of writing skill.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

The results of the present study are congruent with previous research on the use of weblogs for writing skill improvement. Weblogs were the prospective tools to the exposure of online learning resources and lead the students to English language learning which impact to the development of their writing skill. The students who owned positive attitude towards the use of weblogs for English language learning maximizing the advantages of the tools such as the similarity to word processing, easy public access, ownership of content, writing quality improvement, audience awareness, authentic audience, and authentic purpose for writing. The most pronounced issue associated with the writing skill improvement that blogging appeared to ameliorate was concern with the process of writing. The influence from the students' first language drove the

students to the enhancement of vocabulary. Although most students tended to write in a writing style known as netspeak or text-based communication, along the writing process, students acquired new lexicon which impacts to the richness of their writing. It automatically facilitates the students to create a better writing organization for their academic purposes. Students' initiative to begin the interaction via blog walking implicates that they were involved in a versatile learning environment. This event was revealed as one of the bridges to their self-directed study. Thus, it would contribute to the continuity of weblogs utilization by students to other subjects.

Suggestions

There are a number of limitations to the present study. It focused more on the students' experience in utilizing the weblogs instead of the content of students' blog entries. Therefore, further study on the analysis of students' blog entries might be carried out. It would also be merit the future research to investigate the relationship between reading and writing development related to blog use. Based on the findings of the present study, English language teachers are recommended to incorporate weblogs for students' learning process, particularly to engage them in an academic atmosphere of interaction outside the classroom. To avoid the constraints such as the students' use of non-academic terms in their entries, teachers can provide a form of peer critique for the students as one of the references of giving feedback to the other students. The incorporation of weblogs for English language learning can be taken into consideration by applying class blogs to avoid the overwhelming blog sites to visit. One or two learners may be assigned to be in charge of the class blog. Hence, one classroom would have one class blog. This strategy would help both teachers and students in promoting the interaction among peers and the teachers, particularly in giving the feedback for their writing.

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