

Article

Improving Descriptive Writing Through Blogs

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Abstract. Writing is an important skill in English learning, but many students find it difficult and less interesting. This study investigated the use of a blog to improve students' ability to write descriptive texts. The study used a quasi-experimental design involving 72 tenth-grade students of SMA Negeri 2 Blora. Thirty-six students from X MIPA 4 were assigned as the control group, while 36 students from X IPS 1 were assigned as the experimental group. Both groups received a pre-test and post-test.

The experimental group learned descriptive text using a blog containing learning materials, pictures, examples, and vocabulary, while the control group learned without using a blog. The results showed that the students in the experimental group achieved better writing performance after the treatment.

The study also found a significant difference between the two groups. The findings suggest that blogs can be used as an alternative medium to support students in learning descriptive writing.

Keywords: blog, descriptive text, writing, English learning, EFL students.

Introduction

Writing is one of the important skills in learning English. However, students often find writing difficult because they need to organize ideas, choose appropriate vocabulary, and construct correct sentences. Descriptive writing can be particularly challenging when students have difficulty developing ideas about the person, animal, place, or object they want to describe.

The use of learning media can make writing activities more interesting. A blog is one digital medium that can be used to provide learning materials, pictures, examples, and other information. The source study explains that pictures can help students develop their imagination and make it easier for them to write descriptive texts.

Blogs can also provide students with a more interactive learning environment. Previous research cited in the study found that blog-based peer feedback had a positive effect on students' descriptive writing, particularly grammar and word choice.

Based on this background, this study investigated whether using a blog could improve students' descriptive writing and whether there was a significant difference between students taught using a blog and those taught without it.

Materials (if any) and Methodology

This study used a quasi-experimental design with a control group and an experimental group. Both groups received a pre-test and post-test. The experimental group received treatment using a blog, while the control group was taught without the blog.

The participants were 72 tenth-grade students of SMA Negeri 2 Blora. The students came from two classes. X MIPA 4 consisted of 36 students and served as the control group, while X IPS 1 consisted of 36 students and served as the experimental group.

The instrument was a writing test. Students were asked to write a descriptive text of approximately 200–250 words using the appropriate generic structure. The topics included favorite pets, family members, and favorite idols.

The experimental group used a blog containing descriptive-text materials, examples, pictures, generic structures, and vocabulary. Students selected pictures from the blog and used them as ideas for their writing. The students' writing was measured through pre-test and post-test scores. The data were analyzed statistically using SPSS.

Results and Discussion

Students' Writing Performance in the Control Group

The control group consisted of 36 students who received writing instruction without the blog-based treatment. The mean pre-test score of the control group was 63.08, with scores ranging from 53 to 73. Following classroom instruction, the mean post-test score increased to 69.67, with scores ranging from 58 to 85.

The increase indicates that students in the control group also developed their writing performance during the instructional period. However, the increase was relatively smaller than that observed in the experimental group.

Students' Writing Performance in the Experimental Group

The experimental group also consisted of 36 students. Before the treatment, students' writing performance was generally categorized within the lower or fair range. Following the blog-based treatment, the mean post-test score increased to 79.36. The post-test scores ranged from 58 to 95. The

original study described the experimental group's post-test performance as reaching the good category.

The individual student data also show improvement for many participants. For example, several students who initially obtained scores in the high-50s or low-60s achieved scores in the 70s, 80s, or 90s in the post-test.

Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Results

Group	Mean Pre-test	Mean Post-test	Mean Increase
Control	63.08	69.67	6.59
Experimental	66.22*	79.36	13.14

The original thesis reports the experimental pre-test mean as approximately 66.22 in the abstract and conclusion sections; one section contains an inconsistent typographical value. The table therefore follows the value reported in the abstract/conclusion as the most consistent summary. The experimental group demonstrated a larger descriptive increase than the control group. The control group improved by approximately 6.59 points, whereas the experimental group improved by approximately 13.14 points.

Statistical Difference

The original study reported that statistical testing showed a significant difference between the writing performance of students taught using the blog and those taught without it. In the conclusion, the reported t-test value was 2.608 with 56 degrees of freedom, compared with a t-table value of 2.000.

The abstract of the original thesis contains a different reported t-test value (16.723) and t-table value (4.059). Because the thesis contains these inconsistent statistical figures, the present article relies on the more detailed conclusion and results section for the reported between-group comparison rather than presenting both values as if they were interchangeable.

Discussion

The findings indicate that blog-based learning supported students' descriptive writing performance. Before the treatment, some students considered writing a boring activity and had difficulty developing ideas. The use of pictures and examples through the blog gave students clearer ideas about what they could write.

The blog also provided materials about the generic structure of descriptive text and vocabulary that students could use when writing. This helped students understand how to organize their texts into identification and description. The result is also related to previous research showing that blog-based activities can support descriptive writing and provide a more interactive environment for students.

Although the control group also improved, the experimental group showed a larger increase. This suggests that the blog provided additional support for learning descriptive writing. However, the study used two existing classes rather than randomly assigning individual students, so the results should be understood within the context of the research setting.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study found that using a blog could support students' descriptive writing. The experimental group showed greater improvement than the control group, and the statistical analysis indicated a significant difference between the groups.

The blog helped students access descriptive-text materials, examples, pictures, and vocabulary. These materials made it easier for students to develop ideas and organize their writing.

Therefore, blogs can be used as an alternative digital medium for teaching descriptive writing. Further research could examine the use of blogs with larger groups, different writing genres, or longer periods of instruction.

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