Investigating the Influence of Blogging on EFL Students’ Writing

Fluency, Accuracy and Complexity

The case study of first year LMD students of English at Larbi Ben M'hidi university

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language Sciences and Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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Dedication

In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

I dedicate this humble work to all my family, friends, and teachers, especially, Mr. Poupia,

who supported me endlessly during the accomplishment of this work.
Acknowledgement

In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

To start with, I thank Allah the Almighty who guides our steps to the right way and provides us with patience and strength to praise him for everything he granted us.

I would also like to express my infinite gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. A. Benzitouni, for her precious guidance, support and patience throughout the accomplishment of this work.

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Abstract

Writing is one of the must-have skills that every EFL student needs to master. However, most of EFL students face many writing difficulties. In today’s world, there are lots of new helpful methods in language teaching in general and teaching writing in particular as blogging. This research reports on a quasi-experimental study regarding the effect of blogging on students’ writing performance. It examines improvements in writing fluency, accuracy and complexity achieved by using Blog free writes among a group of students, with reliance on a short English Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) program. Forty two 1st year LMD students at Larbi Ben M’hidi University participated in the study. Findings from this study confirmed our hypothesis and revealed the effectiveness of using blog vs. pen-and-paper based writing on improving the participants’ writing skills. Accordingly, the study supports the previous research done in the field that blogging has the potential of becoming an effective tool for enhancing writing fluency, accuracy, and complexity.

**Key words:** blogging, writing fluency, writing accuracy and writing complexity
List of Abbreviation

CAF: complexity, accuracy and fluency

CACD: computer aids class discussion

CALL: computer assisted language learning

CMC: computer mediated communication

EFL: English as a foreign language

ECML: European center for modern languages

FCK: platform of multiple editors

FW: fax from e-mail

HTML: Hypertext Mark-up Language

i.e: That is to say

IDS: detection system

ICT: Information and Communications Technology

L2: second language

NCSA: national center for supper computer application

OPML: online processor make up language

RSS: rich site summery
SMS: Short message service

NO.: Number of

CAF: complexity, accuracy and fluency

SD: Standard Deviation

Vs.: versus

ELT: English language teaching

G.O: General observation
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الملخص
General introduction

Introduction

Recent developments in the way people communicate in networked world have highlighted new genres of writing that are changing all aeries of society including education. The language learning benefits of synchronous computer-mediated-communication (CMC) have contributed to a change in the traditional definitions of language learning benefits. Nowadays, the chances afforded by technology permit us to create different types of activities and projects which are motivating for the 21st century EFL student. Blogs may be used a helpful tool for teaching foreign language writing. Blogs have become extremely popular in the last few years and have been increasingly used to improve not only native speakers’ writings but also EFL learners, and as a form of “diary introspection” for teachers. Educational blogs have drawn the interest of researchers and language teachers due to their user friendly interfaces as well as their powerful archiving features.

1. Statement of the Problem

Over the last decade, the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education has undertaken a number of reforms. The rapidly growing demand for quality of education at the university level has led to the need of using new technological tools for ameliorating the educational incomes. However, no application of the new teaching methods is observed.

Writing in a foreign language is one of the most challenging skills for almost all students. Developing the writing skill is thought to be highly complex. However, using modern, appealing and popular writing tools among students as blogs may improve their writings.

Despite the fact that CALL programs have been functioning in the Algerian universities for a long period of time and blogging is gaining popularity among students,
using blogs in education is still in its infancy and most teachers are alien to the idea of using blogs in teaching and writing in particular.

Furthermore, only few studies have been conducted on the use of blogging compared to pen-and-paper as a conventional writing tool. Hence, a study on comparing the effect of pen-and-paper and blogging on the writing performance of Algerian students seems inevitable.

2. Aim of the Study

The main aim of this study is to shed light on the usefulness of using blogging to help first year LMD students in the department of English at L’arbi Ben M’hidi University improve their writing fluency, accuracy and complexity.

In addition, the results from this research may lead to a number of recommendations that may help university instructors incorporate the use blogs in the learning/teaching process especially when EFL students are increasingly depending on new pedagogical tools.

3. Research Question and Hypothesis

To clearly address our issue, we ask the following question:

Are first year LMD students in the department of English at Oum El Bouaghi University aware of the efficiency and the positive influence of Blogging on EFL learners writing fluency, accuracy and complexity?

In order to answer our research question, the following hypothesis is formulated:

✔ If the students make use of blogging, they will have a significant difference in their writing performance than those who do not.
4. Research Methodology

Few of Blog-related studies have examined the role Blogs might play in promoting students’ Writings and offering teachers a form of diary introspection through an integrated Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), and few have offered quantitative results as to the fluency, accuracy and complexity benefits of blogging.

The data gathered for this research is based on a quasi-experimental study. It focuses on the effect of blogging on EFL students’ writing in three aspects (fluency, accuracy and complexity) and thus compares and contrasts results between and within groups. Forty students participated in the study. Pre and post tests are administered to students. The control group (n=20) accomplished their writing assignments as a paper based homework whereas the experimental group (n=20) accomplished the writing assignments using a blogging software. The aim is to examine whether there are any differences in students’ writing performance under the two conditions.

5. Structure of The Study

This study is basically divided into three main chapters. The theoretical part of this research is made up of two chapters. The first one deals with the use of blogging as a pedagogical tool whereas the second chapter covers the literature review concerning writing fluency, accuracy, and complexity. Each chapter of the theoretical part contains a set of titles and subtitles that give a close view to blogging as a useful tool for promoting EFL writing aspects. The practical part is devoted to the presentation, analysis and discussion of the results of the carried experiment. Finally, the thesis ends with a set of recommendations that were reached on the basis of the results obtained and might be taken into account to improve the learning/teaching situation.
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Introduction

Blogging is an essential strategy in nowadays educational settings. Blogs are considered as an effective tool that must be integrated in learning process, to encourage language learning and learners’ participation in writing practices outside the classroom. In this chapter, some definitions of blogging are provided along with how it affects the learning process of foreign language learners. Then, blogs unique features, reasons behind blog use in the educational context, and the future of blogging were discussed. The chapter concludes with a set of items for building the habit to keep on blogging.

1.1. What is a Blog?

The Blog is the short form of the word weblogs and the net work that is accessed through net. It is defined as an official record of events during a particular time. Blogs can be classified as asynchronous online journals or diaries that afford the possibility of adding comments. Murray and Hourigan state that “due to the internet genetic format of this writing tool, it is difficult to identify a stable and succinct definition of a blog. As one attempts to define a blog, one is immediately struck by the amorphous nature of the expending blogosphere. Blogs are currently with multiple formats and thus had been evolved beyond the original perception as being mere journal entrée” (2008, p.83).

Blogs are regularly updated websites that can be set out as a form of micro-publishing (Williams and Jacobs, 2004). Blogs serve the purpose of email, discussion forums, instant messaging, and electronic publishing (ward, 2004). The key factor of all blogs is their options for readers to directly comment or question whatever content has been presented. Whilst, blogs act as facilitator platforms designed for the presentation and archiving of the bloggers experiences, opinions, comments, images and hyperlinks like audio tapes or videos, web users
or bloggers can submit their perspectives for instant web publication through a regular web browser without the need for a web design software (Siemens, 2002).

After an entry is posted on a blog, the bloggers can post comments by entering texts in their browsers. They can then revisit their entries to read the comments and answer others’ in return (Siemens, 2002). The cycle of networking establishes communities to ensure bloggers exchanging information through this dynamic communication platform and due to that fact that bloggers are zealous about the use of blogs in relation to educative settings.

### 1.2. Blog and Its Unique Features

Blogs are a regularized basics of electronic journals where readers post their opinions, thoughts and perspectives to be classified and arranged in backward chronological organizations, where readers readings start with new lastly posted posts down until they reach the place of the post they were left with the last time they logged on. Basically, blogs can be useful in sculpting more plans, and controlling both discussion and projects. They afford a lot of benefits for authors as sharing opinions, insights, and links. In addition, they relate sites and links of interest that may contain videos, images, and audio files (podcasts) (Gorden, 2003). Table 1 below highlights the difference between blogs and wikis.

**Table 1:** The Difference Between Blogs and Wikis (Gorden, 2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blogs</th>
<th>wikis</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Blogs are based on commentary.</td>
<td>• Wikis are based on editing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Once something is posted on a blog, only the writer can edit it, Others can only add</td>
<td>• Any one can edit anything on wiki page.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comments.

- Blogs are organized chronologically.

- Blogs are useful for spreading information with people with shared interest.

- Wikis have no predetermined structure (because they are based on hyperlinks).

- Wikis are products of multiple inputs.

- Wikis are useful for developing internal communities and promoting collaboration.

1.3. Blogs Types Related to Education

Blogs have received increasing interest from educational sectors particularly in language teaching at tertiary level. Gordon (2003) identified three types of blogs that are generally observed in the educational context as the tutor, learner, and class blogs. The tutor can maintain a contact with a group or groups of students. Learner blogs are individual journal-type environments. The class blog, on the other hand, is a single blog space that can be accessed, updated, and edited by a group of learners. Blogs are also classified as new genres of writing born out of the technological revolution that have changed ‘how we live, how we communicate, how we learn’ (Siemens, 2002, p.22).
1.3.1. Teacher’s blog

The teacher’s blog is settled out with the purpose of sharing communication and simultaneously providing resources with links. For instance, teachers can bring a background for the proposed assignment with the evolvement of a link or attachment that appears in parallel with the resource post. Furthermore, the assignments posted through the blogs can bring benefits for both local and around the world audience (Gorden, 2003).

1.3.2 Student’s blog

The student’s blog stands as both a refining and measuring tool for students writing level, that is clearly viewed upon the posts hierarchy classification and organization. It can be also directed as a basis for a project control from the part of individuals or a small group of students. For example, as the project plans that are mainly dedicated to be in the form of an e-portfolio. Figure 1 represents an example of a teacher’s blog. Teachers and students engagements in sharing reflections and exchanging ideas has a great impact for the enhancement of the blog virtual environment toward a vast acculturation through the e-learning community (Gorden, 2003).

1.3.3 Class blog

A class blog includes all students’ blogs gathered in one blog platform. All members of the class are aware of its address that is under the delegate management. This blog type has the opportunity to provide a link between the teachers’ and students blogs (Gorden, 2003).

1.3.4 Project or topic blog

Blogs do not necessitate an extra effort for providing information to attract readers or writers because they are easy to be renewed and handled. Users can create blogs with specific topics or projects; you can delete the previous portfolios when engaging onto new different
topics. Blogs are not only to be kept as permanent archive, they are frequently renewed and for several times as the user requires (Gorden, 2003).

![Figure 1: Screenshot from 'Big Smarter Think Faster website' represents an example of a teacher’s blog](image)

1.4. Features Set for the Educational Blogging Platforms

1.4.1 Blogging Platforms

Wenger (1998) summerized the rules in three principal ways:

- By simplifying the process of producing, presenting and publishing Web content through the use of WYSIWYG text editors and predefined presentation templates, blogging platforms have made it possible for anyone to publish to the Web.
By providing content consumers with a subscription mechanism (usually through RSS or a similar syndication protocol), blogging platforms have enabled consumers to synthesize customized pages from content originating on various blogs of interest.

by allowing content producers to use mechanisms such as trackback and pingback, which afford them with the feature of reference content cross, blogging platforms have made it possible to create and support online “communities of practice”.

However, for the purpose of investigating educational blogging platform design issues in this project, it was decided to build one from the ground up, starting with a simple blogging core to which features could be added as teachers’ and students’ requirements and expectations grew with experience.

David Squires (1999) advocates the principle of “volatile design” for educational software, a type of design which allows learners sufficient freedom and flexibility to personalize and reconfigure their own virtual learning environment to “resonate with their own needs”.

1.4.2 Design Brief

Squires (1998) summarized a set of refining norms to evolve more amelioration on students writing products as follows when using the blog:

- Blogs permit teachers to control students’ publications and their writings.
- Affords students with an output for more practice to develop their writing skills.
- Evolves a set of mechanisms which help students have a more supportive networking, dialogue and cross referencing between students’ writing.
- Provides users with the opportunity to work on the platform customization and personalization.
1.4.3. Promoting Dialogue and Community

Two mechanisms were settled with the purpose to support dialogue and enhance the platform incorporation by comments and link backs. Since commenting is a traditional dialogue method inherited from the Internet, users react to posts by adding their comments (Langridge and Hickson, 2002). This dialogue style denotes that comments work in a supplementary role, since by their very nature they are not complete articles in their own. Although, commenting has its uses, blogging promotes a different dialogue paradigm, with bloggers writing articles in response to other articles.

For a dialogue to be developed in this paradigm, commenting on each other articles must contain a reciprocal links. A number of link back mechanisms that had been developed in a routine process. For the purpose of creating a blog project, a limited form of the pingback protocol (Ibid) was implemented to operate between posts on the platform. On some browsers, this made it possible to link to an article simply by dragging its permalink into the editing window. Nevertheless, pinging had been unpopular with learners, the fact that made the problem to seem conceptual rather than technical.

1.5. Reasons for Blogging in Education

Since the educative blogs have a major goal in learning as sharing responsibility for our own learning and even classroom management, blogs play a very important role in creating community relationships and collaboration. However, they have a huge echo and speed in spreading out any information. Additionally, A blog develops better literacy over reading and writing and truly opens the students’ world as shown above. For acceding to an interesting identical quality within a blogging classroom, these major reasons should operate successfully in the first place. The major educative reasons that fully attract educational bloggers stated by Murch (2008) are:
• The execution of such a wonderful feeling when combining fun with learning. It drives the students to feel comfort and forget that they are involved explicitly to learning.

• Learning through blogging suits all styles especially visual students.

• It stands as a motivator in the first place, and more importantly as an electronic diary.

• It boosts students motivation for reading and students will happily spend a lot of time browsing through their partners’ posts and their global counterparts.

• The blog roll affords a link and a quick access for friends. It allows a lot of students to make comments even frequently in their own sms language as well.

• It ameliorates confidence levels that are mostly powered by comments and the global bunch of maps that links can afford to the bloggers community. Then, students can exploit areas where they perform with strength and upload their units of work to be shared through posting. For instance, their personal digital photography, their pets, hobbies..etc. This stuff intrinsically reflects the insights of what some students are good at.

• Blogs allow the teachers to detect easily the areas of strengths that students have as they permit the teachers to gain insight on how students are thinking and feeling.

• Since their works are frequently named to be in a chronicle logs posted habitually and regularly. That fact creates for them the feeling for gaining as much pride in terms of both presentation and content.

• Blogs afford the aid by the authentic materials for the foreign language learners environment. Besides, they increase proofreading and validation skills through multiple digital native items such as multimedia, widgets, audio and images.

• Blogs bases are strong enough to increase the students’ awareness degree covered in classroom environment.
• Blogs extend the ability for contributing in entering into the conceptual revolutions where charity can be shown at its outsized angels such as tagging their parents, the community and the globe to be aware of the content of the published post.
• Blogs are also featured with mutual learning options between students and tutors.
• The students’ posts can be viewed by parents with the internet access partnership with the classroom.
• These digital portfolios are more manageable.
• The permanent storage of students’ posts can be simply manageable upon distinct levels as affording a valuable assessment and evaluation.
• Foreign language learners can be considered approximately as digital natives since blogs operate with the digital items naturally which gives students chance to show responsibility and trustworthiness as it stimulates independence in learning.
• Blogs foster the students ability to practice the digital citizenship as they encourage peer to peer monitoring. As well, they give them advance to learn cyber safety while exchanging learning from each other.
• Lead students’ writings to professional development.
• The students’ regular publishing of the topics for posts can raise students consciousness, as it can lead them to create critical thinking.

1.6. The Educational Benefits of Blogging

Distinct benefits are to emerge when evolving blogs use in educational settings. The educational specialists Fernette and Brock Eid state that blog benefits involve the development of critical and analytical thinking and enhance the quality content for attaining access and relation. Furthermore, they boost and enhance users social interaction in a very delicate way (Lou, 1992). The educational benefits of blogging extend to the administrative
and teaching mechanisms of how should class operates to turn out the students to less
dependent and autonomous learners.

1.6.1. Critical and analytical Benefits

Peter Duffy, educational development officer at Hong Kong polytechnic university,
and Dr. Axel Bruns, a faculty member at Queensland University of Technology, suggest that
the blog structure maintains on several ways that students can exploit to get as much as
benefits to enhance their foreign languages as it puts on their hands a platform that raises
their awareness about the creative risks they may confront (Lou, 1992). However, Duffy and
Bruns argue that the benefits of commitments are to be well received, if only students are
given writing assignments for blog posts; they would be familiarized also with the way of
planning and scheduling. For instance, they do their best to respect the deadlines for posting
submission and not discussing issues out of the proposed topic.

1.6.2 Increased Exposure to Quality Content

Raising students awareness about the skills to apply when subscribing into blogs
increases their chances to encounter various scholarly materials as Eides claims that when
students are given a topic to write about as a blogging writing assignment, they are provided
with a chance to pick out data that reinforces their points of view (Lou, 1992). Furthermore, teachers may deal with many trials and encounter many errors when targeting to
construct various sources through this act where they would easily differentiate between the
authoritative and non-authoritative sources (Lou, 1992). More importantly, blogging acts as an
effective tool that can be embedded as a basic part in the course requirements.

1.6.3. Solidarity and Social Interaction

Blogs are commonly featured more than the internet message board, As Duffy and
Burns argue unlike internet boards, blogs put in favor the feature of having a large and
predominant space that gives creators more security and freedom in uploading and expressing their individual views. In contrast, message boards lack this feature of highlighting the individual thoughts that blogs can afford. Messages boards emphasis more on highlighting group’s thoughts than they do with the individual views. (Lou, 1992).

1.6.4. Teaching and Administrative benefits

Blogs provide a considerable support for the classroom administrative issues. They stand as an important beneficial tool for students and parents as they can serve as an inner location that contains relevant materials suitable for the class use, such as calendars of events, assignments recapitulations and course syllabi. Additionally, a blog can also serve as a restore place where students can view the set of the gathered classroom videos and images classified and synchronized partly from their classroom activities forming a field trip from the designation that the blog platform affords (Lou, 1992).

1.7. How Blogs are Set Up and Used in Foreign Language Education (FLE)

It would be an indispensable issue to regard weblogs as one of the motivational and professional tools in the academic context. Various technical strengths can be derived by individual learners while monitoring their progress within one organized class weblog. Besides, teachers can encourage learners’ reflection on their linguistic errors only by guiding them via specific areas of their limitations. The gradual development of writing skills and vocabulary knowledge are other advantages that web blogs make them possible. Moreover, teachers can also use the web blog to provide their learners with authentic materials which can in turn lead extended discussion of the content (Ferdige, 2004).

Wired (2002) discussed the benefits of blogging further by advocating that learners can enhance their communicative skills through the discussion within a group by posting relevant links and multimedia artifacts and posting comments in the target language. When
weblog assignments require from students to refer to online multimedia resources, they help in integrating learners’ language skills. For example, learners can be asked to refer to the weblog links by using the online authentic video and audio when collecting information for their weblog writing assignments.

Weblogs have high potential for boosting student motivation for language learning as they will be freely participating in the weblog activities in which they are interested; they will be intrinsically motivated toward the weblog tasks (Kennedy, 2003). Accordingly, Feridge (2004) admits that through using weblogs language teachers can exploit web technology for the students’ favor via applying the web skills in the language learning process. By doing so, they can help students reduce the perceived gap between the classroom and the outside communicating contexts.

Weblogs also offer unique opportunities for non native speakers to have a direct discussion with native ones as this would not be possible through other means and this would help them enhance their levels in many aspects of the target language. In addition, weblogs communities can help systemize language learning tasks that are not feasible within the physically, geographically and linguistically confined classrooms (Feridge, 2004). An illustrative example can be an intermediate learner who may visit the personal weblog of a well known journalist and obtain not only culturally specific insights but also engage in meaningful communicative interactions (Feridge, 2004).

Beyond the benefits of weblogs as regards language learners, teachers too can utilize weblogs in different perspectives. Foremost, teachers can effectually exchange lessons plans, ideas and provide each other with critical feedbacks. By posting ideas and links to the wider EFL community, language teachers can also form and extend their professional knowledge (Ibid.).
1.8. Weblog Use in EFL Context

A survey was administrated to foreign language teachers of Spanish, French, German, and Italian, revealed that none of the teachers make use of weblogs for language instruction or for professional development (Bull, 2003). Notwithstanding, most of teachers claimed that they usually use the web to do the aforementioned tasks including through e-mail searching for information and reading news. Moreover, they stated that Web-based applications and resources assist in systemizing activities to be taught in an enjoyable and interesting way. For instance, many teachers created online language learning activities such as quizzes, word games and chat, all of which could be integrated within weblog class (Ibid).

Despite the fact that weblogs have been highly advantageous in the academic context, they have not been widely adopted in the FLE field. There is a very limited number of weblogs that are dedicated for teachings purposes (Campbell, 2004).

1.9. The Future of Blogging

From the influence that blogging has on journalism and academic fields, a hopeless optimist might propose that weblogs are not a fashion but a sign of a good future. A future in which the media is centralized and charged with making students feel exited to keep writing just because the entire world is reading their words and not just their teacher of writing (Du, 2006). This may encourage students to not only think about what they write but also how they write it and this enhances their style and the quality of their productions (Ibid.).

In the history of weblogs, Bull (2003) explains why she feels so passionate that weblogs need to be taken with forethought, “I strongly believe in the power of weblogs to transform both writers and readers from ‘audience’ to ‘public’ and from ‘consumer’ to ‘creator’” (p.7). Unlike websites, weblogs are as effortless to set up as a Hotmail email account, but unlike emails the weblogs allow anyone with a computer to send one message to
the entire world (kajder, 2003). The evident role of blogging in academic contexts can be seen in its implementation in the University of Southern California as part of their online journalism course and the interest extends ways beyond journalism. “Teachers at every level are trying to bring blogs into their classrooms”(Lohnes as cited in Glen, 2002, p. 2).

1.10. Motivation to Keep on Blogging

Motivation is considered a prominent aspect that urges us to keep doing a given thing. Though weblog entails a lot of advantages for its users, researchers brought to the surface the question of motivation to keep blogging. A recent inquiry by Professor Kehr and Doctor Gröpel (2002) reveals how our willpower gets influenced by our unconscious motivation. Therefore, the results of their research reveal that there are three key elements that constitute our motivation (as cited in Welch, 2003).

1- Achieving our goals are derived by the conscious desires and objectives.

2- Reaching our objectives highly depend on our existing capacities and skills.

3- There is an unconscious motivation based on profound emotional beliefs that pushes us forward.

When these components occur concurrently, people are motivated and satisfied. If one element is missing, we require the willpower to bridge the gap. Unfortunately willpower is not sufficient to keep us going long term (Welch, 2003). This matters for the weblog users who may have a lot of energy when starting blogging but over the time it can take time to build a permanent will for keeping on the diary. Researchers suggest creating internal motivation using targeted incentives (Ibid). To motivate students to keep blogging for a long period of time thirteen actionable blogging techniques have been suggested by (Cammpell, 2004) to assist and maintain the willpower.
1.10.1. Attract Positive Feedback to Motivate Yourself

1. It is necessary to show that you are an active member via responding politely to other members’ comments. This technique encourages people to interact with your publication and get interested on what you share with them.

2. You should encourage everyone who has a social media contact including your classmates, colleagues, friends and family to share your blog posts. This can be achieved by providing reasonable and why not fun reasons.

3. The usefulness of blogging appears better in interactive situations where you can get support from other peers who are blogging. The benefit is that you can edit each others’ works.

4. Create a community around your blogging through joining a blogging group on social media or in person.

1.10.2. Build the Writing Habit

5. For many skilful writers, there are signs that help in judging others whether they are good writers or not. One clue is to show up at your page every day and at the same time.

6. Generate a special plan that includes specific place and things you do when you start blogging, for instance, have a cup of tea.

7. Try to be sociable and pick the computer or phone and write in public places such as parks. This helps to motivate you and inspire you to have new ideas to be written down.

8. Avoid restricting yourself to words and make use of videos and images. This variety helps you and the audience from getting bored.

9. It is useful to have a break once in a while but with reflective plan as it may lead you to lose your blogging habit.
1.10.3. Plan for Blog Motivation Success

10. It is necessary to think about the references that are directly relevant to your audience. This can be done as a way to plan the content that you want to share.

11. To insure against “blank screen syndrome” it is recommended to carry on an - on-going list of potential topics.

12. Jot down the main points that you come across or you thought about because you may assume that you will remember them but for sure you won’t. You may use an ever note or your smart phone’s recorder to organize those information.

1.10.4. Gather Blog Inspiration

13. Be careful to the questions that your audience ask and try to respond every one.

14. Try to gather information from your colleagues and friends to insure that they are interested in your writing.

15. You may not be sure about the preferences of your readers. Thus, it is preferable to survey them from time to time to keep them interested on what you write.

16. Promoting the quality of your writing is not that easy task and this can be reached via having contacts with experts in the field.

17. Show your voice and express your views particularly as regards hot topics that receive the attention of your target readers.

18. Read widely in the field that you write about it or what is labeled “news jacking”.This makes your public feel your professionalism.

19. Attend meetings to engage with others and get inspired for new idea.

20. Do not only share your own ideas but try to vary your posts by sharing ideas developed by others. In this way even your post will reach large number of people.
1.10.5. Get social

21. Responding the questions of the audience is not only a matter of respect but this helps in getting ideas for new posts.

22. Whenever you have a question, you may ask it on facebook to get responses and in this way you can carry on in your blog.

23. Facebook is not the only a social medium that aids you to blog but you may participate in twitter chats to extend your public.

24. Use Twitter to decide what’s trending. That has implications for your position.

25. Vary between the visual social media to generate new conceptions and ideas.

26. Commenting on other people posts is a good start for a discussion that you can move to your blog.

27. Just as you want people to help share your writings other people may want the same. Hence, try from time to time to share on your page other people’s content.

1.10.6. Study what Works on Your Blog

28. In order to brainstorm new ideas examine your topics that resonate more with your audience.

29. Be precise and professional in the sense that you avoid posting all what you have written in a day in one post. It is preferable to break posts into two or more to make your public be inspired for the next post.

30. You may use comments as an indication for next posts, or as an answer to a question you have received.

    All in all to keep motivated for blogging necessitates various techniques to assist you to form a habit. It is important to say that the more you blog and readership increases, the better your willpower get enhanced.
Conclusion

Indeed, blogs are authentic, interesting, and communicative resources that can serve a variety of purposes in the foreign language classroom. As, it stand as a medium to reflect on material, seek into issues, and provide interaction with others, blogs afford a rich and easy-to-use environment for both learners and instructors. The recent popularity of blogs, as well as their user-friendly nature, make them an obvious choice for instructors wanting to introduce out-of class resources to their learners.

However, to determine whether or not, blogs do indeed encourage greater learner independence, and interest in learning out the classroom. In this chapter, we have reviewed blogging by providing a definition along with a historical background of blogging. Then, a general overview on blogs’ unique features, the reasons behind the blogs use, the educational benefits of blogs were discussed. Finally, we provided a set of tips of how to keep motivation on blogging without confronting problems. The next chapter will be devoted to writing fluency accuracy and complexity.
# Chapter two: Writing Fluency, Accuracy and Complexity

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Introduction

One of the major means of communication is writing. This productive skill is considered the most difficult skill among the four skills. Although writing is an important skill for EFL learners who basically rely on it even to learn and acquire the other skills, many researches show that many EFL learners face many difficulties in writing. It is one of the most challenging skills even for the high proficiency students. In this chapter we deal with the notion of writing by clarifying its nature, the EFL writing skill, the feedback in writing, the writing process as well as its basic rules and stages. Besides, this chapter attempts to tackle the main approaches of teaching the writing skill in EFL classrooms. Then, we conclude with some difficult features which the learner may face while writing.

2.1 Definition of Writing

Writing is certainly one of the major skills to be mastered by students in order to succeed in their academic career. It is also by far the hardest in comparison to the other skills: listening, speaking and reading. Remelan (1992) defines writing as the presentation of the symbols of the language, which makes it a tool of communication. Also, Tarigan (1994) defines writing as the activity of producing or drawing graphic symbols belonging to a given language that is understood by a group of people. In other words, writing means the act of writing symbols of a given language to convey a message and these symbols can be read and understood by everyone.

Finocchinaro(1974) states that writing is a written thinking. According to Nunan (2003), writing is a mental and physical activity. It’s the process of generating ideas and developing them into sentences and paragraphs. For Byrne (1988), writing is encoding messages i.e. the writer turns his/her thoughts into written passages. Furthermore, Hesse and
Troyka (2005) argue that “the physical act of writing triggers brain processes that lead you to make new connection among ideas” (p.2).

From another point of view, writing is considered as a social and cultural activity. Sperling (1996) argues that “writing, like language in general, is a meaning-making activity that is socially and culturally shaped and individually and socially purposeful” (p.55). Writing is similar to language, and it is an activity that is socially and culturally shaped as it is purposeful for both the individuals and society. Also, Hamp-Lyons and Kroll (1997) defines writing as “an act for a context which aims at fulfilling a purpose and a specific audience”.

As has been noted by Hamp-Lyons and Kroll, more emphasis is being depicted by Johnson and Johnson in (1999) when he argues that the "process of writing represents a shift in emphasis in teaching writing from the product of writing activities (the finished text) to ways in which text can be developed: from concern with questions such as 'what have you written?' , 'what grade is it worth?' to 'how will you write it', 'how can it be improved?'” (p.257).

For a long time writing was a neglected part of the language program which was devoted only for the teaching of grammar and vocabulary. However, recently it is proved by many teachers and methodologists that writing is one of all the language skills that has become an essential tool for people in all ways of life through which they can inform others, convey their thoughts and opinions that are transcribed into written words and sentences created by a particular set of conventional symbols Hamp-Lyons and Kroll (1997).

However, writing is not merely a mode of communication. It is not restricted only in transcribing and expressing language which is created by a particular set of symbols drawn up visually; in fact, it is more than this. White and Arndt (1991) stated that: Writing is far from being a simple matter of transcribing language into written symbols: it is a thinking process in
its own right. It demands a conscious intellectual effort which usually has to be sustained over a considerable effort of time. (p.3) So, writing is a method of reflection, thinking, and analyzing. It requires both time and mental efforts.

In addition, Lado (1983) views that writing in a foreign language means being able to incorporate structures, lexical items, and how they are conventionally represented in different genres and contexts. Rozakis (2004) mentions that “writing is a powerful means of communication because it forms and shapes human thoughts” (p. 1). In other words, writing serves as a way of communicating with others in a written form. In addition, it expresses one’s personality and individuality, as well as it can be a social attempt. Miller (2001, as cited in Richards and Renanya, 2003, p. 25) states that “even though the writing production is an expression of one’s individuality and personality, it is important to remember that writing is also a social endeavor, a way of communicating with people”.

2.2 The Nature of Writing

Writing is an ancient tool of communication. In the book: Study for Writing (flower, 1986 p.51), it is mentioned that writing had existed before speech. Human beings were expressing their thoughts with writing; it was a kind of images and signs. At first, writing had been created without a defined system. The First known writing system, cuneiform (in the shape of a wedge), began around 3500 BCE in Mesopotamia (modern day Iraq) (Damerow, 2006, p.2).

The nature of writing can be defined as both a physical and a mental activity (Nunan, 2003, p.88). It is categorized as a physical activity because the writer should be able to express the message through a physical act. As a mental activity, Nunan (2003) explains that the act of writing focuses on the way of expressing these words in organized statements or paragraphs which make the message understandable for the reader. Crystal defines writing as
“a way of communicating which uses a system of visual marks made on some kind of surface. It is one kind of graphic expression” (1995, p. 257). From these definitions, we can describe writing as a mechanical activity, whereas; Bell and Clear (1984, as cited in Nunan, 1989, p. 36) state that writing is a complex cognitive activity. It means it needs a whole cognitive process to work at once, and the writer must control the format and the content components while producing. The writing skill is defined as the most complex skill. According to Nunan (1989, p.36) “writing is an extremely complex, cognitive activity for all which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously”.

2.3. Stage Division of the Writing Process

Grabe and Kaplan (1996) describe the four stage division in the history of the writing process as follows: the expressive stage, the cognitive stage, the social stage, and the discourse community.

2.3.1. The Expressive Stage

The expressive stage focuses on the need for free expression of the writer himself. Exponents of the stage based their work on putting the writer’s insights into good practice. Although it has no theoretical support, it was influential in the domain of teaching writing (ibid).

2.3.2 The Cognitive Stage

In the 1970’s, writing started to be seen as thinking. It was introduced first by the psychologists Flower and Hayes. They proposed that writing is a complex, goal-directed, recursive activity. It shifted through time from the production of writer-based texts i.e. neglecting the reader/self-expression to reader-based texts i.e. reader’ consideration (ibid).
2.3.3. The Social Stage

In the 1980’s, the emergence of socio-linguistics led to the appearance of the social stage. Holliday’s functional linguistics and educational ethnography was the guider to criticize the two previous stages of process writings approaches for deleting the social factor. This latter was considered as a crucial key in the writing process. (ibid)

2.3.4. The Discourse Community Stage

This stage has developed as a result of the social stage. Its leading principles are the concepts of audience and genre, and a focus on tertiary-level of writing which demand a written production accepted by the academic community (ibid).

2.4. EFL Students’ Difficulties with Writing

The writing skill is rated as the most difficult language skill to master. Therefore, Byrne (1991) states that many problems can occur while writing since it is not a skill that is acquired spontaneously and which has to be taught. According to Byrne (1991), there are three main problematic areas in writing: psychological, linguistic, and cognitive problems.

Concerning the psychological problems, Byrne (1991) states that “…writing is a solitary activity and the fact that we are required to write on our own, without the possibility of interaction or the benefit of feedback, in itself makes the act of writing difficult.” (p. 4). In addition, Byrne (1991) views that cognitive problems are very simple to be highlighted, In spite of the fact that speaking is natural and based on spontaneous expression, it is firmly recommended from Students to be aware of the structures used in the written discourse even if they are not used in the spoken one. Besides, organization might be an important aspect in order to pave the way for the audience to grasp the meaning. Here, it should be also
acknowledged that the traditional methods and the lack of adequate techniques which are adopted to teach this skill are one of the major difficulties that students may face.

2.5. Reasons for Writing

Writing is not devoted only for communicative purposes; instead, there are many other crucial reasons behind teaching/learning writing as a part of second language curriculum. According to Rimes, the first reason is that, writing extends students linguistic knowledge, by increasing their grammatical structure, idioms, and vocabulary. Second, whenever students write they get the chance to develop their language use and act risky by making their own stories. Therefore, it builds the sense of creativity and innovation. The third reason is that engaging in writing offers students the ability to activate their thinking ability by realizing new ways and methods to introduce their ideas and thoughts in order to express them in a proper way. Since students use brain, eyes, and hands simultaneously they intensify the process of learning (Hedge, 1988).

Furthermore, Hedge (1988) mentions that the reason for writing is to learn new items of language, and to make progress in the process of writing by the feedback that is provided by teachers. More importantly, writing enables teachers to diagnose their students’ level, and the problems they have faced during their writing process. In other words, through assessing students’ writing, teachers discover the areas of students’ difficulty and obstacles to treat them by providing written feedback on their pieces of writing. Hedge (1988, p. 7) explained that by saying: In this context, the role of writing is little different from its role in any other subject; it allows students to see how they are progressing and to get back feedback from the teacher, and it allows teachers to monitor and diagnose problems.

In addition to the previous reasons, Graham and Perin (2007) declared that writing paves the way for students to cover the use of strategies such as planning, drafting, and
revising texts to accomplish a variety of goals, such as writing a report or expressing an opinion or an idea. It also enables students to master the conventions of punctuation, capitalization, word usage, and grammar, which are necessary for the accuracy of a writing task (as cited in Hedge, 1988, p. 7). Therefore, writing is a means to extend and enlarge students’ knowledge; it works as a tool for learning a subject matter, which is known as “writing to learn”. In short, if students are to learn, then they must write.

2.6. Effective Techniques for Writing Improvement

Raimes (1983) points that the eacher’s main concern in writing is to provide students with effective classroom teaching techniques. Providing students with the first sentence, or correcting their error is a decision about the teaching techniques. Accordingly, the selection of which appropriate technique that suits the students’ level and class is based mainly on some basic questions in teachers’ mind; the following seven questions are suggested by Raimes (1983, p. 12,23) which must be asked by any teacher before class:

- How can writing help my students learn their second or foreign language?
- How can I find enough topics?
- How can I help to make the subject matter meaningful?
- Who will I read what my students write?
- How are the students going to work together in the classroom?
- How much time should I give my students for their writing?
- What do I do about errors?

Raimes also proposed different techniques that support students to produce a significant piece of writing, such as the use of picture technique including: photographs, charts, graphs, maps, and diagrams which are considered as a valuable resource in providing a shared experience for students in the class (Raimes, 1983). All ESL writing teachers can
find valuable resources in pictures, drawings, photographs, posters, slides, cartoons, magazines, advertisements, diagrams, graphs, tables, charts, and maps. First of all, pictures provide a shared experience for students in the class, a common base that leads to a variety of language activities. With a picture, however, all students, after close observation of the material will immediately need the appropriate vocabulary, idiom, and sentence structure to discuss what they see. So, pictures are vital resources in providing the use of common vocabulary, and common language forms (ibid).

Currently, visual organizers are widely incorporated in the teaching of writing. These tools are claimed to provide learners with a concrete structural framework of information and help to guide learners by keeping their focus on key ideas and the factual relations between them rather than the apparently isolated facts (Delrose, 2011). In fact, graphic organizers are among the visual organizers that are claimed to be an effective teaching technique in enhancing and facilitating the complex task of writing. Lee (2004) confirms that graphic organizers are regarded to be the most effective tools for teaching and improving writing skills. Similarly, Raimes (1983) shares that “Especially effective communicative tasks can be derived from diagrams, tables, graphs, and charts. Students deal with given information presented visually, and they work on conveying the same information in writing, that is, in a letter, report, or composition” (p. 40). To conclude, the visual representation of graphic organizers provides learners with a structural framework of information, and helps to guide students’ attention to the key concepts, facilitate learning, and minimize boredom. Therefore, graphic organizers play a vital role and can be a very successful technique to teach writing.

2.7.Dimensions of Written Production

Complexity, accuracy and fluency as dimensions of L2 written production often appear simultaneously as dependent variables in L2 research. However, in other researches,
the CAF may be investigated independently i.e., as a separate phenomenon of the psycholinguistic process of L2 acquisition (Housen et al, op.cit, p. 2).

2.7.1. Complexity

Skehan and Foster (1999) define complexity as the capacity to use a more advanced language, with the possibility that such language may not be controlled so effectively. This may also involve a greater willingness to take risks, and use fewer controlled language subsystems.

Complexity is the most ambiguous dimension among the CAF because the term is used to refer to cognitive complexity as well as to linguistic complexity. However, the two concepts are very different. While the cognitive complexity is treated as an independent variable and is related to the task difficulty, the linguistic complexity is treated as a dependent variable and has nothing to do with the learner.

2.7.2. Accuracy

Skehan and Foster (op.cit) define accuracy or more precisely linguistic accuracy as "the ability to avoid error in performance, possibly reflecting higher levels of control in the language, as well as a conservative orientation, that is, avoidance of challenging structures that might provoke error” (as cited in Fahim, Nourzadeh and Fat’hi, p. 4).

Whereas, Housen et al (op.cit, p. 2) define it simply as “the ability to use target-like or error-free language.” This definition of accuracy is the most agreed upon across different studies (Housen and Kuiken, 2009, Pallotti, 2009; as cited in Housen et al, p. 4). However, such clear and straightforward definition does not make of accuracy a simple concept. It is difficult to decide about the nature of errors and the criteria that evaluate them; for example, a researcher may find him/herself asking whether errors should be measured against standard
L2 or against non-standard L2 norms. Thus, accuracy is not just defined as correctness, but it is often treated as ‘appropriateness’ or ‘acceptability’ (Housen et al, op.cit; Vercellotti, op.cit).

2.7.3. Fluency

Skehan and Foster (op.cit) define fluency as the capacity to use language in real time to emphasize meanings, possibly drawing on more lexicalized systems (as cited in Fahim et al, p. 4). It is also referred to as the “learner’s or user’s global proficiency, particularly as characterized in terms of the ease, eloquence, ‘smoothness’ and native likeness of speech or writing” (Chambers, 1997, Lennon, 1990; as cited in Housen et al, p. 5). Unlike complexity and accuracy that can be observed at all levels of language, fluency has mostly, but not exclusively, to do with phonology. It is ‘multidimensional’.

2.8. Measures of Written Production

Ways of measuring CAF are numerous in applied linguistics. They can be holistic, qualitative and subjective or quantitative and objective (Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005; as cited in Housen et al, p.8). The latter are specific and favored by researchers, while the former are general and less favored, and the two can be said to form two ends of a spectrum of methods.(Housen et al, ibid).

2.8.1. Qualitative Measures

Many researchers like Halleck (1995), Wolfe-Quintero (1998), Ortega (2003) and Norris and Ortega (2009) have surveyed the methods used in measuring the CAF across research (as cited in Housen et al, p. 8-9). Polio (1997) conducted a study in which she described and compared three measures of linguistic accuracy in L2 (English) essay writing. Her aim was to help researchers in L2 writing choose the appropriate measure of linguistic accuracy. Polio found out that the dominant measures of linguistic accuracy are the holistic scales, the number of error-free units and the number of errors. The measure of choice in our
study is holistic, for it is “suitable for a wide range of proficiencies (Ishikawa, 1995, as cited in Polio, p. 112), and it can also discriminate between high and low quality essays as Polio claims. According to Hyland (2003, p. 227), a “holistic scale is based on a single, integrated score of writing behavior”. It is a method that measures the quality of a writing piece in one single and general impression. For those who use this kind of measure, writing forms one entity, and the quality of this entity is best accounted for by one global score.

Furthermore, the holistic scale emphasizes what the writer can do well instead of focusing on the weaknesses in his/her writing and tracking the errors in it (Write, 1994, as cited in Hyland, 2003, p. 227). In a holistic scale, criteria are made explicit through the use of scoring guides or rubrics. A holistic rubric is “a rating scale that outlines the scoring criteria. Holistic scoring rubrics generally consist of 4 to 10 levels or bands, each of which corresponds to a score and a set of descriptors.” (Park, 2008, p.1). In other words, these rubrics can take the form of a step scale in which each step describes a given proficiency criterion and is given a specific score. According to Hyland (2003), rubrics are meant to reflect the scorer’s objectives and perception of good writing. They are designed to fit a particular genre, a given topic or a set of topics and learners’ differences. Already established scales may be used or adapted by teachers to score the learners’ pieces of writing.

Holistic scales may be easy, appropriate and useful for judging the quality of essays, but they also have many shortcomings. According to Cohen (1994), holistic scoring gives a global impression of a wide range of abilities and is time saving; it is also simple to use by a single novice scorer and can emphasize some specific criteria of a writing task. However, holistic scales give no diagnostic information about particular abilities such as the ability to use complex sentences; therefore, teachers cannot use them to give feedback to learners. Details are not given, thus the exact areas of deficiency are not distinguishable (as cited in Hyland, 2003, p. 227).
2.8.2. Quantitative Measures

According to Housen et al (op.cit), a wide range of quantitative measures for the CAF exist, among which are frequencies, ratios and indices. These measures are designed to evaluate each one of the three dimensions (complexity, accuracy and fluency) separately from the others in different ways for each dimension. When measuring accuracy, the researcher may adopt either a specific quantitative measure or a general one. Using a specific measure means that the researcher targets a specific structure by engaging his/her participants in a focused task (Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005; as cited in Vercellotti, p. 10). In other words, to measure the accuracy of a given form of language, the task given to the students must elicit this target form (Ellis, 2012, p. 226). An example of measuring linguistic accuracy on a specific form is counting the number of subject-verb agreement errors per clause.

According to Vercellotti (ibid, p. 14), a countless number of language complexity measurements exist. Complexity can be measured based on sophistication or variety. Another way to measure complexity is by measuring the syntactic or grammatical complexity of a text. To do this, the researcher may use the tool of estimating the length of a sentence by counting the number of its words. Another tool of measuring grammatical complexity is to count the additional phrases in each sentence, and a third tool is the one of counting the subordinate clauses. Complexity can also be measured through measuring the lexical variety (Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005; as cited in Vercellotti, p. 18).

Measuring fluency focuses mainly on oral production by estimating the rapidity of speech or the articulation rate, number of hesitations or repairs. However, in writing measuring fluency is more or less different. In previous researches, fluency was through counting the total number of words written within a specific time limit for a given task. In studies like the one of Wigglesworth and Storch (2009), fluency was measured by counting...
the total number of T-Unit (Terminable Unit), knowing that a “T-unit is defined as an independent clause and all its attached or embedded dependent clauses” (as cited in Sadeghi and Mosalli, 2012, p. 53).

2.9 Stages of Writing

Harmer (2007) cited that "writing is a process that is the stages the writer goes through in order to produce something in its final form. The process may be affected by the content of writing, the type of writing, and the medium it is written in. This process has four main elements: planning, drafting, editing, and the final draft" (p. 4). In this context, Hedge (2005) stated that "writing is the result of employing strategies to manage the composing process...it involves a number of activities: setting goals, generating information, selecting appropriate language, making a draft, reading and reviewing it, then revising and editing, thus, it is a complex process" (p. 302). That is to say, to write a good piece of writing, going through multiple stages is necessary (Seow, 2002):

2.9.1 Prewriting

The procedures followed in bringing up ideas with no presence of inspiration are called "prewriting". This term is used because these procedures come before writing anything. It is also known as "planning" because, in this stage, the writer needs to find out what s/he is going to write and how s/he is going to write it. Then s/he generates ideas and collects information about the target topic(Seow, 2002).

2.9.2 Drafting

The moment the writer feels that s/he generated enough ideas during the first stage to start up with, s/he should attempt writing them down. This process is called "drafting". The latter is the departure of the writing process. It is when the writer organizes ideas and information logically and develops the topic (ibid).
2.9.3 Revising

To revise literally means "to re-see" or "re-look" at the work done. Revising is to read the piece of writing from the reader's view. At this stage, the writer reworks and refines the content to the clearest possible way and assures that the ideas are expressed in the best possible way (ibid).

2.9.4 Editing

The "revising stage" focuses on making the content clear; however the "editing stage" focuses on finding and eliminating mistakes, and making the piece of writing meet the conventions of standard written English. The writer at this stage should check the following aspects: grammar, sentence structure, word choice, punctuation, capitalization and spelling ...etc (ibid).

**Figure 2:** The Writing Process According to Seow (2002, p. 315).

This figure illustrates that although the writing process includes identified stages, these stages don't occur in a strict, linear manner; rather they are recursive, interactive, and potentially simultaneous as Raimes (as cited in Tribble, 1996, p. 39). Writers can switch from one stage to another, or return to one stage several times as the situation requires. This means
that the stages of the writing process are not seen as fixed steps; rather they are dynamic and can occur in a parallel manner (Trible, 1996).

2.10. Models of Writing

Nowadays, theoretical approaches to writing differ in their perspectives whether in linguistic, cognitive or social acts. Throughout these perspectives, the emphasis is given to the text, the writer, or the context (audience or community) (Johnson and Johnson, 1999).

2.10.1 Writing as a Product

The definition of writing implies the output or the end-product of the writing’s process. Johnson and Johnson (1999) state that "this product view is one of more or less static text, visible on paper or screen, and more or less separable in time and place from the producer and the act of production" (p. 342). The concern of this model is at both the grammatical and discourse levels.

2.10.2 Writing as a Process

In addition to the previous model, researches shifted to focusing on the process of producing the piece of writing itself. It concentrates mainly on the activity of transforming ideas to sentences, rather than on the product solely (Johnson and Johnson, 1999). This model sees the writing process as a complex cognitive activity. It uses mental processes and various problem-solving strategies to generate ideas and transform them into a coherent text.

2.10.3 Writing as a Social Activity

According to Johnson and Johnson (1999) "writing is an act of communication between writer and reader within an external context". Writing is seen as the message from the writer sent to the reader in a given context. It is based on the interaction between the producer and receptor in terms of shared knowledge and situational context (Johnson and
Johnson 1999, p.344). The written passage plays a mediator between the writer and the reader and conveys certain ideas.

2.10.4 Writer’s Process

The writer’s process is the process that the writer follows in order to get a whole picture of what s/he is going to write like generating ideas, starting planning, and starting drafting…etc (Johnson and Johnson, 1999)

2.11. Components of Writing

Written expression is an important activity within the development of language learning and teaching (Raimes, 1983). There are multiple components of writing that need to be taken into consideration to produce a good piece of writing and to achieve an effective communication of ideas which are the audience, purpose, word choice, organization, mechanics, grammar, syntax and content.

Audience: The readers play important role in the writing process. The writer takes into consideration what the readers want to read and how they want to read it and in what manner.

Purpose: The reason of the writer behind writing is what determines the whole work plan, aspects, form, and content…etc.

Word Choice: The audience and the purpose are two aspects that make the writer choose his words carefully as vocabulary, idioms, register and tone…etc.

Organization: The organization is the final form of the piece of writing, numbers of paragraphs, topic and concluding sentences, coherence and cohesion…etc.

Mechanics: include the handwriting, spelling, and punctuation…etc. which means free-error writing and not only free from the grammatical errors.

Grammar: The system of rules of a given language and its effective use leads to good writing.
**Syntax:** The pattern of formation of sentences or phrases in a given language. It includes sentence structure, sentence boundaries and stylistic choices…etc.

**Content:** The content is a very important component of writing. It is the base of all components mentioned above. It is the combination of relevance, clarity and logic…etc

![Diagram of Components of Writing](image)

**Figure 3:** Raimes’s Diagram Representing Components of Writing. Socialization, is Reflected In This Diagram Presented by Raimes (1983)

### 2.12. Approaches to Writing

Writing is an important phase in EFL classrooms. For writing to be effective, ELT practitioners have suggested three approaches to writing: product, process and genre oriented approach. It is the needs of the classroom which determine the approach to be used. During the last couple decades, there has been a dominance of both the product and process oriented approaches in most EFL classrooms Gabrielatos (2002). However, there has been a great shift toward using the genre oriented approach in EFL classrooms recently.
2.12.1 Product-oriented Approach

Gabrielatos (2002) defines the product oriented approach as a "traditional approach in which students are encouraged to mimic a model text, usually is presented and analyzed at an early age" (p. 5). This approach accentuates the mechanical aspects of writing that relate the words, sentences, and paragraphs, such as grammar and syntax...etc., and imitating models that are introduced at the beginning of the lesson. Furthermore, the "correctness" and the form of the final product are the two bases of this approach. The product-oriented approach emphasizes on the form of the students’ written production. In a typical product oriented approach classroom, the exercises given deal with sentences and paragraph-level organization. Students are asked to follow a specific framework given along with the instruction of the teacher in order to produce a piece of writing (Gabrielatos 2002,p.5).

2.12.2 Process-oriented Approach

Kroll (2001) defines the process oriented approach as follows: The “process approach” serves today as an umbrella term for many types of writing courses what the term captures is the fact that student writers engage in their writing tasks through a cyclical approach rather than a single-shot approach. They are not expected to produce and submit complete and polished responses to their writing assignments without going through stages of drafting and receiving feedback on their drafts, be it from peers and/or from the teacher, followed by revision of their evolving texts. The Process oriented approach considers writing as a developmental process which promotes the development of language use such as: brainstorming, discussion and rewriting (Ibid).

Although this approach gives great importance to the mechanical aspects of writing, however, it should not interfere with the process of writing itself. The latter requires the teacher’s guidance through every step of it. While the product oriented approach emphasizes on the correctness and the form of the final product (Brown, 2001).
2.12.3 Genre-oriented Approach

The genre oriented approach considers writing as a social and cultural activity. According to Paltridge (2004), this approach highlights the specific genre that the students need for their social communication. That is to say, writing is seen as a mean of communication between a reader and a writer and the genre ought to be specified and taught in EFL classrooms. Muncie (2002) argues that the genre oriented approach considers the reader the center of the writing process in which the writing piece should follow certain conventions to be successful and acceptable by the readers of the same community.

2.13 EFL Writing Skill and Proficiency

Writing is an important skill for EFL learners since they use it in their note taking, exams answering as well as in learning the other skills. The writing skill can be defined as the ability to express all one’s ideas into the form of structured pattern which creates a meaningful message for the reader (Brown, 2001, p. 334). To master the writing skill, it is not a matter of acquiring grammatical rules or having a vocabulary repertoire only, but it demands acquiring certain knowledge about organization, structural rules, also an appropriate style for each subject matter. That is what makes it a hard process for EFL learner to be mastered (Jim A.P, 2010, p. 2).
2.14. Approaches to Teaching Writing

The teaching of writing has typically focused on presenting students with different approaches (to Morrissey, 2003). The table below summarizes some of the writing genres more commonly taught in classrooms. The forms of presentation are only some examples and are not necessarily exclusive to a particular approaches.

**Table 2: Approaches of Writing** (adapted from the writing site website: [http://thewritingsite.org/](http://thewritingsite.org/))
2.14.1 Creative Writing

According to Morrissey (2003), creative writing offers students opportunities to:

- Express themselves and their own ideas. This promotes a more motivating and stimulating experience, as students would be drawing on their own personal interests while having a means to use their imagination.

- Play around with language. In doing so, students as writers must pay attention to ensure that the desired effect is obtained.
To practice and learn how to select vocabulary accurately and use figurative language, such as idioms, metaphors and expressions in order to improve their text.

2.14.2. Journal writing

Journal writing can be considered a daily record of events or a private journal, usually referred to as a diary. Like creative writing, journals have been promoted as a medium to encourage writing as they are meant to appeal the interests of the writer. They can be personal or impersonal.

2.14.3. The Controlled – to Free Approach

As its name indicates, the controlled-to-free approach contains two steps. The first is “controlled” while the second is “free”. In the first step, students are provided with a short text or passage in order to make the grammatical changes like transforming it from present to past, singular to plural depending on the instructions given. This phase is controlled and guided with specific instructions. It aims at building grammar correctness and vocabulary repertoire (Raimes, 1983, p. 7). According to Hyland (2003) the purpose of this step is to make the student able to write without mistakes.

When the first aim is reached, teachers accede to the second step which is free writing. Now, students are allowed to write some free compositions without instructions. In other words, after requiring a good level of grammar and vocabulary, students are ready to produce their own ideas. This approach has been criticized because it focuses on the correctness of the structural aspects of the language, and it neglects the communicative aspect. In addition, the controlled-to-free approach does not give attention to the purpose of writing as well as the audience to whom you are writing. Raimes (1993, p. 7) states that “this approach stresses three features: grammar, syntax, and mechanics”. In fact writing is a mixture of all the
previous aspects and it is an enjoyable experiment which cannot be achieved with guidance and control.

2.14.4. The Free-Writing Approach

This approach emerged as an alternative to the controlled-to-free approach because educators felt the need for practicing fluency in writing. The principle was that writing too much enhances the good writing ability. So, teachers asked students to write freely as much as they can without paying attention to grammar or spelling mistakes. “In this way, students feel that they are actually writing; not only performing exercises of some kind; they write what they want to write and consequently writing is an enjoyable experience” (Byrne, 1988, p.22).

2.15. Feedback in Writing

A feedback is defined as the information given toward students’ performance in certain tasks. According to Woldkowski and Jaynes, feedbacks “are information that students received about the quality of their performance on a given task, knowledge of results, comments about skill, approving nod are forms of feedback that teachers often use with students” (1990, p. 93). Besides, feedback can be provided orally or written.

Indeed, feedback takes an important part from the whole teaching/learning process. Because the writing skill is based on practice, students need feedback about their work which helps them assessing their levels and improvements. In this concept, Narciss claims that “from the cognitive view point, feedback is regarded as a source of information necessary for verification, elaboration, concept development…” (1993, p. 3). From the psychological perspective, feedback is seen as a source of development and progress. More explanation based on Vygotsky’s theory (1986) of “the zone of proximal development” where skills are extended through others’ comments and guidance. In another area, feedback can be a motivational element for students. It means, when the teacher highlights the learner’s
mistakes and explains them to him, he will understand his weaknesses as he will be aware of them. The awareness and the comprehension of one’s mistakes push him to correct and develop himself more (Harmer, 2007).

According to Harmer (2007, p.108-113) the effective feedback should be done by correcting and responding. In the first place, the teacher corrects the mistakes of the student’s product such as syntax, grammar, spelling…etc. In the second place, the teacher has to explain these mistakes, to suggest examples to him. Harmer’s point of view is that the role of the teacher is not just to indicate the right and the wrong in the piece of writing, but also to help the student improve his level through such a feedback by responding effectively to those mistakes (2007).

Teacher can provide feedback orally or in a written form. So, he can use different ways to deliver his feedback. The following methods are suggested by Brook hart in her book “How to give to your students an effective feedback” (2008):

2.15.1. Handwritten Contents

This is one of the most widely used forms of feedback where the teacher includes his written feedback on essays, reports …etc. with this method, the teacher attempts to highlight the mistakes of each individual’s work. Students appreciate such method for its privacy.(Ibid)

2.15.2. Face-to-Face Feedback

It is the teacher immediate oral comments for an individual or a groups of students. It can manifest as body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, and emphasis. Face-to-face feedback method helps the teacher to understand his students” attitudes towards his feedback (Ibid).
2.15.3. Electronic Feedback

The use of technology in education becomes a widely used method because it saves time. Electronic feedback can be done in many ways: e-mailed comments, computer conferences, and computer-delivered feedback. In the first technique, the teacher makes written comments on students work but through e-mail. In the second technique, both the teacher and his students make a conference through internet where the teacher provides oral feedback about students’ works. However, computer-delivered feedback is a software that includes a model of feedback in the computer. In this case, it is the computer which comments on students’ e-mails tasks. The following table provided by Brookhart (2008, p.5) shows the conditions including in the choice of the feedback method.

Table 3: Feedback Strategies Brookhart (2008, p.5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback strategies can vary in . . .</th>
<th>In these ways . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>• When given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>• How many points made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How much about each point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>• Oral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Visual/demonstration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>• Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Group/class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

Writing perfectly is related to different processes included in the written production. This chapter afforded us with the definition of writing in the first place. Then the key concepts of fluency, accuracy and complexity were discussed.
Chapter Three: The Influence of Blogging on EFL Learners’ Writing Fluency, Accuracy and Complexity.

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Introduction

It has been mentioned in the literature review that blogging is an effective tool in the promotion of the academic writes outside the classroom. The current research seeks to measure the extent to which first-year EFL learners at the University of Oum el Bouaghi, the department of English interact with each other through writing with their instructors in an online environment. A quasi-experimental study was conducted. This chapter presents a detailed description of the study, including the choice of the method, the sample, the research design, procedures of data collection and treatment, data gathering instruments and an analysis and discussion of the results of our study.

3.1. Choice of the Method

We employed a quasi-experimental design that is mainly conducted to test the validity of the hypothesis that had been suggested before about blogging effectiveness in helping the students acquire greater proficiency on the level of complexity, accuracy and fluency in the written exchanges. This method is thought to be more suitable to our study than any other method. It is a type of investigation meant to test the effectiveness of a given tool on the participants.

3.2 The Description of the Sample

The target population of the study is 370 first-year LMD students of English at the University of Oum el Bouaghi, for the academic year 2016-2017. Since it is not possible to deal with the whole population, we have randomly selected a sample that may represent the whole population; its total sum is 42 students. Then, due to the absences, the number decreased to 40 students. They were already divided into two groups because of administrative purposes.
First-year students were chosen as a sample simply because they are at their first stages of constructing their linguistic background and how to organize their writing assignment through the different steps of the writing process. Consequently, we hoped to accustom them from the beginning to adopt blogging as a pre-writing tool in order to depict blog effectiveness as a means that can afford a considerable promotion to the EFL learners writing environment.

3.3 The Research Design and Hypotheses

The method that was selected to carry out this study is the quasi experimental method. The experimental and the control groups were chosen to take part in this study. In this research, we have focused on the following question: Are blogs effective in helping the students acquire greater proficiency on the level of fluency, complexity, and accuracy in the written exchanges? Statistically speaking, this question is raised in the following way: Is there any significant difference in the writing performance between learners who adopt blogging as a writing tool and those who do not?

On the basis of the research questions, this work will examine two variables: dependent and independent. The independent variable in this case is blogging, and the dependent variable is the writing skill. The quasi-experiment was carried out with three phases: pre-test, treatment, and post-test. The schematic representation of the design is shown as follows:
3.4 Procedures

3.4.1 Pre-testing

The pre-test was administered to all participants (the control and the experimental group). Students accomplished their assignments at home. Besides, the students were informed that the purpose behind this evaluation of their written production is to test their knowledge about the cultural relation between Egypt and the English language, as well as to determine their abilities and capacities to develop an acceptable piece of writing.

3.4.2 Treatment

After providing both groups with the pre-test, the experimental group received the treatment on net, by publishing a set of posts including exercises that work on enhancing their lexical and the cognitive level. Additionally, the same activities were proposed for the control group during 6 sessions; both groups were taught the same content but the guidelines about creating and using blogs and commenting were dedicated only for the experimental group. The treatment period took 6 sessions. Each session lasted 20 minutes.

Table 4: Writing Instruction Program of the Experimental Group Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


3.4.3. Post-Test

The last session was devoted for the post-test which was delivered to both experimental and control groups. It consists of accomplishing writing assignments on the unique aspect of the Egyptian culture (as a home work). The instruction was mentioned on a sheet of paper without any further explanation or guidance.

3.5. Instruments

3.5.1. Tests Used in Pre-testing and Post-testing

The tests were writing a composition on Egypt and the English language in the pretest and a composition on the unique aspects of the Egyptian culture. Participants were asked to work individually with no help from peers or other members. Both groups were evaluated using the same grading criteria.

3.6 Scoring

In order to assess students’ writing performance, the same scoring procedure was used for both groups in the pre-test and post-test. The maximum score was 10. Points were given to the amount of written words, and commenting on someone else’s blog (experimental
group), or commenting by reading (control group). In addition, two points were devoted to the use of language (vocabulary, expression, ideas, issues, etc.).

3.7. Statistical Analysis

Data analysis was done quantitatively via using text analysis web tool “Advanced Text Analyzer” at Using English.com. For instance, to measure language accuracy, three categories of writing errors were counted for all posts:

1- Errors regarding capitalization usage in subject headings, counted in posts only.
2) Spelling errors, but not mechanical errors.
3) Lexical and grammatical errors that hindered communication (i.e. word order, word choice, tense, subject-verb agreement,

Differences between scores in pre and post tests were then calculated. And, to determine percentages of gain or loss for each of the aspects measured in the study, the following formula was used:

\[(\text{Ave of the post } 3 + \text{pot } 4 - \text{ the Ave of post } 1 + \text{ post } 2) / (\text{Ave of post } 1 + \text{ post } 2) \times 100.\]

3.8. Results

The following section presents the statistical analysis of the study. It also shows the results of the writing performance of both groups in the pre-test and post-test, and it discusses the findings gathered from the research.

3.8.1 Results of the pre-test and post-test

**Table 5:** Measures of Language Fluency of the Control Group in Pre vs. Post -test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CWC 1</td>
<td>CWC 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. sentences</td>
<td>9.54</td>
<td>9.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. words</td>
<td>137.35</td>
<td>136.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 indicates that the difference between the control group’s measurements on the pre- and post-tests is not very significant. Although the participants’ performance was somewhat better on the post-test, the results are practically comparable. The comparability is further displayed at the gaining and loss of submitted criteria. The gain (marked with a decrease in criteria percentage) as the number of sentences decreased by 15.08%, the number of words by 30.5%, and the number of syllables by 21.2% in which students performed well. However, the loss is marked with an increase as Ave. words per sentence, Ave. No. syllables per sentence and No. paragraphs. This increase indicates that students’ performance is failed all over those criteria. As a result, these measurements marked a slight difference between the pre and post test.

![Figure 5: Control Group Fluency Results on the Pre and Post-test](image)

**Figure 5:** Control Group Fluency Results on the Pre and Post-test
Standard deviation of each criteria, the smallest is the closer it will be to the mean; as the small SD of paragraph 0.47 indicates when compared with the mean 2.3 of paragraphs. And, the large SD the farther it will be, as the SD of the Ave. No. syllables per sentence 40.48 indicates in relation with the mean 23.80 of the same criteria as it is shown in table 5 since the majority of SD are large the distribution is centralized farther away from the mean on the right as Figure 5 illustrates.

Table 6: Measures of Language Complexity of the Control Group in Pre vs. Post Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CWC1 CWC2</td>
<td>CWC1 CWC2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No complex words (i.e. words containing 3 or more syllables)</td>
<td>12.42 10.5</td>
<td>7.25 14.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave. No. complex words per sentence</td>
<td>1.30 1.06</td>
<td>1.07 1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% words outside level 3 of the British Lexical corpus (BNC)</td>
<td>14.77 18.25</td>
<td>17 13.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave. No. words per sentence outside level 3 of the BNC</td>
<td>2.13 2.50</td>
<td>1.88 1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunning Fog Index</td>
<td>9.47 8.84</td>
<td>8.36 9.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical Dencity</td>
<td>60.83 60.93</td>
<td>69.77 64.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results in Table 6 below show a decrease in some measurements of language complexity and increase in others. A significant difference is marked between the pre-test and post test where students performed greatly better all over the post-test. A comparison between average measures obtained from pre and post tests exhibit the following criteria percentage. Number of complex words per post decreased by 6.06%. The percentage of words outside level 3 of the British National Corpus fell by 7.21%. This means that students achieved well. Readability measures provided by the Gunning Fog Index also showed a greater than 1 level decline in the difficulty of the written language produced (-1.31). However, there was a 9.95% increase in lexical density. The number of average complex
words per sentence increased by 7.20%. These increased measurements depict that the criteria failed and applied wrongly by students.

![Control Group Complexity Results on the Pre and Post-test](image)

**Figure 6:** Control Group Complexity Results on the Pre and Post-test

In this case, the majority of Standard Deviations are close to the mean and not excessively dispersed from the mean. Distribution is on the right (in that case the majority SD are large this means the criteria are failed) where the majority of SD are centralized in Figure 7. However, the biggest SD value 3.63 is a bit farther than the mean 64.10 while, the smallest SD 0.17 is close to the mean 1.46 as represented in table 6.

**Table 7:** Measures of the Language Accuracy of the Control Group in Pre vs. Post Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ave.No.spelling error per sentence</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave.No.lexical and grammatical</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results in Table 7 above show a marked decrease in spelling accuracy within CWC where comparison between the pre and post test measures students revealed that their performance in post-test are better, but with slight difference. A comparison between average measures obtained from pre and post tests indicate that the number of spelling errors increased by 20.15%. However the number of lexical and grammatical errors decreased slightly (-1.89%) this depicts that those criteria are gained, and the only criterion they failed is capitalization errors with a slight increase (1.77%) within the subject headings of posts.

**Figure 7:** Control Group Accuracy Results on the Pre-test and Post-test

Figure 7 exhibits the distribution of the majority of SD that is close to the mean since they are with small values. The largest SD value is 37.3 with a mean of 41.29 which means that is close to the mean; whilst the smallest SD 0.36 is close to the mean 1.46 means as table
7 shows. The major SD distribution is reduced on the left (in this case the majority SD are small this means that the criteria are gained) as illustrated in the figure above.

### 3.8.2 Results of the Pre-test vs. Post-test of the Experimental Group

**Table 8:** Measures of Language Fluency of The Experimental Group in Pre vs. Post Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD.Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>post1</td>
<td>post 2</td>
<td>post 1</td>
<td>post 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. sentences</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. words</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave. words per s</td>
<td>19.45</td>
<td>22.22</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave. No. syllables</td>
<td>7.74</td>
<td>11.39</td>
<td>7.83</td>
<td>10.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.paragraphs</td>
<td>31.18</td>
<td>31.11</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results in Table 8 above show a marked decline in the fluency of language in learners submitted posts. A significant difference is marked between the pre-test and post test performance where pre-test results were recovered slightly than the post test. A comparison between average measures obtained score in the post and pre test tell that the number of sentences decreased by 26.75%, the number of words declined by 30.17%, and the number of syllables fell by 34.26%. Also, the percentage of the pen paper based written assignment of more than 2 sentences length dropped by 39.9%. These results show that the students gained those criteria but, they lost the increased criteria as the number of syllables and the average word per sentence.
Figure 8: The Experimental group Fluency in Pre and Post-test

It is quite sufficient to indicate that the distribution of the major SD are reduced on the left (in this case the majority SD are small which means that the criteria are gained) as Figure 9 shows. Less dispersion indicated between the values of the mean and the values of the SD. In addition, the larger standard deviation equals 1.61 means is with small value and close to the mean 9.73. However, the small deviation (equals 0.33) is close to the mean value 1.98 as table 8 illustrates.

Table 9: Measure of the Language Complexity of the Experimental Group in Pre vs. Post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th></th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th></th>
<th>Ave</th>
<th>St.Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>post 1</td>
<td>post 2</td>
<td>post 1</td>
<td>post 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No complex words (i.e. words containing 3 or more syllables)</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave .No. complex words per sentence</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% words outside level 3 of the British Lexical corpus (BNC)</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>11.44</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>7.43</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave .No. words per sentence outside level 3 of the BNC</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results in Table 9 above show a marked decrease in the complexity of language in the experimental group posts. After a comparison between the pre-test and post test, a marked difference of advance is detecting all over the post test results. A comparison between average measures obtained from pre and post scores expose the following results, in which the number of complex words decreased by 41.19% and the number of average complex words per sentence fell by 19.46%. In addition the percentage of words outside level 3 of the British National Corpus fell by 58.02%. Readability measures provided by the Gunning Fog Index also showed a slight drop in the readability measures provided by the Gunning Fog Index(-0.12)which indicates a slight decline in the level of difficulty of the written language produced. All those decreased factors are achieved by students accept that increased factor of lexical density 6.16% they fail in achieving it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gunning Fog Index</th>
<th>6.16</th>
<th>8.06</th>
<th>6.97</th>
<th>6.74</th>
<th>6.86</th>
<th>0.76</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lexical Density</td>
<td>92.36</td>
<td>84.01</td>
<td>92.32</td>
<td>94.91</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 9: The Experimental group Complexity in Pre and Post -test](image-url)
Figure 9 depicts a small dispersion that is displayed between the major SD values and the mean values. SD are reduced and centralized on the left (in this case the majority of SD are small this means that the criteria are gained since the larger standard deviation equals 3.38 this means that with small value and close to the mean value 7.43. However, the small deviation 0.38 is a close to the mean 0.71 (Table 9).

**Table 10: Measures of the Language Accuracy of the Experimental Group in Pre vs. Post-test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th></th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>post 1</td>
<td>post 2</td>
<td>post 1</td>
<td>post 2</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>St.Dev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave. No. spelling errors per sentence</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave. No. lexical and grammatical errors per sentence</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results in Table 10 above show a marked decrease in the accuracy of learners posts, and through a comparison between the pre and post test, we can deduce that students post test is better. A comparison between average measures obtained from pre and post test of writing assignments tells that the written assignments submitted in the post test maintain on an increased spelling errors by 11.5%. In addition, there was a slight 1.77% increase in capitalization errors within the subject headings of the assignments, and also a slight 4.73% increase in the average number of lexical and grammatical errors. This increase in the criteria settled for measurements reveals that the students failed in achieving them while performing.
Figure 10: The Experimental Group Accuracy in Pre and Post-test

The larger standard deviation in table 10 equals 0.90 means that it is with large value farther from the mean value 0.8. the smallest deviation 0.70 is farther from the mean 0.19. A large dispersion is displayed between the major SD values and the mean values, adding that the majority of SD are condensed or reduced on the right (in that case the majority SD are large this means that the criteria are failed as it is illustrated in Figure 10.

3.8.3 Findings and Discussion

The objective of this current research was to investigate the influence of blogging on EFL students’ writing performance as well as raising students’ awareness on their writing by using the blog platform as an effective tool that contributes indispensably in promoting the CAF aspects. In order to meet the aim of this research, a quasi-experimental study was carried out. The results obtained have proved that the manipulated independent variable (blogging) has a significant effect on improving students’ writing fluency, accuracy and complexity.
It has been formerly revealed that the control group failed in achieving the correct application of the criteria of two aspects (fluency, accuracy) and achieved only one aspect (accuracy). In addition, both groups performed better in the post test.

Table 11: Comparative Results on the Frequency of the Decreased and the Increased Criteria of Control Group and Experimental Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency of the decreased criteria (gained)</td>
<td>Frequency of the increased criteria (failed)</td>
<td>Comparison results</td>
<td>Frequency of the decreased criteria (gained)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>&lt;</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>&lt;</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>&gt;</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table exhibits the gain and fail of the criteria being measured. The gain is measured by the frequent decrease of the values of the achieved criteria. The Experimental group gained two aspects (fluency with 4 decreased criteria, accuracy with 4 decreased criteria) being failed by the control group (fluency with 3 decreased criteria, accuracy with 3 decreased criteria). The experimental group failed in achieving one aspect (accuracy decreased with 0 criteria) gained by the control group (accuracy decreased with 1 criteria). Failure is measured by the frequent increase of the values of the failed criteria. Therefore, the control group failed in tow aspects (fluency increased with 3 criteria, accuracy increased with 2 criteria) and the experimental group failed just one aspect (accuracy increased with 3 criteria).
criteria). From this, we can conclude that the experimental group by using blogs reflects significantly and positively on the major aspects.

So, students of the experimental group show more growth in their piece of writing when using blogs as a part of the writing process. The results were confirmed via the advanced text based analyzer available on using English .com that implement several corpora for checking reliability and the refinement of the results. This analyzer proved that the experimental group performed better in avoiding written production mistakes when assessing the CAF aspects.

**Conclusion**

After analyzing the data of the quasi-experimental study using the upgraded text analyzer available at using English .com, it was revealed that the manipulation of the independent variable had a positive effect on the dependent variable. In other words, the manipulation of the blog on the writing aspects of fluency, accuracy and complexity, showed satisfactory results, and that blogs are beneficial and helpful. Therefore, our hypotheses were accepted.

**Limitations of the Study**

There are several limitations to this study. First, it involved a relatively small population. Second, language production was measured over only one-semester, preventing generalizations to year-long courses, where students have longer time to gain familiarity with communicating in a discussion blogging environment. Third, our department does not provide the required technological environment. That affects the reliability of our research (doing the assignments as a home work task).

**Pedagogical Implications**
The current investigation demonstrated that using blogs brought satisfactory results in improving second year LMD students’ writing fluency, accuracy and complexity. Interestingly, this implies that:

- The development that occurs in the students’ writing performance leads us to end up that blogs are effective as a pre-writing technique that should be taken into consideration by EFL teachers while attempting to teach writing.
- Blogs are flexible, in other words; they might be adopted in other domains like: reading, note taking…ect.
- Blog platforms are also effective in encouraging and motivating students to work either individually or in pairs depending on the teacher’s instructions.
- In fact there are many types of blogging platforms, and each type is best suited to fit a particular type of information. However, all of them may share the same effect which is creating a background and organizing their virtual portfolios.
- Blogs can be used as a pre-writing training tool, as well as, they can be adopted as a revising tool for errors.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

The actual study attempts to investigate the influence of blogging on EFL learners writing fluency accuracy and complexity. While doing so, we came out with several questions and issues proposed as recommendations for further researches:

- In our study we attempted to examine the influence of students’ writing performance. What if blogs are qualified enough and could be equally effective as a technique for teaching other language skills such as reading comprehension, listening and speaking?
- We have implemented only one type of the blog which is the educational one. So, what about other types?
- We also suggest to seek the effect of blogs on visual learners in particular.
- The current research targeted first-year university students. We suggest to change the case study, and to work with middle or secondary school pupils in future researches.

**General Conclusion**

The actual research begins from the problem of poor written productions that were due to the use of traditional methods to teach the writing skill. Therefore, this study was undertaken in an attempt to shed light on the influence of blogging on the EFL learner’s writing fluency accuracy and complexity. On this base, instructing students to the use blogs as a modern innovative tool, as well as raising their awareness to the importance of this strategy were two major aims to start with. In order to reach our objectives, it was hypothesized that if students use blogs writing tool then their writing, CAF aspects would be improved. To test our hypotheses a quasi-experimental study was conducted. First-year LMD students of English at Larbi Ben M’hidi University, in O. E. B were used as the sample for the study.

The findings revealed that students who used blog during the treatment period showed better results in the post-test than those who followed the casual method (pen paper based writing). In this respect, we can conclude that blogs are a beneficial technique for EFL classrooms to develop students’ writing performance. Hence, our hypotheses were confirmed.

Finally, this research paves the way for further researches that are conducted in the field to examine the effect of other types of blogs. Also to check if the web blog can be equally an effective tool for teaching other language skills such as reading comprehension, listening and speaking, and what kinds of instructions can be used to train students in using blogs. So, blogs are a valuable technique to improve students’ writing performance, A fact that should not be disregarded by both teachers and students.
References


Finocchiaro, M. 1974. English as a Second Language: From Theory to Practice. New York:


5 Plane, 2002. 29


Appendices

Appendix A

Pre-test writing assignments.

The pretest of the control group

Name:
Group:

The tool: the traditional pen paper.

Question1: Write a short composition in which you discuss and you show your points of view on the following topic:

1/ Egypt and the English language.

Reminder:

- Try to respect your writing methodology, watch out your spelling mistakes, and be concise and precise.

Thank you for your cooperation
The pretest of the experimental group

Name:

Group:

The tool: use the blog to complete the task.

**Question1** Write a short composition in which you discuss and you show your points of view on the following topic:

1/ Egypt and the English language.

Reminder:

- Try to respect your writing methodology, watch out your spelling mistakes, and be concise and precise.

- Comment on the other students posts related to this topic.

Thank you for your cooperation
Appendix B

Post-test writing assignments.

The post test of the control group.

Name:

Group:

The tool: use the traditional pen paper to complete the task.

Question 2 Write a short composition in which you discuss and you show your points of view on the following topic:

2/ The unique aspects of the Egyptian culture.

Reminder:

- Try to respect your writing methodology, watch out your spelling mistakes, and be concise and precise.

Thank you for your cooperation
The post test of the experimental group

Name:

Group:

The tool: use the blog to complete the task.

Question1 Write a short composition in which you discuss and you show your points of view on the following topic:

2/ The unique aspects of the Egyptian culture.

Reminder:

- Try to respect your writing methodology, watch out your spelling mistakes, and be concise and precise.

-Comment on the other students posts related to this topic.

Thank you for your cooperation
Appendix C

Scope on blogging assignment and the assessment criteria to respect

Blog Assignment: For this class you are required to keep a BLOG where, you are allowed to interact on an online journal, where you can also write down your thoughts, talk about issues, ask questions to your classmates and teacher, and use the computer to help you practice your English skills. Blogs are a great way to keep up your English outside the class. Every week you must write at least 150 words on your BLOG. Sometimes you will be able to “free-write.” This means you can write about anything you like. Sometimes, your teacher will give you specific instructions about what topics to write about in your BLOG. These topics will be related to issues that we study about in class. You should make an effort to recycle vocabulary, expressions, and ideas that we discuss in class. This way you will be using the English that you study in class, and by using it you will have better chance or remembering it in the future. On each BLOG, there is an opportunity to “comment.” This means that if someone reads your BLOG, they can respond to it. Every week, you should read two or three of your classmates’ BLOGS and you should respond to at least one. You may want to ask them a question or tell them something positive about their BLOG. Please be positive in your comments and help your classmates by giving them good comments or by asking interesting questions. This assignment is an out-of-class assignment. You are expected to work on your BLOG outside class. You can access your BLOG from any computer that has an Internet connection.

You are graded on the following criteria:

• Do you write at least 150 words/week and comment on someone else’s BLOG? (6 marks)
• Do you use the English (vocabulary, expressions, ideas, issues, etc.) covered in class? (2 marks)
• Do you make an effort to include and explain vocabulary, expressions, and ideas from outside the class (movies, music, literature, etc.) (2 marks).

Remarque: If you have difficulties doing this, please discuss your situation with me on my private account.

Self Assessment of competency level (ferdige, 2004).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Novice</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beginning 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I can understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Familiar words and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>very basic phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>concerning myself,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>my family and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>surroundings when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>people speak slowly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>and clearly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I can understand I can read short I can familiar names, simple texts, I can understand words, and very find specific texts that simple sentences, periodical consist for example on information in simple mainly of notes, posters or in everyday material, such as job-related everyday or catalogs. advertisements, language. I menus, and can understand schedules and I can understand short the simple personal description of letters. events, feeling and wishes in
I can interact in a simple way when the other person is ready and prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need on very familiar topics.

I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short exchanges, even though I cannot keep the conversation going myself.

I can deal with most situations likely to arise when traveling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter a conversation on topics that are familiar of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel, and current events).
I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know. I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background or my present or most recent job. I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams and hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.
I can write short, I can write short, I can write simple post card, for simple notes and simple example sending messages, I can write connected holiday greetings. I a very simple text on topics, can fill in forms personal letter, for which are with personal example thanking familiar, or of details, for example someone for personal entering my name, something. interest. I can nationality and write personal address on a hotel letters personal registration form. describing experiences and impressions.
Appendix D

1st year students at L’arbi Ben M’hidi University, Assigning on a microblog alternative (facebook) with Some filtering comments by high proficiency learners, and teachers.

Good evening, hello everyone :) I want to share my little composition about Egypt and the English language. I need ur comments and opinions to upgrade my writing style and thank you so much.

Despite the fact that English is the most common foreign language ever used, most of the street plates are bilingually written, firstly with the local language and secondly with the English language as it is the matter in Egypt. After a review on the history of the English language in modern Egypt, the use of this language continues to grow quickly. And Egyptian English continues to gain opportunities through several professions. For instance Egyptian English university communities are widely spread in social media (chatting, discussing...), large tourist industries, engineering, business and even medicine.

Rana Mayar: You have a good style 😊. I wish you take in consideration the following remarks:
- The composition is too short.
- Try to explain more your ideas... Vor plus.

Actually you do well, adding to the mates' remarks and feedback. I wanna hint that only one paragraph isn’t enough at all to cover all aspects of such a topic you're talking about, so I think ya need to write and discuss it in an
Figure: Examples on the Proposed Activities to Students to Accomplish on net
Résumé

Cette étude rapporte sur une étude quasi-expérimentale relative à l’effet des blogs sur les performances d’écriture des élèves. Elle se concentre sur trois aspects d’écriture, connaissance, précision et complexité en écriture, comme elle vise a comparer et contraster les résultats entre et au sein de groups. que quarante-deux des étudiants LMD de l’ère année à l’Université Larbi Ben M’hidi ont participé à l’étude. Le groupe témoin (n =20) fait leurs affectations comme travail à domicile et sur papier comme outil d’écriture, cependant, le groupe expérimental (n = 20) accomplie leur affectations par écrit à l’aide de logiciels de blogging. En outre, l’étude prend en charge les recherches antérieures effectuées dans le domaine que les blogs ont le potentiel de devenir un outil efficace pour améliorer la rédaction en raison des données recueillies dans cette étude.

Mots-clés: Mots clés : l’influence des blogs, aisance, précision et complexité d’écriture
الملخص

خلاصة هذا البحث تتمثل في تقارير عن دراسة شبه تجريبية بشأن تأثير المدونات على الأداء الكتابي للطلبة. التي بدورها تركز على ثلاثة جوانب من الكتابة المتمثلة في الطلاقة والدقة والتعقيد الكتابي، باعتماد خطة المقارنة بهدف الحصول على نتائج الاختلاف، حيث أن عدد الطلبة هو اثنين وأربعين طالب من مشاركين ومتفاعلين حيث ينتمون إلى الفوج رقم 80 الذي تم أخذه كعينة لاستنباط واستقراء النتائج، وما أنهم طلاب من السنة الأولى نظام LMD من طلبة جامعة العربي بن مهدي. المجموعة المسيطرة (20طالب) حيث وكلت لهم مهام القيام بالواجبات المنزلية باستعمال الورق أو الطريقة الكلاسيكية المنتهية للكتابة، بينما المجموعة التجريبية المتشابهة (20طالب) معنين بإنجاز مهام الكتابة باستخدام المدونات المبرمجة. وعلاوة على ذلك، فإن البحوث السابقة والبيانات المجمعة في هذه الدراسة بوسعيها أن تثبت أن المدونات لديها القدرة على أن تصبح أداة فعالة لتعزيز مستوى الكتابة فيما يخص الطلاقة والدقة والتعقيد الكتابي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تأثير التدوين، الكتابة الطلاقة والدقة