Using Web Blogs in Teaching Writing for EFL Students

by Eka Apriani

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Hengki Kris Sanjaya
Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Curup
krissanjaya29@gmail.com
Eka Apriani
Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Curup
eka.apriani@iaincurup.ac.id
Sarwo Edy
Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Curup
edywong59@yahoo.com
Corresponding email: krissanjaya29@gmail.com

Abstract

In teaching writing, medium is an essential aspect. This research discovers students' perception on weblogs as an educational tool in writing class in order to improving students' writing skill. This quantitative research discussed 30 English Foreign Language (EFL) students. In obtaining the data, the thirty students of 8th semester at English Study Program of IAIN Curup were given a set of questionnaires to get students' response on weblogs. After obtaining the data, the researcher analyzed the student's response by counting its frequency and percentage. The findings of this research Indicated that the majority of students have positive perception on weblogs based on five indicators that is provided by researcher, those are: students confidence to write, writing skill improvement, Information and Communication Technology experience and knowledge, critical thinking promotion and accessible aspect. This research revealed that students gave positive response to the use of weblogs as a medium in writing class. Furthermore, students also prefer to do their assignment on blog rather than write conventionally on paper. Findings of this research also advise the English teacher and lecturer to consider weblogs as medium and learning tool in school and university since it can encourage students' writing motivation to write. The researcher also provide conclusion in this article.

Keywords: EFL students, writing class, weblogs

Introduction

For hundreds decades, people use writing for transmitting the information, keeping historical record, and some similar activities. Historically,

writing is extention of human language that across space and time. It is the most crucial invention in the whole of the world, because for hundreds decades, people use writing for transmitting the information, keeping historical record, and some similar activities. Vivian Zamel (2007) mentioned writing as a form of communication to deliver through or express feeling through written form. In addition, writing is a kind of communication way where the writers can communicate with someone to send the message or particular communication purpose.

As an essential skill in language production, writing skill is taught in schools and universities. In the domain of EFL, writing is not only functioned as a medium for communication, but more than that, writing also prosecute students to organize knowledge or transfer their ideas and thought into written form. It indicates that in EFL context writing is considered as one of the most challenging skill to be learned. Generally, writing skill becomes least devotee to the students. The fact that productive learning of the writing skill influenced by the successful with the learning of other skill also becomes an evidence that writing is the most complicated skill in English. The statement above is supported by Fageeh who stated that "many EFL learners heavily rely on writing as integral skill to language learning. Writing absolutely has crucial role for the EFL learners. It helps learners to achieve academic mastery. Considering those functions of writing, the lecturer plays an essential role in EFL writing class. The expectation to the students in university to become a good writer is very high. If they do not have a good writing skill, several difficulties might be faced by them in university course. Consequently, teachers portray very crucial role in writing class, they should encourage and make students be aware of importance of writing skill.

In teaching writing, medium is very important and helpful for both teacher and students to reach the successful of mastery writing skills(Rahmawati, et al. 2019). One of the media that can be used in EFL writing class at university is Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Tinio as cited in Eka defined ICT as diverse set of technological tools and resources

used to communicate, create, disseminate, store, and manage information.(2016) Nowadays, the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) cannot be neglected in every aspect of life, included educational aspect. In the domain of education, one of ICT types that can be used as a medium in writing class is weblogs. Weblogs is an internet platform that allows the user to write a paragraph or article where the written work can be accessed by everyone who uses internet and their own blog. A.P. Campbell (2016) identifies three types of blogs used in foreign language classes, those are: tutor blog, class blog, and learners blog.

In the era of technology, weblogs is a popular platform among EFL students. Weblog has features that allow the user to drafting, posting, or leaving comments. Those features make students share their writing knowledge easily. Compared with other media used in language-teaching, blog has a special benefit. Kavaliauskiene (2014) indicates that students like blogging irrespective of the difficulty of the tasks. Amal Alsubaie (2018) argued that blog facilitates the learners to master writing skills, trigger writing motivation, and interact in both social and real context effectively. Furthermore, Richardson as cited in Drexler et al (2015) stated that weblogs promoting students' character development and insight into writing process.

Hence, to improve students' writing skills, in the beginning of 2019 the lecturer at English Study Program of IAIN Curup used web blog as a learning media. In its implementation, the lecturer in IAIN Curup asked students to create their own blog which available on search engine Google. Every student must upload their own written work on web blog. Then, they have to submit the link to the lecturer.

However, the utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) such as weblogs in EFL writing class can bring out perception for students. Edy (2019) defined perception as a process of providing meaning to environment by individual. Furthermore, Richard (1992) devided perception into three types: visual perception, auditory perception and speech perception. Wan (2011) in her research confirmed that students feel that web

blogs can enhance their confidence, improve their writing skills and assist them to express their thought.

However, Wan (2011) also indicates that students have negative perception on web blog, they prefer to practice writing on paper because it is more familiar. Accordingly, students' perception on weblogs in writing class divided into two forms, they are positive and negative perceptions. Moreover a study of Fischer (2011) their findings suggest that there is no substantial difference in levels of reflection achieved when students comprehend a similar assignment via online blogging or traditional essay writing.

Based on the description above, the researcher interested to investigate students' perception on weblog used by lecturer in EFL writing class in the 8th semester of TBI students at IAIN Curup academic year 2019/2020. What is the difference between this research with others?. This research focus on writing essay for Islamic Students. Accordingly, the research question is formulated as how is students' perception on weblog used by lecturer in EFL writing class?. All data collected on this research targeted to answer the research question.

Research Methodology

This research was descriptive study and organized in quantitative way. Explained by Cresswel (2009), quantitative study is a type of study which is explaining phenomena by collecting the numerical data that are analyze using mathematically-based method. It means that the data of quantitative research presented statistically and describing phenomena. Hence, the design of this research was survey. Cresswel (2012) defined survey as procedures in quantitative research in which investigator administer a survey to sample or to do the entire population of people to describe the attitude, opinions, behavior, or characteristic of population. In line with that, this research focused on discovering students' perception on weblogs used in writing class.

The population was the entire students of second, fourth, sixth, and eight semester of English Study Program of IAIN Curup academic year 2019/2020. The total number of population was 236 students. In selecting of the sample, the researcher choose 8th semester students of A and B class of English Study Program. There was a characteristic of subject that become consideration based on this research: First, the sample was students who got experience in using web blogs in writing 3 subject in academic year 2018/2019 as medium in learning writing. Second, the researcher assumed that the students have their own perspective toward the use weblogs in enhancing writing skills.

Data collection

In collecting data, the researcher gave the questionnaire to 8th semester students of English Study Program of IAIN Curup academic year 2019/2020. The questionnaire was a tool to collect students' perception concerning to the use of weblogs as medium in writing class. The purpose of using this instrument was to know whether students have positive or negative perceptions as means to enhance their writing skills. After collected the data, the researcher analyzed the data by using Likert Scale, to calculate students' perception on weblogs in writing class. In the research, the social phenomenon has determined specifically by researcher, then, called as research variable. On the other hand, determining of Likert Scale should be based on research variables that have arranged by the researcher.

Instrument

The using of questionnaire in this research is to get specific data about students' perception. In this study, the researcher used close-ended questionnaire to generate statistical research. In constructing the questionnaire, the researcher determined the indicators of writing and students perception on weblogs in writing class. Then, after got the indicators the researcher determined the question of the result of weblogs and writing indicators' elaboration. Hence, the questionnaire consist of 30 items from 5

primarily indicators. In this questionnaire, the researcher used Likert Scale to obtain the data needed, namely:

5= Strongly agree

4=Agree

3=Uncertain

2=Disagree

1=Strongly disagree.

After the data conducted, the researcher would analyze the data.

Data analysis

Before analyzing the data, the researcher run the reliability analysis in order to measure internal consistency of each item. The reliability in this research was measured by using Cronbach Alpha. It is generally used when a researcher has multiple questions with likert scale in a survey/questionnaire to determine if the scale is reliable. In the psychometric test, most descend in the range of 0.75 to 0.83 with at least one asserting a Cronbach's alpha up to 0.90.

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha	Internal Consistency
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$	Good
$0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$	Acceptable
$0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$	Questionable
$0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$	Poor
$0.5 > \alpha$	Unacceptable

After measuring the internal consistency, the next step was analyzing the data. Robson mentioned that there are some steps to analyze the data as follow: First, the researcher analyzed the data from questionnaire by using 5 values on Likert Scale that is used to measuring the mean score of students perception on weblogs in writing class. To obtain the mean score, each statement was developed with the value (Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4,

Uncertain = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = 1), the formula is described as follow:

$$X = ((f\ SA\times5)+(f\ A\times4)+(f\ U\times3)+(f\ D\times2)+(f\ SD\times1))/N$$

Where:

f	: Frequency	U	: Uncertain
SA	: Strongly agree	D	: Disagree
A	: Agree	SD	: Strongly disagree

After each respondent's score were accounted, then the researcher would categorized the range score to describe the categories of blogging activity in writing class. Then, the score from each respondent done to be counted, then it should be categorized into the range score to get the description of students' perception on weblogs. The formula is following below:

Highest score = 5   Lowest score = 1

Score Range = Highest Score-Lowest Score/Max Score

The next step is the researcher accounted its percentage of each items of questionnaire that answered by respondents. Percentage analysis is used by the researcher to find out the category of students' perception toward using web blogs in teaching writing. In this research the researcher only focused to find out the category of students' perception. The formula is following below:

$$P = \sum score\ /\ Max\ Score\ x\ 100\%$$

Where:

P   : Percentage

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∑ score   : Total score

Max score   : Maximum score

Findings and Discussion

Students' Perception on Weblogs used in Writing Class

From the responses given by students based on the questionnaire, the researcher found that the students have perception on weblogs in five indicators: students' confidence to write, students' writing improvement, Information and Communication experience and knowledge, promoting critical thinking and accessible aspect. The tables below are the explanations.

Table 2. Students' Perception on Weblogs as Means to Enhance Their Confidence to Write

Indicator	Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	
		F	F	F	F	F	Score	%
Students' confidence to write	1. Using weblogs in writing class could increase my confidence, consequently I can create an interesting content which is appropriate with the topic.	0	0	2	22	6	124	82,7 %
	2. Using weblogs in writing class could increase my confidence, consequently my written task well-organized.	0	0	2	21	7	129	86%
	3. Using weblogs in writing class made me more confidence to choose an appropriate word on my writing task.	0	0	9	13	8	119	79,3%
	4. Using weblogs in writing class could increase my confidence, consequently I use tenses, articles, pronoun, and preposition thoroughly.	0	1	9	10	10	109	72,7%

		SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	
5. Using weblogs in writing class could increase my confidence, consequently I use punctuation, spelling, and capitalization thoroughly.		0	0	2	18	10	128	85,3%
Total							609	81.2%

From the data above, **statement 1** showed that there were 2 students choose uncertain, 22 students choose agree and 6 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 124 and has percentage 82,7%. **Statement 2** showed that there were 2 students choose uncertain, 21 students choose agree and 7 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 124 and has percentage 86%. **Statement 3** showed that there were 9 students choose uncertain, 13 students choose agree and 8 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 124 and has percentage 79,3%. **Statement 4** showed that there were 1 student choose disagree, 9 students choose uncertain, 10 students choose agree and 10 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 109 and has percentage 72,7%. **Statement 5** showed that there were 2 students choose uncertain, 18 students choose agree and 10 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 128 and has percentage 85,3%.

Based on description above, it can be concluded that the majority of students have **positive perception** on weblogs as means to enhance their confidence to write with the entire percentage 81,2%.

Table 3. Students' Perception on Weblogs as Means To Improve Writing Skill

Indicator	Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	
		F	F	F	F	F	Score	%
	1. I feel using weblogs in writing class could enhance my writing skills, consequently I can create better content rather than write conventionally on	0	1	4	16	9	123	82 %

	paper.						
Writing skill improvem ent	2. Using weblogs in writing class could increase my writing skill, consequently the organization of my writing task was cohesive.	0	0	4	22	4	120	80%
	3. Using weblogs in writing class could increase my writing skill, consequently my vocabulary choice was more effective.	0	1	4	12	13	127	84,7%
	4. Using weblogs in writing class could increase my writing skill, consequently the applying of tenses, articles, pronoun, and preposition were better than write conventionally on paper.	0	1	2	14	13	129	86%
	5. Using weblogs in writing class could increase my skill, consequently the use of punctuation, spelling, and capitalization were better than write conventionally on paper.	0	1	2	15	12	128	85,3%
Total							627	83,6%

From the data in table 3, *statement 1* showed that there were 1 student choose disagree, 4 students choose uncertain, 16 students choose agree and 9 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 123 and has percentage 82%. *Statement 2* showed that there were 4 students choose uncertain, 22 students choose agree and 4 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 120 and has percentage 80%. *Statement 3* showed that there were 1 student choose disagree, 4 students choose uncertain, 12 students choose agree and 13 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 127 and has percentage 84,7%. *Statement 4* showed that there were 1 student choose disagree, 2 students choose uncertain, 14 students choose agree and 13 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 129 and has percentage 86%. *Statement 5*

showed that there were 1 student choose disagree, 2 students choose uncertain, 15 students choose agree and 12 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 128 and has percentage 85,3%.

Based on description above, it can be conclude that the majority of students have **positive perception** on weblogs as means to improve their writing skill with the entire percentage 83,6%.

Table 4. Students' Perception on Weblogs Concerning to ICT experience and knowledge.

Indicator	Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	
		F	F	F	F	F	Score	%
Information and Communication Technology experience and knowledge	1. I got new experience and knowledge concerning to Information and Communication Technology by using weblogs on writing class as a result I got inspiration to create a content on my writing tasks.	0	0	1	13	16	135	90 %
	2. I got new experience and knowledge concerning to Information and Communication Technology by using weblogs on writing class as a result I got more references to organize my writing tasks.	0	0	3	13	14	131	87,3%
	3. I got new experience and knowledge concerning to Information and Communication Technology by using weblogs on writing class as a result I got inspiration from internet to considered the variety of vocabulary on my writing tasks.	0	0	2	16	12	130	86,7%

	4. I got new experience and knowledge concerning to Information and Communication Technology by using weblogs on writing class as a result I had various resources from internet as references in the use of syntax' elements on my writing tasks.	0	1	1	12	16	133	88,7%
	5. I got new experience and knowledge concerning to Information and Communication Technology by using weblogs on writing class as a result there were so many resources that could be guidance for me to use punctuation, spelling, and capitalization on my writing task.	0	1	7	14	9	124	82,7%
Total							653	87,08 %

From the data in table 4, ***statement 1*** showed that there were 1 students choose uncertain, 13 students choose agree and 16 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 135 and has percentage 90%. ***Statement 2*** showed that there were 3 students choose uncertain, 13 students choose agree and 14 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 131 and has percentage 87,3%. ***Statement 3*** showed that there were 2 students choose uncertain, 16 students choose agree and 12 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 130 and has percentage 86,7%. ***Statement 4*** showed that there were 1 student choose disagree, 1 students choose uncertain, 12 students choose agree and 16 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 133 and has percentage 88,7%. ***Statement 5*** showed that there were 1 disagree, 7 students choose uncertain, 14 students choose agree and 9

students choose strongly agree. The total score is 124 and has percentage 82,7%.

Based on description above, it can be conclude that the majority of students have ***positive perception*** on weblogs since they got new experience and knowledge about Information and Communication Technology (ICT) with percentage 87,08%.

Table 5. Students' Perception on Weblogs in Order to Promote Critical Thinking

Indicator	Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	
		F	F	F	F	F	Score	%
Promote critical thinking	1. Using weblogs in writing class could promote my critical thinking so that I could create an educative content.	0	0	3	20	7	124	82,7%
	2. Using weblogs in writing class could promote my critical thinking so that my ideas were clearly stated.	0	0	6	16	8	122	81,3%
	3. Using weblogs in writing class could promote my critical thinking so that I was more selective in vocabulary choices.	0	2	3	18	7	120	80%
	4. Using weblogs in writing class could promote my critical thinking so that I could build up a sentence with the effective complex construction.	0	2	5	19	4	115	76,7%
	5. Using weblogs in writing class could promote my critical thinking so that I was more thorough in applying punctuation, spelling, and capitalization on my writing tasks.	0	0	6	16	8	122	81,3%
Total							603	80,4%

From the data above, **statement 1** showed that there were 3 students choose uncertain, 20 students choose agree and 7 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 124 and has percentage 82,7%. **Statement 2** showed that there were 6 students choose uncertain, 16 students choose agree and 8 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 122 and has percentage 81,3%. **Statement 3** showed that there were 2 students disagree, 3 students choose uncertain, 18 students choose agree and 7 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 120 and has percentage 80%. **Statement 4** showed that there were 2 students choose disagree, 5 students choose uncertain, 19 students choose agree and 4 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 115 and has percentage 76,7%. **Statement 5** showed that there were 6 students choose uncertain, 16 students choose agree and 8 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 122 and has percentage 81,3%.

Based on description above, it can be conclude that the majority of students have **positive perception** on weblogs as means to promote critical thinking with the entire percentage 80,4%.

Table 6. Students' Perception on Weblogs Concerning to Accessible Aspect

Indicator	Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	
		F	F	F	F	F	Score	%
	1. Using weblogs in writing class were appropriate since it can be accessed easily so that I could revise my writing task's content anywhere and anytime.	0	0	2	9	19	137	91,3%
Accessible aspect	2. Using weblogs in writing class were appropriate since it can accessed easily by both writer and readers so that I triggered to more thorough in organizing my writing task.	0	0	1	16	13	132	88%
	3. Using weblogs in writing class were appropriate							

	since it can accessed easily so that I could revise my writing every time if there were any inappropriate vocabulary choice concerning to content.	0	0	1	13	16	135	90%
	4. Using weblogs in writing class were appropriate since it can be accessed easily so that I could revise my writing task if there were any error in applying tenses, articles, pronoun, and preposition on my task.	0	0	6	10	14	128	85,3%
	5. Using weblogs in writing class were appropriate since it can be accessed easily so that I could revise my writing task if there were any error in applying English convention on my task.	0	0	0	19	11	131	87,3%
Total							663	88,38%

From the data above, **statement 1** showed that there were 2 students choose uncertain, 9 students choose agree and 19 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 137 and has percentage 91,3%. **Statement 2** showed that there were 1 student choose uncertain, 16 students choose agree and 13 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 132 and has percentage 88%. **Statement 3** showed that there were 1 students choose uncertain, 13 students choose agree and 16 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 135 and has percentage 90%. **Statement 4** showed that there were 6 students choose uncertain, 10 students choose agree and 14 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 128 and has percentage 85,3%. **Statement 5**

showed that 18 students choose agree and 10 students choose strongly agree. The total score is 131 and has percentage 87,3%.

Based on description above, it can be conclude that the majority of students have **positive perception** on weblogs concerning to its accessible aspect with the entire percentage 88,38%.

Diagram 1. The Total Percentage of Students' Perception on Weblogs Used in Writing Class

Discussion

To discover students' perception on weblogs in writing class at English Study Program of IAIN Curup, the researcher used questionnaire to the 30 respondents from 8th semester since they got experience in using weblogs in writing 3 subject in academic year 2018/2019 as medium in learning writing. The questionnaire consists of 25 items from five main indicators.

As means to enhance students' confidence, the majority of students have **positive perception** when the lecturer decided to use weblogs in writing 3 subject. Related with this, Kuimova and Zvekov (2016) confirmed that weblogs assist students to build up confidence in their writing. Therefore, students feel that weblogs really assist them to enhance their confidence to finish their writing assignment. Furthermore, Richardson as cited in Draxler

(2007) agreed that web blogs offering background into character development and insight into writing process.

The increasing of students' confidence give positive impact to their writing product since they could create better content, organize their writing well, choose an appropriate word, use tenses, articles, pronoun, and preposition thoroughly, use punctuation, spelling, and capitalization thoroughly. Based on finding, students' perception on weblogs as means to enhance confidence to write has percentage 81,2%. It indicates that students have very high percentage of perception.

In case to improve writing skill, most of students have **positive perception**. The percentage of students' perception are categorized very high with 83,6%. In line with this, Zhang (2009) said that the using of weblogs in writing class helps the students to enhance the quality of their writing by adding visual representation... visual literacy, visual thinking, and visual learning are concepts related to the purpose of Constructing Meaning. This finding is in line with Kuimova and Zvekov (2016) research which stated that 55% students argued that weblogs give a positive impact in developing writing skill. Accordingly, the use of weblogs in writing class gave a positive impact for students such as, they can create better content rather than write conventionally on paper, the organization of their writing task was more cohesive, vocabulary choice was more effective, the applying of tenses, articles, pronoun, and preposition were better and the last, the use of punctuation, spelling, and capitalization were better than write conventionally on paper.

Concerning to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) the students gave **positive perception** when the lecturer used weblogs in writing class. It allows the students to get new experience and knowledge. The explanation above is supported by Francis & Taylor (2009) who stated that blogs which is a new and innovative technological tool can be used to support student learning by capitalizing on students' interest and familiarity with on-line communication. In relation with the result, the study conducted by

Chan and Ridgway (2006) confirmed that students were essential to reflect on lessons, and to write their likenesses on their blogs as part of their assignment.

In order to promote critical thinking, the using of weblogs brought out **positive perception** from students. Based on finding above this indicator has very high perception with total percentage 80,4%. This finding in line with Zhang (2009) who stated that Writing blogs offers students a way to improve their writing skills and encounter new ideas through interaction with other students. According to previous study conducted by Noytim (2010) in Taiwan showed that the students accepted blogs as a useful tool in terms of improving writing and critical thinking skills... Blogs allow students to easily link to resources that support their assertions, and thereby encourage critical thinking.

Concerning to accessible aspect the use of weblogs in writing class brought **positive perception** from students. Richardson (2010) claims that weblogs are easy to create, easy to update, and allow the author or students to publish written work directly on Internet forum. From the finding, this indicator got percentage 88,38%, which is the highest percentage of the whole indicators that measured by researcher. Related with this Song and Chan (2008) in their research confirmed that most of the students mentioned that it is convenient to use blogging as they can access the blogs 24/7 at their own pace. Kirk and Johnson (2009) on their study found that blogs are useful and make students fill comfort with using the Internet due to the format can use easily. From this finding we can see that the students gave high appreciate to the implementation of weblogs in writing class due to they can access it anywhere and anytime.

Conclusion

Based on the result of this research, the researcher conclude that the majority of students have positive perception on weblogs used in writing class. Based on theory there are five indicators that become reference to discover students' perception on weblogs. The researcher obtained the data of

students' perception on weblogs used in writing class and to confirm that blog is appropriate medium in writing class as a means to improve students writing skill. Based on finding of the research, the researcher found that the majority of students have positive perception when the lecturer used weblog in writing class as a medium. The benefit of weblogs in writing class can enhance students' confidence, improving writing skill, give them a new experience & knowledge, promote critical thinking and weblogs are easy to use due to it can be accessed anytime and anywhere.

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