

<https://jurnal.unigal.ac.id/index.php/jall/index>

JALL (Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literacy), ISSN 2598-8530, February, Vol. 4 No. 1, 2020

Received	Accepted	Published
December 2019	January 2020	February 2020

THE ROLE OF BLENDED LEARNING IN ENHANCING STUDENTS' WRITING PARAGRAPH

Dodi Mulyadi

dodi@unimus.ac.id

English Department, Universitas Muhammadiyah Semarang, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia

Testiana Deni Wijayatiningsih

testiana@unimus.ac.id

English Department, Universitas Muhammadiyah Semarang, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

The use of efficient and appropriate learning media-based learning is needed at all levels of education. In English language teaching (ELT) at the university level, the use of media can help to improve paragraph writing. The objective of this study was to determine the effect of Blended Learning on improving learning outcomes of EFL university students' writing paragraphs in English. This quasi-experimental research entailed non-parametric statistical analysis. The results indicated a statistically significant improvement after getting treatment of blended learning. The average pretest score was 65.9 and the average posttest score was (86.6) which means higher than the pre-test. These results also indicated that the Blended Learning model stimulated students to explore more ideas in writing activities. In addition, the results of the questionnaire showed that 85% of students were enthusiastic and enjoyed the learning process. Since the dearth of the research sample, further research has to be conducted in a broad research sample to be a more generalizable pedagogical implication.

Keywords: blended learning, writing, paragraph.

INTRODUCTION

The language learning process has been altered by the rapid development of Information Communication Technology (ICT). The language learning objectives, especially English, can be achieved by students easily through useful and innovative learning resources and activities (Wichadee, 2017). Nowadays, educators encounter the utilization of ICT to invent effective pedagogical methods that enable students to engage the teaching and learning process enthusiastically (Mahmud, 2018). One of the teaching methods that employ ICT in learning the English Language is blended learning that integrates online and technological learning with face-to-face learning. To date,

blended learning is commonly adopted in multifarious academic frameworks (Tananuraksakul, 2016).

Mastering the English language adheres to the acquisition of language skills that encompasses listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The manifestation of language skills is most recently mastered by language students (Iskandarwassid & Sunendar, 2015). Compared with three other language skills, writing ability is the most difficult language to master because the ability to write requires a mastery of various linguistic elements.

Writing is one of the language skills that someone uses to communicate indirectly and not face to face with other people. Writing is a productive and expressive activity. Through practice and a lot of practice and regularly causes writing skills to be mastered well (Tarigan, 2008). Writing skills are not obtained directly, but they need a recursive process as a part of continuous learning. Writing is a language skill that uses a variety of written languages. Writing is an inseparable part of a learning process experienced by students during their studies at school. Writing requires skills because it requires ongoing practice. Learning writing skills for students also requires a lot of writing practice.

The learning process of writing skills mentioned above also occurs in S1 English Language Education students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Semarang who have a lack of writing experience, enthusiasm, and motivation to improve their learning outcomes. Accordingly, the present study focused on finding out whether the effect of blended learning in improving learning outcomes in writing paragraphs in English can be effective or not.

Blended Learning (BL)

The blended learning model has become a trend in learning, especially in higher education. In general, blended learning has three meanings, among others: 1) fusion/integration of traditional learning with an on-line web-based approach; 2) a combination of media and equipment (e.g. Textbooks) used in the e-learning environment, and 3) a combination of a number of teaching-learning approaches regardless of the technology used. The blended learning model is a combination of two learning environments. On the one hand, there is face-to-face learning in traditional environments, on the other side of a distributed learning environment that begins to grow and develop in exponential ways as new technologies are likely to be extended to the distribution of communication and interaction. To wit, blended learning is

considered as the integration of face-to-face learning and learning methods with an on-line approach (Lee & Hung, 2015).

To date, there has been no determination about a single definition for blended learning. In addition, the terms "blended," "hybrid," and "mixed-mode" are used interchangeably in the latest research literature. The preferred term at Penn State in the above learning is "blended." The use of blended learning models is a new way for both teaching and learning in a basic education environment. Three main reasons why blended learning is chosen include: 1) Improving learning material; 2) Increasing access/flexibility, and 3) Increasing cost-effectiveness.

Three reasons for choosing the Blended Learning model in mastering the English language. It contributes to the development and support of interactive strategies not only in face-to-face teaching but also in distance education. It also offers more information to students and facilitates faster feedback in classroom interaction between teachers and students. In addition, it prompts access to learning sources as one of the key influencing factors in the growth of the learning environment. Students can access the material at any time and anywhere (Li, 2013). Thus, the blended learning model allows them after completing their work, family and other social commitments to start learning. The program of the blended learning model includes several forms of learning tools, such as collaboration software, online web-based programs, and electronics that support performance systems in the task of learning environments, and system management knowledge.

Writing

Writing is one form of basic expertise that complements the other three language skills. Yunus (2012)) argues that the process of communicating indirectly between the writer and the reader is called writing. Writing is a process where the products produced by an author are produced through recursive stages. These stages begin from the stage of acquiring ideas, processing ideas to the stage of producing ideas. The statement is in accordance with the opinion of Tarigan (2008) that writing is one of the language skills used by someone to communicate indirectly, not face to face with other people. Writing is a productive and expressive skill. Writing skill is not obtained directly but through a lot of practice and reiteration. Furthermore, Susanto (2015) explained that writing activities refer to a person's activities place something in a dimension of space that is still empty, after that the results in the form of writing can be read and understood the contents. Taufikurohman, I. (2018) said that writing is a way of learning that we have to

produce words, phrase, sentences, and paragraph at the same time. Accordingly, it can be concluded that writing is an activity that includes continuous and recursive stages having to do with creating products in the form of writing that can be understood and read well by readers in general.

Paragraph

Paragraphs are two sentences or more semantically and syntactically to build a unit of language which is a whole unit. Semantically, it means that in a paragraph there is one main idea equipped with additional information about the main idea. Syntactically, in a paragraph, there is a main sentence that contains the main or main idea, plus several other sentences that contain additional information about the main idea (Chaer, 2011). In short, a paragraph is a basic unit in creating a coherent and continuous whole discourse.

Considering the lack of writing ability, motivation, and enthusiasm of the second semester English department students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Semarang. The main objective of this study was to determine the effect of Blended Learning in improving learning outcomes and their motivation in writing paragraphs in English.

METHOD

This research was conducted in the second semester of undergraduate students of English Language Education of a private university in Semarang, Indonesia. This study involved an intact group ($N=14$) since the English language study program only has one class each year. The research was carried out in 4 months. In addition, second-semester students still have low motivation in creating creative ideas which are expressed in simple sentences. Writing tests and questionnaires were administered. Writing tests included pre-tests and posttests completed with their rubrics. Meanwhile, the questionnaire was intended to find out students' responses or opinions on the results of writing learning with blended learning.

This quasi-experimental study (quasi-experiment) aims to determine the differences in student learning outcomes in the class that used Blended learning to increase the skills of writing paragraphs. The process of treatments encompassed recursive stages comprising 7 meetings that included face to face learning and 7 meetings pertained with online learning activities employing web 2.0 facilities using Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and hangout applications. This research used a single group pre-test post-test design. The design of the initial test-final test in a single group

did not have a control class and students were given an initial test before treatment instructions so that there were two tests; O1 is the initial test, and O2 is post-test, X is used as a symbol of treatment in the design.

This study used data analysis methods, namely Nonparametric statistical analysis. Nonparametric statistics is a test that does not specify the existence of certain conditions. In addition, Nonparametric statistics were used for small samples as in this study. The Mann-Whitney test is one of the tests in Nonparametric statistics that are used to compare responses between two groups of interconnected data. The present study analyzed how the results of the significant differences between student learning outcomes using conventional lecture techniques compared with Blended Learning techniques. The analysis process used in the present study employed SPSS 21 software.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test reveals that $\text{sig} = 0.001 < \alpha = 0.05$ which means the average pre-test scores were 65.9% with grade D, meanwhile the results of the post-test mean scores after getting the blended learning model increased to 86.6% with grade B as manifested in Figure 1.

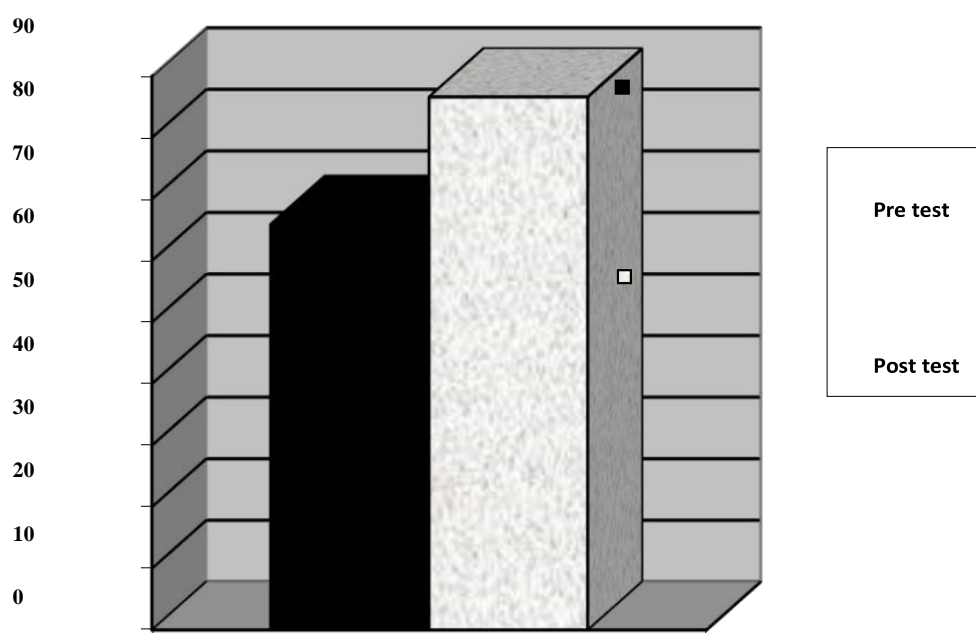


Figure 1. The Differences between students' Pre Test and Post Test scores of writing Achievement (%)

Hence, it can be deduced that the utilization of the blended learning model has influenced on 14 students' writing performances. It is in line with Ferriman's (2013) study and Wijayatiningsih's (2018) one that the writing activities by using an online

bulletin board as part of a blended learning environment affected the students' writing performance in small class size. The present study also criticizes the research conducted by Rajabi & Hashemian (2015) that found the online writing activities in blended learning had the time-consuming to gather data and was not engaged by some learners. Thus, it argues the blended learning is an effective way to teach a writing class in enhancing students' writing performance.

Questionnaire Results

The application of blended learning can be seen from the increasing ability to write skill which is taken from the questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed to 14 students. The form of the questionnaire is an open questionnaire which concludes that the blended learning model can help students to create diverse writing ideas and can produce systematic writing. This can be seen from the results of the questionnaire distributed to students obtaining an average of 85%. These results are higher than the 75% basic indicator. If they have difficulty in writing paragraphs, they feel easier after they learn to write with the blended learning model. Students also enjoy learning that is carried out when they learn face to face and online learning through their respective blogs that are interrelated with each other. They tend to be pleasant to write a paragraph in online media such as blogs, what apps, and Facebook with various types of essay models. This finding concurs with Wijayatiningsih's (2018) study that EFL learners enthusiastically engaged in writing class by utilizing blended learning.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the application of Blended Learning in teaching writing accomplished significantly on students' writing performance after comparing the pretest results with posttest results. In a similar vein, the present model also enables students to prompt in building diverse writing ideas. To wit, the results of the questionnaire distributed to students obtained an average of 85% that is higher than the 75% as a basic indicator. Therefore, the activity of students in learning to write paragraphs has increased after the implementation of the Blended Learning model. Since the dearth of the research sample, further research has to be conducted in a broad research sample to be a more generalizable pedagogical implication.

REFERENCES

Chaer, A. (2011). *Ragam Bahasa Ilmiah*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.

- Ferriman, N. (2013). The impact of blended e-learning on undergraduate academic essay writing in English (L2). *Computers & Education*, 60, 243–253. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2012.07.008>
- Iskandarwassid, I., & Sunendar, D. (2015). *Strategi Pembelajaran Bahasa*. Bandung: Remaja Rosda Karya.
- Lee, L. T., & Hung, J. C. (2015). Effects of blended e-Learning: a case study in higher education tax learning setting. *Human-Centric Computing and Information Sciences*, 5(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13673-015-0024-3>
- Li, K. C. (2013). Encountering pedagogical challenges: a case of three pilot blended learning courses. *International Journal of Innovation and Learning*, 13(2), 153. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJIL.2013.052285>
- Mahmud, M. M. (2018). Technology and Language – What Works and What Does Not : *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 15(2), 365–382.
- Rajabi, B., & Hashemian, M. (2015). A Comparative Study of the Effectiveness of Two Methods of Teaching Resumptive Pronouns in Writing: TBLT and Blended Learning. *English Language Teaching*, 8(9), 196–202. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v8n9p196>
- Susanto, A. (2015). *Teori Belajar dan Pembelajaran di Sekolah Dasar*. Jakarta: Prenadamedia.
- Tananuraksakul, N. (2016). Blended e-learning as a requirement for teaching EFL in a Thai academic context. *Teaching English with Technology*, 16(4), 48–55. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0021-9797\(02\)00170-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0021-9797(02)00170-4)
- Tarigan, H. G. (2008). *Menulis sebagai Suatu Keterampilan Berbahasa*. Bandung: Angkasa.
- Taufikurohman, I. (2018). The Effectiveness of Using Padlet in Teaching Writing Descriptive Text. *JALL (Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literacy)*, 2(2), 71-88.
- Wichadee, S. (2017). A Development of the Blended Learning Model Using Edmodo for Maximizing Students' Oral Proficiency and Motivation. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, 12(2), 137–154. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v12i02.6324>
- Wijayatiningsih, T. D. (2018). Blended Learning Fostering Students' Writing. In *The 6th ELTLT* (pp. 1–12). Semarang: Universitas Negeri Semarang.
- Yunus, A. (2012). *Pembelajaran Bahasa Berbasis Pendidikan Karakter*. Bandung: Refika Aditima.