

The Implications of Blog Writing on Writing Enhancement in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) among Students in Buqata Junior High School, Golan Heights

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Abstract: Weblogging, or blogging online, has always intrigued academicians because of its interest and excitement created on young students. Yet, only a few qualitative studies have been conducted on the effect of blogging on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' English writing. This study is one of those that can provide some light on the impact of blogging on EFL students' English writing. This experiment used EFL students from Buqata Junior High School in Golan Heights. Based on the teacher's prompts, the participants were asked to write in English on a blogging website, Blogger.com. The first prompt writing experience produced many grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and syntax mistakes. The teachers found improvement in the subsequent prompt writing experience. The teachers were interviewed at the end of the experiment, and they provided valuable insights into the effect of blogging on the EFL students' English writing. The students showed interest and excitement in blogging, which motivated them to write in English. This study found that blogging on a blogging website, blogger.com, allowed and motivated EFL students to improve their English writing.

Keywords: Writing skills, Vocabulary knowledge, Technology integration, Web blog, English Language Institute

Introduction

Blogging improves English as a Foreign Language/English as a Second Language (EFL/ESL) students' writing and motivation, enhances their writing, and develops autonomous writing effectively. Blogs are common examples of writing using technology and the internet that allow users to easily maintain content by making the most of websites, social media, and blogging sites. Blogs have also been researched in the linguistic context (Herring et al., 2013). Weblogs represent a major digital area practiced with the internet and have significantly grown since free, easy-to-use blogging applications in gadgets (e.g., cellphones, tablets, laptops, etc.) became available.

The current recent pandemic outburst has led educational establishments all over the world to depend on online teaching as the chief method to evade direct contact (Hung and Nguyen 2022). In conjunction with other online platforms such as chats, instant messaging, and social networks, blogs make it possible for individuals with shared interests who wish to connect across geographical and cultural boundaries to communicate on a wider spectrum (Vettorel, 2014). In this context, English is commonly used as a language of communication. Blogging offers numerous benefits for language learners, particularly for enhancing writing skills. It offers

writers a free space to express and share their ideas with a global audience. Blogs also constitute a constructivist tool where learners draw knowledge and information from others. Studies affirm that writing enhances through blogs (Akdağ & Özkan, 2017; Cequena & Salle, 2013; Lin et al., 2013; Lin, 2014).

Blogs are easy to manipulate, especially the ones provided by blogging websites like *Blogger.com* and *Live Journal* and have a wide range of functions to allow users to communicate with peers and the internet community. Many educators have focused their attention and research on this phenomenon, believing that blogs can potentially enable effective teaching and learning. In recent years, many researchers have examined blogs, especially in the context of ESL/EFL writing classrooms. According to recent research, most ESL students enjoy using blogs in the classroom and believe they can express themselves more readily through this medium. In addition, numerous student bloggers are inspired to write (Sun, 2010). These positive results could explain why student bloggers believe they can strengthen their writing skills (Wu, 2005) and why students' writing performance has improved (Chen et al., 2011).

Literature Review

Theories on writing

Grabe and Kaplan (1996) hypothesized that learning to write requires the manipulation of many complex structural and rhetorical dimensions, with greater complexity occurring in expository/argumentative writing (Kaplan, 1996). Teaching grammar and vocabulary and applying all kinds of tests in writing does not mean that EFL students eventually learn writing skills. The researchers identify two types of writing in a language class: "writing without composing" and "writing through composing." The former is designed to reinforce grammatical structures, while the latter teaches students how to inform, relate, and persuade, among other skills.

In his book "Rethinking Foreign Language Writing," Scott (1996) differentiates between writing as a supporting ability and writing as the construction of meaning (Scott, 1996). The former includes transcribing, taking notes, making lists, and completing fill-in-the-blank exercises, whereas the latter involves generating meaning by arranging words, sentences, and paragraphs. The second category of writing incorporates a variety of genres, including letter writing, journals, report writing, academic essay writing, and creative writing. However, many foreign language classes focus predominantly on the first form of writing, while the second type is frequently ignored. Can blogging bridge this divide?

In recent decades, research has revealed that writing is a cognitively and communicatively complex activity beyond merely knowing vocabulary and grammar norms. It necessitates specialized instruction and care, as it involves multiple complex processes. Teachers of a second/foreign language should be conversant with current research and evidence-based approaches to teaching writing to educate their students better (Doghonadze, 2017; and Gareyev et al., 2020).

A 2022 estimation advocated that there were over 600 million public blogs out of more than 1.9 billion websites (Hardwick, 2022). Numerous studies have explored the efficacy of incorporating blogs in EFL writing classrooms, but more empirical research is needed on implementing blog-supported writing instruction in EFL classrooms. Porte and Richards (2012) argue that replication studies should be conducted to influence the direction of EFL writing research because EFL writing is considered a cognitively demanding activity due to the various topics covered (Porte & Richards, 2012). Consequently, this study aims to investigate the effect of a blog-mediated writing course on writing performance to obtain an improved comprehension of the influence of blog-mediated writing instruction on psychological variables related to second language (L2) writing.

The "Blog"

Definitions of what constitutes a blog abound in literature and vary according to the approach taken to their study. Weblog is a contraction of 'Web' and 'log': Web refers to the World Wide Web (WWW), which, as everyone knows, refers to the internet, while log means "to record something officially" (Cambridge Dictionary). Over time, the syllable 'web' was taken from use, and what remains is 'blog'. From this context, a blog is writing on the web. This paper is searching for writings on the web for EFL learners to improve their English writing. From the point of view of communication, sociology and ethnographic studies, blogs have been examined as "practice and process" focusing on the blogger's motivations, activity, interaction and relationship management (Herring et al., 2013; Yu, Jiang, and Zhou 2020).

Blogs are an element of digital communication that emerged in the 1990s, along with graphical user interfaces, local area networks, user-friendly software, and the WWW. They provide an alternative to interpersonal or handwritten communication. The emergence of networked media has enabled learners with numerous opportunities to improve their communication skills through independent practice and connection to a global community of other learners and speakers of the target language (Ensslin & Krummes, 2013).

According to Ensslin and Krummes (2013), the evolution of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) can be broken down into three distinct phases (Ensslin & Krummes, 2013). During the first phase of

CALL, which occurred before the advent of the WWW, emphasis was placed on determining the advantages of computer technology for language acquisition and whether or not computers could eventually replace instructors (Hung, Pham, and Purohit 2022). In 1984 (Higgins & Johns), CALL programs primarily provided offline practice exercises and reading and writing aids (Higgins & Johns, 1984). Pre-WWW CALL was typically behavioristic, with the computer primarily serving as a drills provider for individual students and a reading and writing instrument for offline input and output (Lamy & Hampel, 2007).

In the 1980s, many people believed that CALL was consistent with communicative (Krashen, 1983), content-based, and task-based approaches to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (Nunan, 1991), as well as with the recently developed constructivist principles of the learner, learner-centeredness, and the interaction of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (Dörnyei, 1994).

The final change in paradigm from communicative to integrative CALL was shaped during the 1990s and continued into the 21st century due to the democratic transformation and diversification of the internet, which included user-generated content, shareware, upgrades, fan culture, social networking, and microblogging (Ensslin & Krummes, 2013). This innovation made accessing spoken and written language outputs from networked, multimedia-enabled computers simpler and enabled integrative interaction with authentic learning materials in various virtual contexts. Consequently, language learners can deploy multiple skills simultaneously, making computer-mediated communication environments more analogous to those without computers.

Moreover, the shift towards integrative CALL has made online learning and instruction more collaborative and sociocognitive, allowing for group and task-based learning and peer-to-peer feedback (Lamy & Hampel, 2007). This action is consistent with the collaborative nature of the Read/Write Web. The rise of blogging can be traced back to 1999 when websites such as Pitas.com, Blogger.com, LiveJournal.com, Xanga, and later Typepad introduced user-friendly and free blogging tools (Blood, 2002). As technology advanced, so did people's use of blogs; content development shifted from being text-only to incorporating more multimedia elements. The variety of bloggers, whether individuals or groups, has increased in number and variety. In addition, some argue that blogging has evolved from a unique and even radical practice to a mainstream phenomenon (Herring et al., 2013). Weblogs, considered one of the most common web tools among language learners, are used increasingly by those in almost every age group. The National Institute for Technology and Liberal Education (NITLE) Weblog Census estimated that 61.9% of the 2.1 million weblogs were written in English, then rose in 2005 to 68.7% taken from 2.9 million weblogs (Herring et al., 2013).

Weblogs became a real trend when Cameron Barrett listed a few self-created websites similar to the format known today on his Weblog (Vettorel, 2014). Weblogs are kept on the web, as the term weblog suggests and connected to other internet locations via hyperlinks (Du & Wagner, 2007). Personal home pages were the inspiration for running-themed blogs, which included a mix of links, comments, ideas, and writings (Blood, 2002). Blogs were originally built in Hyper-Text Mark Up Language (HTML) and manually uploaded to a web server; thus, web design expertise was needed for creation and maintenance. Most of the first bloggers worked in the IT sector and used their blogs to disseminate news and insights (Miller & Shepherd, 2009).

Blogs serve a purpose in language classrooms because they provide students with an authentic audience for their writing. Typically, only the teacher reads pupil writing, emphasizing form rather than content. Students can write for an audience with blogs, including their classmates, students from other courses or even individuals from other countries, their parents, and anyone with internet access. Understanding writing for a real audience encourages students to improve their grammar and vocabulary. As suggested by Vijay and Vijayakumar (2023) participation in blog conversations necessitates that students consider the quality of their writing and language usage, pay closer attention to their audience, and be more selective in their source selection.

Types of blogs

A business blog is used for commercial purposes, such as advertising a business online (Akdağ & Özkan, 2017). Blogs differ from other types of websites because they are interactive and user-friendly. The list of articles may also contain links to pertinent websites and blogs. Bloggers frequently include links to their preferred websites in their posts to share them with their audience. A blog is more common as it is used for personal expression, peer interaction, friendship, or to promote oneself. Personal blogs are used by the young population and in many areas throughout the globe. This can be used by members of an organization or friends worldwide, wherever they are and for any purpose. Another kind of blog is used for academic purposes in which teachers interact with their students or conduct lessons as an extension of classroom interaction. This is a process of blended learning, which is a combination of face-to-face and online classrooms. Meinecke et al. (2013) and Morgan (2015) argued that classroom blogs create opportunities for students to interact with people in other countries and cultures (Meinecke et al., 2013; Morgan, 2015). Blogs encourage reflective learning and a deeper understanding of language.

Why blogging is important to EFL learners

Blogs or blogging offers many advantages to EFL writing skills. They offer a free space to express their ideas to an international audience. Richardson (2010) indicated that blogs serve as a constructivist tool for learning where students learn as they build knowledge from ideas and share information with other students (Richardson, 2010). Sütçü (2020) says that blogs are not new and have evolved a lot since they were first introduced, but they are still effective and ideal for learning, especially for EFL students (Sütçü, 2020).

For EFL contexts, communication's primary objective is to ensure the message is plausible. As English is a common language in various contexts, including academia, tourism, and business meetings, communicative conciseness can be achieved through various pragmatic strategies and accommodation skills, such as repetition or rephrasing, and innovatively utilizing virtual language resources.

In EFL interactions, regular linguistic processes include explicitness, enhanced clarity, and simplification through regularization. Improving clarity, according to Seidlhofer (2013), "requires accentuating essential elements, utilizing redundancy to one's advantage, and increasing explicitness by making patterns more regular or by making word classes and semantic relations more explicit" (Seidlhofer, 2013). These patterns frequently occur in varieties of English, particularly in situations involving language contact or in the spoken form of the language's grammar. These patterns include the varied use of articles, the regular or irregular pluralization of nouns, and the inventive application of morphology. All of these are non-standard uses of EFL by its speakers, following a process of language innovation comparable to that observed in other varieties of English, especially in the context of World English. Many formal and functional properties of EFL can be viewed as the result of a tendency to regularize the system, resulting in the process of language change that is more pronounced and rapid in EFL than in English as a Native Language (ENL) because "a set of standardizing norms does not constrain EFL" (Jenkins et al., 2011; Seidlhofer, 2013).

Bragg (2003) points out that blogs in English classrooms allow students to publish their work online in a collaborative setting while obtaining comments from an authentic readership (Bartlett-Bragg, 2003). In addition, Nelson and Fernheimer (2003) state that blogs are helpful for group writing assignments (Nelson & Fernheimer, 2003). The potential advantages and disadvantages of utilizing blogs as a writing prompt in the English classroom are analyzed in this research. This research aims to see whether employing blogs to teach writing improves students' writing abilities, encourages greater student participation, and makes class time more engaging than conventional teaching strategies. The research also hypothesizes that students will be more comfortable communicating through blogs than in oral conjunction or Skype discussions because of the lack of pressure that comes with in-person discussions (Ward, 2004). Alsamadan (2018), and Han (2022) too, highlights the effectiveness of online blogging for students' individual and group writing skills.

Studies on weblogs and blogging

Studies on blogs used in education suggest that blogs can benefit EFL students as blogs are like online journals that can encourage discussion or be productive for educational content exercises (Gedera, 2012). Blogging has been found to impact education, particularly in organizational learning concepts.

According to Schroeder (2006), the first is the structure, the next is motivation, and the third is the social context (Schroeder, 2006). Concerning the structure, blogging is simple and easy for bloggers or users. Blogs motivate students because they give them a sense of ownership in posting and maintaining the blogs; they have the power to choose their topics and audience. In the social context, blogs have become a status symbol for many students. In the learning aspect, this is "collective" because it occurs at the group level, and it comes from sharing previously unspoken yet understood knowledge, is generative and is articulated in the interactions developed about work.

Learning a language may be facilitated by blogging and obtaining critiques from peers. Writing a blog regularly might also help with spelling and punctuation. The results from the grading reveal that writing quality has improved as mistakes have decreased. This points to students' improved writing due to their increased awareness and ability to correct their errors in the writing process. These findings corroborate the conclusions of other research suggesting that blogs may improve linguistic proficiency (Fu and Wang 2022). A study of weblogs by Yunus et al. (2013) found that blogs could help in the positive interaction between teachers and students (Yunus et al., 2013). Among students, the participants revealed that they could freely write their opinions and observations while improving their English writing skills.

According to McGrail and Davis (2011), using blogs in classroom activities enhances focus on student writing growth as blogs can bring different dynamics into the classroom while writing becomes public, participatory, and continually enhanced (McGrail & Davis, 2011). Blogs can facilitate literacy development through storytelling and dialogue because their format encourages self-expression and recounting personal events to the blogger community in a nonverbal style (Huffaker, 2005).

A recent study by Yousefifard and Fathi (2022) examined the impact of blog-mediated writing instruction on the development of writing skills and ideal writing self in Iranian EFL learners. The experimental group, using blogs, showed significantly greater improvement in writing performance and ideal L2 writing self compared to the control group. These findings suggest that integrating blogs in L2 pedagogy can be an effective form of blended learning, leading to improved linguistic and affective outcomes in EFL writing instruction.

The current study is consistent with Lin's research, which proposes further investigating the influence of various classroom structures on students' writing abilities when using the Blog-Assisted Language Learning (BALL) method. This method involves a frequently updated website that displays entries with text, images, and pertinent hyperlinks in reverse chronological order and allows visitors to leave comments. According to Lin (2015), BALL incorporates all learning and teaching activities that use blogs as a computer-mediated platform for communication between instructors and students or among students, as well as for observable language learning activities inside and outside the classroom (Lin, 2015).

Students in the BALL course struggled with their limited language skills and deciding whether to blog. These obstacles frequently resulted in time management issues. Ginger, one of the finest writers in the class, frequently abandoned journal entries out of concern for the time required to ensure correct language usage. It was "difficult and time-consuming" for Isaac and Cindy to ensure the integrity of their blog posts. As previously mentioned, Danny felt "too occupied" to post in English, and another participant failed to revise their entries based on criticism from the instructor because they believed "it would take too long to revise in English" (Lin et al., 2013).

Teachers can stimulate and motivate students with pertinent blog ideas and topics. Blogs can be used to publish various educational materials, including homework assignments, class rules, and student projects. Because of these benefits, the use of blogs by educators is multifaceted. It helps strengthen the connection between home and school by allowing teachers to inform parents about the blog and keep them up-to-date on classroom activities. This method also improves teaching efficacy because instructors no longer need to search for pamphlets that students may have overlooked or papers they wish to repurpose, as these materials can be posted to a blog for easy accessibility.

Blogs provide a viable alternative to traditional paper records (Richardson, 2010). Teachers may accomplish this goal by having students use blogs as online portfolios to showcase their work and obtain pedagogical criticism. If parents have access to the blog, they can keep tabs on their children's progress in class, and the blog makes it easier for instructors and students to keep track of papers than with physical copies.

Levy (2009) asserts that utilizing blogs is time-consuming, even though blogs appear to be essential for ESL learning (Levy, 2009). Surprisingly, this subject has not been extensively researched or written about. Given that there hasn't been much discussion on this topic, it's not surprising that Levy goes on to say that the language advancements attributed to blogs are frequently taken for granted without sufficient consideration of the additional work this causes for teachers.

Literature summary and research rational

This study is important to the English language development of EFL students. Writing has been considered essential to language improvement, but studies have shown that students find writing difficult to learn English (Gedera, 2012). English is a means of communication for blogging; therefore, encouraging students to write (blog) on blogging websites (e.g., Blogger.com) might eventually improve their English proficiency.

While the prevalence of blogging is rising, its use in the writing process is still relatively new. Therefore, researching this subject can have multiple educational benefits. It can offer instructors effective pedagogical strategies and suggestions for using blogs as a writing instrument. By integrating blogs into the curriculum, teachers can systematically evaluate students' writing skills, increasing student engagement and interest in writing in English. Moreover, incorporating blogs into the curriculum can boost students' self-esteem and facilitate language educators to interact with students actively. All of these initiatives can contribute to the promotion of independent, student-centred learning.

Purpose of the study

This study aims to explore the effect of blogging on the improvement of EFL students' writing skills in English of 7th and 8th Grade students of Buqata Junior High School in Golan Heights. English is the main source of communication in blogging. Writing seems difficult and frustrating for EFL learners, but some studies show that writing blogs have improved EFL students' English proficiency.

Research question

This study aims to answer the following question:

Does blogging significantly affect EFL students' writing skills among 7th and 8th-grade students of Buqata Junior High School?

After the experiment, the researcher assessed whether the participants' writing skills and learning attitudes, such as motivation and self-efficacy, improved. This study is consistent with Lin et al. (2013) and Lin et al. (2015), who identified these as a few benefits of blogging in writing classes. The teacher's evaluation comprehensively assessed the students' writing abilities.

Methodology

This study examined the attitudes of 7th and 8th grade junior high teachers about using the blog approach to improve writing skills. The study population included 7th-grade and 8th-grade students from different levels who were required to write a weekly blog during the semester. This study was based on the qualitative approach. This research approach involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. Qualitative research methods depend on observations and interviews to look for a concept or experience from different aspects and understand a personal opinion about them (Hammarberg et al., 2016).

Participants

The research was conducted at Buqata Junior High School in Golan Heights. Twelve 7th-grade students from two classes and twelve 8th Grade students from two classes, ages 12-14, participated in the study from 1st January 2022 to 20th June 2022. **Table 1** shows the research subjects:

Table 1: Information about the participants

	7 th -grade students		8 th -grade students	
Teachers	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4
Participants	3 males	3 males	3 males	3 males
	3 females	3 females	3females	3 females

Research procedure

The researcher contacted the students via English teachers, who formed the main communication tool with the students. The participants were asked to conduct weblogging once a week. The writing process was done only in coordination with their teacher; the researcher did not interfere with what the students were doing, which means only the teacher could communicate with them, and the blogs were sent to the teacher on a weekly visit. Once a week, 24 students from the four different classes were required to answer the blog questions. Furthermore, there is a possibility to post comments on classmates' blogs from the same class. Then, the next step after they finished writing their blogs at the end of the semester, the researcher interviewed the English language teachers to examine the effect of blogging on their improvement in writing skills.

Research instrument

First, the researchers met the English language teachers and explained the study. They gave them questions about the blog, which the students had to do weekly. The blog was based on answering questions about the week's best/favorite English class.

Write a short paragraph about your favourite English class. It would be best if you answered the following questions in your blogging every week:

- What did you like?
- What didn't you like?
- How would this section help you in your improvement of your English?
- Are there suggestions to improve the lesson in your opinion?

Every student had to write every week about one favourite lesson. The student can write about listening lessons, writing lessons, grammar, unseen passages, etc. At the end of the study, every student will have written 15 blogs. The teachers checked the writings of each student weekly. During the checking process, the teacher should check all the characteristics of the writing skills spelling, vocabulary, sentence structure, and grammar. Then, at the end of the semester and the blogging instruction, the teachers evaluated the students' writing to assess whether they had improved their writing. The researchers interviewed the teachers, and the interviews

were about their opinion and their evaluations of this tool's impact on the writing skill from their point of view as EFL teachers and how this reflects on the student's writing.

Results

This study aimed to explore the effect of blogging on improving EFL students' writing skills in English. This section will show the main categories obtained after the interviews' analysis. According to the findings, there were five categories:

1. The definition and frequency of using blogs
2. Blogging improves writing skills
3. Blogging vs traditional method influence on writing skills
4. The disadvantages and difficulties of using the blogs
5. Blogs as a new method of learning EFL

Definition and frequency of using blogs

In this category, teachers gave similar definitions of blogs. Blogs are a kind of online textual interaction and communication. For example, teacher 1 defines blogs as "A technological tool that enables users to make an online diary" and "It enables us to share information and updates," according to teacher 2.

In contrast, when we talked about frequency, there were different answers. One teacher said, "I have a good experience with this tool. I use it in grammar lessons". Another said, "I use blogs from the beginning of the year in weekly education lessons". Two additional teachers said, "I used the blog in the previous year, but this year I have not used it yet".

Blogging and improvement in writing skills

Under this category, the researchers show how blogging influence writing skill according to each teacher. In general, they all admitted that there was an improvement, but each saw that from their point of view.

The first teacher emphasized that blogging helped students improve their English language as EFL learners, especially in spelling "I have noticed a significant improvement in students' writing in general, and especially at the spelling level". "I saw this in their writing in exams as well, which confirmed what I said", he added.

The second teacher said he noticed a positive impact on the students' writing skills during their lesson; he saw a wide vocabulary and fewer grammar mistakes. "I recognized this improvement after I asked them during the class to write an essay, then I found an improvement in grammar and vocabulary choice".

The third teacher confirmed the same idea; students' writing had improved while using blogs. In addition to spelling and vocabulary improvement, he claims they even improved sentence structure. "Students often make mistakes in constructing the correct form of the sentence. This improvement attracted me in terms of correct sentence structure in the English language," he said.

The fourth teacher said that he noticed remarkable progress and development in writing in the English language, especially in using sentence types. He said, "I was impressed by the improvement in the use of blogs in terms of using complex and compound sentences instead of simple sentences. It was a great training method for that".

Blogging vs traditional method influence writing skill

According to the teachers, this category compares the influence of blogs vs traditional methods on writing skills in terms of Buqata Junior High students. I can say that all four English teachers prefer blogging over traditional education.

The first teacher mentioned that changing is challenging to him and his students: "To be honest, I like to try every new thing; I believe in change that accompanies the modern era," he said. He added, "I noticed that students were comfortable using blogs".

Then the second teacher saw that students are more effective by using new methods such as blogging; "In my opinion, I see that students tend to like these programs and applications, and they are very effective than they are in traditional methods".

The third teacher emphasized the importance of using technology in education. "We cannot deny or ignore the entry of technology into the world of education," he said. "However, using technology will be good for both students and teachers. I see that this makes it easier for us and makes students have more fun and a sense of responsibility on one hand and freedom on the other hand".

Finally, the fourth teacher pointed out an important thing. To learn the English language, especially in terms of Arab students where English is a third or fourth language, we need many tools that facilitate the

learning process: "I believe that the English language always needs such tools to make learning interesting", "These programs motivate them and make them responsible because they can comment on each other blog".

Blogs disadvantages and difficulties

If we want to talk about the difficulties that students may encounter, we must consider that students are very familiar with everything related to technology. However, teachers are those who may experience difficulties in acquiring information or applying technological techniques. The four teachers said this: "We didn't face any difficulties; students have high capabilities in the technology field," the first teacher said. "Perhaps we will face difficulties, but students certainly will not," the second one said. The third teacher said, "We don't worry about students; they are stronger than us in technology".

However, they all have expressed concern about the misuse of blogging. The first said, "The main disadvantage is that many students misuse blogging and hurt each other". The second added: "I have always had concerns about blogging being used for bullying". The fourth teacher "The biggest challenge is that we, as teachers, can't completely control what students write."

Blogs as a new method of learning EFL

All the teachers interviewed emphasized the importance of including blogging in the general curriculum as it has an excellent impact on learning English in terms of EFL students. The first said: "It is necessary to introduce this technological method into the teaching of English formally". The second added, "I think that making technological modifications such as blogging is necessary since we see the benefit of this use". Then the third emphasized, "I would have to recommend this to the higher-ups, our educational managers and the school administration so that this can be formally a part of our pedagogy in the English curriculum". The fourth expressed, "Certainly, I will recommend blogging to the administration and make it a regular part of English teaching for ESL students."

Discussion

The study's objective is to explore the effect of blogging on the improvement of EFL students' writing skills among 7th and 8th-grade students of Buqata Junior High School in Golan Heights. This section discusses the study findings to answer the main research question: How does blogging influence writing skills among Buqata Junior High School EFL students?

Both teachers and students adhere to oversight of the success of leveraging blogs for language learning and writing in English. Students are primarily responsible for participating actively and making an effort. However, the importance of the teacher's role is even more significant. Davis (2006) argues that the teacher must foster an environment that supports and appreciates the students' ideas (Davis, 2006). This entails cultivating, analyzing, and discussing concepts. In addition, the instructor must ensure that the blog looks appealing and engaging so that students continue to use it.

Students are not struggling to create, organize, and maintain their blogs, even if they are unfamiliar with the technical aspects of writing. According to Ward (2004), blogging promotes socialization, critical thinking, and teamwork (Ward, 2004). Students work published on blogs will be seen by a wider audience than just their classmates. Many positive signs show that blogging is beneficial to improving EFL writing. While there were some negative views about this, the positive overwhelms the negative, and it seems important to recommend that blogging must be taken seriously by the teacher's community to improve EFL writing skills. We can cite these important comments from the participants themselves, according to their teachers, here below:

According to the second teacher, a participant reported, "I always write carefully and revise before submitting a piece of writing". In simple words, students might have felt more autonomous in writing blogs. Little (1995) showed that feeling autonomous means taking responsibility for setting up one's learning strategies, which must be promoted as an explicit goal of teaching and learning (Little, 1995). The studies of Sütçü (2020), Blood (2002), and Godwin-Jones (2006) mainly supported the concept that blogs can enhance learners' autonomy (Blood, 2002; Godwin-Jones, 2006; Sütçü, 2020).

Autonomy is very important, especially for the participants, regarding their age and ability to pursue a future career. There's little doubt that students exercised more restraint while penning their lines, considering that they would be read aloud by teachers and their peers. According to the third teacher, the students have strong opinions on all of them; "Writing on the blogs made me more careful about sentence and paragraph structure, check word choice and spelling more carefully, and check my grammar more carefully".

The results indicate that students who enjoy writing are more likely to make progress in their writing skills. The feedback received from the fourth teacher about "Blogs and how I changed my writing" and the first teacher about "Blogs and how I felt about learning to write" was highly positive, suggesting that students are more open to using blogs to improve their writing and that this has led to higher ratings for their writing.

Students are enthusiastic about utilizing blogs to enhance their writing abilities and feel that regular writing practice leads to improvement. They feel comfortable sharing their writing on blogs, encouraging them to write more actively and engage with others. These favourable attitudes toward writing are consistent with previous research highlighting the importance of positive emotions toward writing (Jones, 2007; Kelley, 2008).

A skilled EFL writer is normally proficient in the language, knows the assessment requirements and considers them, possesses planning, avoidance (in case s/he does not know the needed word/phrase/structure), remedial and self-editing strategies, knows about genre and style demands, has general knowledge (to provide good examples), logical thinking (to structure the text effectively, to provide coherence and cohesion), and creativity. Further, suppose the aspect of EFL teaching is done; in that case, it is a good idea if communicative/creative writing is not only used in courses called “Writing”, “Academic Writing,” or “Business Writing”, but also in grammar (e.g., asking students to describe their summer vacations will help them to practice the application of past tenses), reading and listening (e.g., asking students to discuss the plot, characters, topics, problems in their essays) courses (Doghonadze, 2017).

Theoretically, writing as a communicative activity has to reflect the writer, the text, the writing contexts and their relationships. Writing is seen as a problem-solving profession from a cognitive standpoint, and the difficult, iterative, and unique aspect of the writing process, which is unaffected by culture or history, is highlighted (Carter & Michael, 2003). On the other hand, a social perspective does not consider writing as a series of hidden processes in the writer's mind. Instead, it regards writing as an activity individuals engage in based on their material and social circumstances (Parks & Maguire, 1999).

Conclusion

Based on theoretical and experimental findings, this study concludes that weblog-based peer review sessions using a process writing approach allow EFL students to enhance their writing skills in English. The participants were presented with different ideas, points of view, and the writing process, allowing them to revise their writing effectively with the help of feedback from peers and their teachers. However, students must compose and recompose to comprehend and be explicit in their writing. A writing process involves multiple processes, all of which must be coordinated for optimal results. The attention devoted to a single phase may affect the overall process. Keeping a blog may serve this purpose well.

In Golan Heights, English is a foreign language, but it is an example of its expanding use, and the range of users across social groups is unique, and in different measures, it is highly present in the lives of the people and their young population who are students of the English language. English is also the main language for international contact among the people in Buqata. In this research, young participants communicated in their personal blogs with peers and the teacher using English. The study found the significance of communication, appropriating English to its language function and exploiting the potential of weblogging. Findings from the data appear in line with other research findings that provide motivational instances for the participants.

Assessment, especially the summative type, may motivate any communicative use of language, as everybody realizes that the goal of a writing test is to let the student pass to a higher level, be admitted to a certain institution/program, etc. However, having assessment rubrics emphasizing the content, organization and originality of writing over its language side will motivate students to pay attention to these aspects while writing, not just vocabulary, spelling, and grammar. The study also found that the levels of blogs and attitudes toward them were quite high. The analysis revealed a significant relationship between a positive attitude, motivation, and the urge to write. This shows that the participants developed positive attitudes towards using blogs in academic writing, which rewarded them with higher writing scores.

Nevertheless, the students did not feel positive about the assessment, meaning they cared more about writing the blogs per se than the grades they attained. The grades were less motivational than the blog writing using the website, which was exposed to the internet community. The teacher noted this and understood the students' feelings (not all participants did not feel the insignificance of the assessment process). Further, the students felt the need to improve their writing skills by using blogs and benefitting from their affordances over the traditional method of writing, which was a good sign in the opinion of the teacher, and she felt happy about it (instead of being sad for the students' disregarding the grades). The students believed that blogging could improve their quality of academic writing. They felt comfortable writing on the website, and the blog can motivate them to more active, interactive writing. These positive attitudes towards writing are also in accord with other studies by reliable authors.

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