

BLOGGING TREND AMONG MALAYSIAN LEARNERS: ACCEPTING OR REJECTING?

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ABSTRACT

Conflicts in writing among second language learners have driven many researchers to conduct studies to explore on the methods that can be used to teach writing effectively. One of the methods that are believed to become the trend in learning English nowadays is the implementation of blog in language classroom (Aydin, 2014). Therefore, this paper investigates on the learners' understanding of the use of blogging activities to support the development in writing among ESL tertiary-level learners in Malaysia. A qualitative analysis on a semi-structured interview is applied to determine whether blogging activities are considered as one of the effective ways to support or hampered the learners' development in writing. Nine Malay ESL tertiary-level learners enrolling in English course in one of the universities in Malaysia are selected as subject to be interviewed for the purpose of this paper. The findings indicate that blogging activities improved the learners' writing and essay organization skills as well as helping them to generate ideas for writing. Even though blogging activities are proven to be an effective tool in teaching writing but the learners' readiness on the implementation of blog in ESL classroom is still questionable as some of the interviewees believed that online feedbacks demotivate them to perceive this method as effective in learning writing. Overall, the study reveals that, blogging activities have both strengths and weaknesses towards the improvement of learners' development in writing and learning English in non-native settings.

Key words: Writing, Blogs, ESL Learners, Feedback, English as a Second Language.

Introduction

Writing is one of the important elements in English learning even though the fact that most of the second language learners acquire the skills to write after they have acquire listening and speaking skills (Abdulaziz Ibrahim Fageeh, 2011). There are numerous reasons why writing is considered as the most crucial skill for students either in school or college to attain. According to Fahad Hamad Aljumah (2012), there are three reasons why to be proficient in writing is fundamental for foreign as well as second language learners. The first reason to be literate enough in writing is important since it contributes to academic as well as for occupational success (National Commission on Writing, 2004). The next purpose for learning writing and be proficient enough with it is to develop vast academic language and to prepare ESL learners to be more productive in their written work (Warschauer, 2010) in Fahad Hamad Aljumah (2012). Finally, it is vital for ESL students to have good writing command in English since it allows them to 'master diverse subject matter'. For example, according to Yih and Nah (2009), by having good command in English, it allows ESL learners to be expressive in different subject matter through expressing their 'awareness of knowledge gaps, abstract problem-specific knowledge into schemas' and 'to elaborate mental representations of knowledge' in written expression by using language that can be understood by almost everyone which is English. In a way, it will benefit the language educators also since they get to know the learners' level of proficiency in using the intended language and develop strategies to come out with instructions or methodology to use when teaching writing.

Based on the importance of learning and acquiring writing literacy, language educators should not view the teaching of writing as insignificant. ESL educators need to fully educate and trained ESL learners towards becoming a competence writer that not only can read what they have written, but other speakers of the intended language can read and understand their written works too. ESL

educators should consider the teaching of writing by using appropriate method which enables the ESL learners to gain specific abilities that help them to present their thoughts and ideas into words in a meaningful form and interact mentally with readers (Matthews et al., 1999).

Although writing is one of the important skills in language, many ESL learners consider it as the most difficult skill to acquire (Trang, 2009). However, it is not impossible for ESL learners to learn writing in a more eloquent and authentic setting especially with the rampant growth of internet technology that contributes to the development of Web 2.0. A Web 2.0 technology which is associated with terms such as blogs, wikis, podcasts, RSS feeds and social web (Aharony, 2009) have had a vivid impact towards the current generations of ESL learners to learn writing. One of it is through blog which is defined as a web page maintained by an individual that has various functions and been a social phenomenon for the last decade (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). A blog is able to provide an environment where bloggers can build communication with one another (Godwin-Jones, 2003), medium for exchanging knowledge (Herring et al., 2005) and also emphasis on real writing including the processes involve that also support collaborative writing (Boling et al., 2008).

Due to the interactive features available of blog mentioned above has driven more people nowadays to read and keeping blogs for various reasons. According to Winn (2008), since blog does not involve any specific programming skills, it has invited many internet users to create their own personal blog. Winn (2008) also revealed that, 'as of March 2008, 184 million worldwide users have started a blog while 26.4 million uses in US; 346 million worldwide users read blogs while 60.3 millions in US'. It shows that, many internet users manage to see the importance of having blog such as sharing thoughts in public space that can contribute to the betterment of the communities through writing.

Various fields have been using blog as one of the ways to communicate with each other from different region such as 'blogging for marketing in business sectors (Singh and Singh, 2008; Wright and Crossland, 2006) as well as blogging among politicians to share their thoughts on political issues to influence the communities (Coleman and Wright, 2008; Francoli and Ward, 2008; Wright, 2008). Based on the huge influence of blog, higher education institution (HEI) in Malaysia, English instructors might want to consider inculcating blogging activities in learning English especially in teaching writing. According to Farahiza Zaihan Azizan (2010), the "chalk and talk" method in teaching should be replaced with computer-mediated communication (CMC) such as by using blogs to make the teaching and the leaning process more effective. The implementation of blogging activities is one of the efforts that instructors might want to consider this tool as poor traditional classroom learning has been a major concern in the teaching and learning activity (Farahiza Zaihan Azizan, 2010).

Since previous studies have determined that many institutions have considered blogging in the teaching and the learning because the use of blogs help to support language learners' development in the intended subject, therefore, it is high time for ESL educators to practice blogs when it comes to teaching and learning writing in ESL classroom. The use of CMC at tertiary level is perceived as a good start since the traditional method applied in classroom offers tertiary-level ESL learners with less input regarding the process of writing (McGrail and Davis, 2011). Not only that, by using online writing application such as blogs in classroom, it 'can cater to learners' writing needs and deficiencies' (Noriah et al., 2012) and in order to overcome issues that occurred among ESL tertiary-level learners by using one of the Web 2.0 tools which is blog.

No doubt that, the use of blog is a success in those fields mentioned, but the question is now: Can blog be used effectively in educational setting especially for language learning and does it support writing development among language learners at various levels? Will the ESL learners cope with the advancement of technology when it comes to learning English especially writing?

Literature Review

Since writing is a cycle process as indicated by Chaffee (2002) from brainstorming to publishing, therefore, it does affect a writer's organization in writing especially during the drafting and revising processes when learners are participating in blogging activities. However, when language educators implement blog in language classroom, learners' writings are still organize in a single paragraph and all the information or resources that learners need are reachable and available in their own blogs. Apart from that, Fahad Hamad Aljumah (2012) revealed that 91.4% of the Saudi learners preferred to submit their assignments through blog since the documenting process in blog is well organized than traditional way of submitting assignments which is by using paper. The learners also added that, by submitting assignments using the traditional way, it was 'time consuming, expensive and requires too much work' (Fahad Hamad Aljumah, 2012) whereas by using blog, it is free and it does not require too much work especially to do the documentation.

Apart from that, one of the reasons why language learners find that writing is the hardest skills to acquire among listening, speaking and reading because they are lacking of ideas on what to write (Normah Othman, 2009). Therefore, language instructors need to play their role to help learners to brainstorm on what to write. Language instructors can consider to use blog as 'blog can promote

exploration of various English websites' (Campbell, 2004) quoted by Wen-Shuenn (n.d). Language instructors can put reading materials that are useful for learners to read and at the same time to trigger their ideas to write. It is an easy and simple process where instructors only need to put materials online and links to their source websites so that learners can read related articles to get ideas for their writing (Wen-Shuenn, n.d).

Whereby, in a study conducted by Fahad Hamad Aljumah (2012), 71.4% (25) of the learners mentioned that, they became more creative in expressing ideas when blogging as compared to writing on a piece of paper. Their purposes of writing in blog not only to produce an interesting work, but also to make the writing more informative since they could include video clips, pictures and sounds in their writings (Fahad Hamad Aljumah, 2012). This is also supported by Song and Chan (2008) and Galien and Bowcher (2010) that majority of the language students found that it was easy to use blog when they were doing their assignments since they can access blog at their own paced and they were not rushed to come out with ideas or pressured to complete their written assignments.

However, there are also some drawbacks of the use of blogging activities in teaching and learning writing. Active participations among readers all over the world by giving comments and ideas to learners' writing through commenting feature available in blog indeed have help language learners to enhance their writing skill but to some extent, comments given by readers are not helpful enough for learners to improve their development in writing. Fahad Hamad Aljumah (2012) revealed that the finding gathered from Saudi learners regarding comments given by audiences towards their writing were not helpful enough for them to improve their writing skills. This was due to the reasons that; 1) Students had limited knowledge on how to comments on others' writing, 2) Comments such as 'I like your entry' or 'Your entries are really useful' are not directing the learners to improve their writing and finally 3) The entries were not interesting enough for learners to read.

Language instructors must also bear in mind that the use of blog in language classroom is not to replace face to face interaction between language instructors and language learners. Even though the implementation of blog indeed can encourage 'learners' autonomy and self-directedness', instructor's presence is still necessary to guide learners during the teaching and learning of the writing process (Noriah et al. 2012). Guidance from language instructor is indeed crucial for learners to develop in their learning as learners build their knowledge by engaging in collaborative activities with instructor, other learners and learning environment as knowledge is fluid and not fixed (Abdulaziz Ibrahim Fageeh, 2011). Shuqiang (1995) pinpointed that ESL learners 'unequivocally preferred teacher feedback over peer feedback' as the learners were skeptical towards the validity of the feedbacks given by their peers.

Finally, different learners have difference preference style in learning language. Some of the language learners prefer traditional way of learning writing which is by writing on a piece of paper hence, it also impede the language instructor's initiative to use blog in classroom to develop writing skill among language learners. As for that reason, language instructor needs to make the learners aware of the advantages that they can get when using blog especially in helping them to improve their writing. Allwright (1996, p.2) mentioned that it is important for language instructor to instill awareness among the language learners about what is happening in the classroom as well as the current situation in teaching and learning language quoted by Soares (2009). Allwright (1996, p.2) also added that, the importance of explaining what is happening in the teaching and learning process to learners could prevented the instructors from having 'no sound basis for deciding to repeat the idea, to adapt it or to abandon it' what had been planned earlier (Soares, 2009).

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to investigate on the learners understanding of the use of blogging activities to support the development in writing skill among ESL tertiary-level learners in Malaysia as well their readiness in learning writing through blog. Therefore, in order to determine the purpose of this study, the research question was:

1. Is there any significant difference in terms of development in writing before and after involving in blogging activities among ESL tertiary-level learners?

In the study, nine Malay ESL tertiary-level learners enrolling in English course in one of the universities in Malaysia were selected as respondents for the interview since these selected learners were actively involved in blogging activities. A qualitative method was employed in order to acquire an insight into the learners' proportional reasoning on how does blogging activities support their development in writing.

The four questions asked to the respondents during the semi-structured interviews were:

1. In your own interpretation, what is blog?

2. What are some of the writing processes (brainstorming, editing, drafting, revising, proofreading and publishing) that you applied while you are writing in blog?

3. Are there any differences between writing in blog with writing on a piece of paper in terms of the process involved? Explain your answer.

4. Is blogging an effective way to support the development in writing among ESL tertiary-level learners? Explain your answer.

As for the purpose this study, only the findings from question 4 will be discussed in the next section to get the clear picture on the learners' understanding on the use of blogging activities as one of the methods that supports the development in writing.

Findings

This section presents the findings on the learners' understanding on the use of blogging activities to support the development in writing. In general, the responses provided by the respondents to this question were not related on whether blogging facilitated or hampered the development in writing but more on how blogging activities facilitated them to improve writing skill, generate ideas and others as discussed.

Improve Writing Skill

Three out of nine respondents agreed that blogging facilitated them to improve their writing skills since there was commenting feature in blog. Comments given by other learners as well as the lecturer helped them to become more vigilant with their writing compared to writing on a piece of paper that only directed to only the lecturer in particular. Repeated phrases about the craft of writing in the responses given by *Respondent One*, *Respondent Four* and *Respondent Eight* such as "Readers can leave their comments on my writing and thus it is good for my development in writing and grammar" showed that they had internalized some part of grammars of schooling in their writing since they were aware of the broader audiences that read and gave feedbacks towards their writing especially grammar and vocabulary. Thus, the respondents believed that it helped them to improve their writing skills.

Improve Essay Organization Skill

According to *Respondent Five* and *Respondent Nine*, the use of blogs had facilitated them to improve their essay organization skills. When writing in blog, *Respondent Five* believed that it was more systematic and everything was well organized in one paragraph. It was supported and agreed by *Respondent Nine* and it was much easier since there was interaction with the lecturer though it was not happened face-to-face. The improvement in essay writing can still happened when writing in blog although the language instructor was invisible.

Generate Ideas for Writing

Respondent Three believed that blogging activities facilitated one's to generate ideas for writing. "You will find that writing in blog, it is easier to elaborate and most of the time you have the ideas to write compared to writing on a piece of paper. You don't have time to think of the ideas to write. The sources are limited". Based on the respond given by *Respondent Three*, it was easier to elaborate ideas since typing on a keyboard did not hamper a person to think of what to write. *Respondent Three* perceived writing on a piece of paper did not support the generating of ideas for writing because the main focus was only to complete the sentence thus lacked of time to think of the ideas to write. In fact, the sources were also limited as learner only depends on their own schemata.

Interference by Too Many Audiences

However, there were also respondents who believed that blogging activities did not facilitate learners' development in writing as well as learning English. In contrast with *Respondent Eight*, *Respondent Six* mentioned that "Blogging activities did not help much towards my development in writing because of the comments given the readers were sometimes not related to my writing such as 'WOW'". This showed that blogging did not support the development in writing since there were too many discrete comments on the writing products which were not constructive enough for the learners' development in writing. This was also agreed by *Respondent Four* though *Respondent Four* stated that it helped to improve writing, but interference made by audiences through comments had influenced one's writing and affect one's self-belief.

Lack of Face-to-Face Interaction

Respondent Two mentioned that blogging activities did not facilitate one's development in writing since "Writing on a piece of paper allows language learners to know their mistakes when they received feedbacks directly and thoroughly from the language

instructor". It is agreed that, lacked of face-to-face interaction between the respondent and the lecturer hampered the learners' development in writing. This was totally against opinion given by *Respondent Eight* that perceived face-to-face interaction was not the main concerned when participating in blogging activities.

Learning Style Preferences

Finally, *Respondent Seven* stated that blogging activities did not facilitate one's development in writing since the respondent favored the traditional way of learning writing which was by writing on a piece of paper. *Respondent Seven* did not reject the implementation of blog to develop writing but writing in blog was difficult as compared to writing on a piece of paper as mentioned during the interview, "Yes, blog is more advanced as compared to traditional way of learning writing. But I prefer writing on a paper because I can easily do amendments to my writing and it is more suitable for me".

Discussion

Even though the learners did not mentioned how blogging activities helped to support their development in writing, but indeed, blogging activities did firstly support them to improved their writing skill. As mentioned by *Respondent One*, *Respondent Four* and *Respondent Eight*, writing in blog support them to improve their writing skills especially when they received comments from the lecturer, other learners and readers. These learners accepted comments positively and made used of the comments when they were doing editing towards their writings. It should be taken into consideration that these learners accepted the comments and made amendments on their academic essay in order to gain good marks for their written assignments, but by the end of the day, blogging helps them to improve their writing skill as well as their grammar and vocabulary. These learners also indirectly exposed to collaborative learning concept where they sometimes seek peers' responses and assistance and gain 'benefits from their ideas and perspectives given by others' (Chaffee, 2002).

The insights given by *Respondent One*, *Respondent Four* and *Respondent Eight* that feedbacks received from other readers are crucial for learners' development in writing. As mentioned by Campbell (2004) quoted by Wen-Shuenn (n.d). Campbell (2004) indicated that with the commenting feature available in blog that allows readers from different parts of the world to comments on learners' writings, it helps them to 'build a sense of ownership and unique online identity' that unconsciously encourage the learners to write more careful since they know that they are going to post their writings online and authentic readers may comment on their postings. Thus, this helps the learners to improve their writing skill because they feel that they need to fulfill the expectations of the audience that necessary for successful communication via online (Reid, 1993, pp.8). This finding also is consistent with Fahad's (2012) finding that 74.3% of the Saudi learners majoring in English agreed that having their own blog encourages them to write better and this also supported by Miranda Bella (2005) who pointed out that writing in blog can enhance learners' writing skills and abilities quoted by Fahad Hamad Aljumah (2012). Learners realize that anyone can read their writing and give desirable or undesirable comments to it, hence this encourage them to produce high-quality of a piece of writing.

Not only writing in blog supports the learners to improve their writing skill, but it also supported the learners to improve their essay organization skill. Writing in blog allows *Respondent Five* and *Respondent Nine* to organize their writing online as it was more systematic and well-kept in their blog compared to writing on a piece of paper. The posts were there in the learners' blogs since blog is one of the applications that display serial entries and allowing users to easily maintain the content or add new dated entries without having to lose the old posts Wei, (2010); Meyer, (2010); Lai and Chen, (2010) and Deng and Yuen (2011).

The English course that these respondents enrolled in is focusing more on the process of writing the academic paper rather than the final product, they were asked to post their writing since the brainstorming process until the publishing of the final product in their blog. According to Chaffee (2002), even though a writer's organization changes especially during the drafting and revising processes but, everything was still organized in one paragraph and all the information or resources needed were there in the posts and reachable. Thus, their writings were more organized and everything was at its place and learners can still progressed with their writings though without face-to-face interaction with the lecturer as indicated by *Respondent Nine*.

This finding was quite similar with finding revealed by Fatah (2012) where blog helped the Saudi students to be more organized with their assignments. Majority of the Saudi students (91.4%) preferred to submit their assignments through blog since blog was more organized than traditional way of submitting assignments. The students added that, by submitting assignment using the traditional way, it was 'time consuming, expensive and requires too much work'. Whereby, by using blog, it was more effective and convenient especially to keep their work than the traditional way that only keeps their work using folders. In fact, students do not have to worry about arranging their assignment in blog since it displays all of the students' posts from the beginning until the current post accordingly. It also benefits the educators when they want to retrieve and evaluate the students' works just by scrolling down the page and the page will shows all of the publishing work. Hence, it can be stated that, the use of blog in teaching and learning language can facilitates the learners to be more organized in their writing as well as become more systematic in keeping and submitting their work.

Blogging activities are also believed to support the learners to generate ideas for their academic writing. *Respondent Three* mentioned that when writing in blog, it was easier to produce ideas rather than writing on a piece of paper since the main attention for *Respondent Three* to write on a piece of paper was to complete the sentences and therefore lacked of time to come out with ideas of what to write. But, when writing in blog, with the help from the computer, *Respondent Three* was not having difficulty to produce ideas as the thinking can happen while typing on a keyboard. Judging from the responses given by *Respondent Three*, it can be stated that, *Respondent Three* preferred to use computer when learning writing in ESL classroom as compared to writing on a piece of paper and with the assist of computer, it probably helps the learner to produce a good piece of writing since the learner have more time to think of what to write and to find ideas by browsing through websites while writing in blog. Apart from that, another possible reason why it is easier for learners to generate ideas when writing in blog is due to the classroom environment that is too stressful for writing when they had to complete their writings in 'real time' on a paper with limited sources.

Campbell (2004) mentioned that, the use of blog in ESL classroom by ESL instructor helped to promote an exploration of other websites that can further benefit the learners especially to gain and generate ideas to write. Campbell (2004) suggested that, ESL instructor can put materials that are useful for learners to read and trigger their ideas to write online. *Respondent Three* preferences to use blog to write because it is very convenient and more time to produce ideas goes in accordance with Song and Chan (2008) and Galien and Bowcher (2010) that majority of the students found it was easy to use blog when they were doing their assignment since they can access the blog at their own pace and they were not rushed and pressured to complete their written assignment. Therefore, they managed to produce a good quality work with brilliant ideas since they had unlimited time to complete their assignment and to look for extra information. This finding also is similar to that reached by Fahad (2012) that 71.4% (25) students mentioned that they became more creative in expressing ideas when blogging as compared to writing on a piece of paper. This was possible with the help of the interesting features available in blog such as video clips, pictures and sounds, their presentation of ideas in their writing became more interesting and attractive which could not be done on a piece of paper.

But, there are also some drawbacks of blogging activities to the learners. *Respondent Seven* claimed that even though blogging activities facilitated the learners' development in writing in many ways, but, traditional way of learning writing in ESL classroom which is by writing on a piece of paper was still in favored by *Respondent Seven*. As claimed by *Respondent Seven*, using blog to develop writing among ESL tertiary-level learners was difficult even though it is the current technology and the advantages cannot be denied. One remarked that can be made is, the implementation of CALL in ESL classroom is not accepted by *Respondent Seven* can be due to the reason that *Respondent Seven* is not familiar with applications available in blog.

Another reason would be because of the influenced by their first language. Learners are more expressive in their writing when they are using their first language and thus their development in writing skill is not entirely based on the medium but also the learners' readiness of using the language itself. Similar finding gathered from a study conducted by Wen-Shuenn (n.d) on the use of blogs in an EFL writing classroom in Taiwan. These EFL learners in Taiwan stated that, frequent writing in blog may not necessarily improve their writing. This adverse remarked given by the learners on their deliberate improvement in writing more or less is influenced by their first language as presumed by Wen-Shuenn (n.d) since the learners managed to present their ideas in writing with the style of their first language but not when they were writing.

In fact, to some extent, there were two respondents who felt that the use of blogging activities in ESL classroom hindered the tertiary-level learners' development in writing. Commenting feature available in blog is viewed as troublesome by *Respondent Six* and *Respondent Four* as comments made by the audiences had caused misinterpretation and thus influenced the learners' piece of writing. This is true since some of the learners do not welcome feedbacks given by others positively as mentioned by *Respondent Four* who had high self-efficacy in writing on a piece of paper and perceived feedbacks from others as threat to one's confident level. Apart from that, some of them were hesitated in applying feedbacks given by others in their writings probably because they are being skeptical with the advantages of peer-evaluation and they are only comfortable with feedbacks made by experienced individual such as the lecturer.

Unrestricted comments made by the audiences somehow do not help learners to improve their development in writing. As mentioned earlier, according to Fatah (2012) that, the three main reasons why learners felt that comments from others were not a successful medium for them to improve their writings because they just simply comments on others' posts and comments made such as 'I like your entry' or 'Your entries are really useful' were not helpful at all for learners to improve their writing skill and lastly. Therefore, some of the learners feel that audiences are just a disturbing element in blog and not a contributing factor for learners' development in writing as indicated by previous researches.

It is also important for ESL instructors to accept the fact that blog is just a tool to help instructors to deliver knowledge to learners but not as medium to replace face-to-face interaction in class since learners still need guidance from the experienced instructors. The finding of this study confirmed that although blog is a powerful tool to improve learners' abilities while writing in a second language (Arena and Jefferson, 2008) but *Respondent Two* mentioned that face-to-face interaction between learners and instructor is still crucial. This implies that *Respondent Two* preferred traditional way of learning language that is face-to-face interaction and uphold

the instructor's abilities to help learners to improve their writing. To some learners, face-to-face is also one of the proofs that learning is taking place between two vital entities which are the instructor and the learners.

Finally, the learners' learning style preference does influence their development in writing when using blog. As mentioned by *Respondent Seven*, the used of blog did not facilitate one's development in writing since writing on a piece of paper was still in favored by *Respondent Seven*. This is probably due to the reason that some of the learners are not well verse with blog and thus they find it difficult to learn writing by using blog. They are not ready to learn language through blog as they have lack of knowledge about it. Therefore, the role of instructors is vital to identify the learners' needs to learn about blog before they actually implement blog in classroom. In a study conducted by Nadzrah and Kemboja (n.d), although all of the students were familiar with internet, but 37% (15) of the students had no knowledge about blog. Thus, the first step was exposing the students with blog by encouraging them to learn from their friends.

Apart from that, instructors need to expose learners with the benefits of using blog to facilitate their development in writing and make learners aware of the purpose of the instructors implementing blog in the classroom. Allwright (1996, p.2) mentioned that it is important for instructors to instill awareness of what is happening in classroom as failing to do so will make the instructors 'have no sound basis for deciding to repeat the idea, to adapt it, or to abandon it' quoted by Soares (2009). Therefore, instructors ought to make learners understand of why blog is use in ESL writing classroom so that learners will become motivated and as stated by Cartelli (2007), in order to make the technology used in classroom a success, the learning community needs to understand the technology very well as it is interrelated with human's performance in task given based on the socio-technical theory. By having the understanding of the implementation of blog in classroom, it helps to optimize the interdependency of the learners with technology to achieve the instructor's aim to help the learners to develop their writing by using blog.

The other possible reason that can cause the learners to favor writing on a piece of paper compared to writing in blog is low proficiency level in English. This is parallel with the finding revealed in Blackstone et al., (n.d) that, students with low proficiency level in English have lack of confident to let others to read their thoughts and they were also afraid with the fact that others had the access to see their mistakes in their writing. Similar finding revealed by Nadzrah and Kemboja (n.d) that low proficiency students in English felt the pressured to post their writing online since they knew that they did not have the privacy as others would read and leave comments. Thus, it can be indicated that learners' proficiency in English also plays a significant role to determine learners' preference to write on a piece of paper compared to writing in blog. Apart from that, students with low proficiency in English might disagree that blog helps them to generate idea and improve their writing when they are writing online. The students will experience anxiety in writing knowing that others will read their works once they post them online and at the same time give comments towards their proficiency in English. This is supported by finding revealed by Nadzrah and Kemboja (n.d) that, one of the students (3%) often felt the pressure to share his/her writings and ideas online since he/she had low proficiency in English. This will definitely influence the student's participation in blogging activities such as sharing ideas, thoughts with others and the use of blog will somehow impede the students to generate ideas in writing. Therefore, they settle for traditional way of learning writing.

Conclusion

Based on the findings from this study, it can concluded that, ESL tertiary-level learners believed that the use of blog in language classroom particularly in learning writing does help them to develop their writing skill but, some of the learners perceived blog as less effective when it comes to learning writing. This is due to the fact that there are lack of constructive comments or feedbacks given by too many audiences as well as lack of face-to-face interaction that is actually vital even though the instructor consider using blog in teaching and learning process. Different learners have different learning preferences and thus, some might not prefer to use blog as these learners emphasis on face-to-face interaction or the absence of their language instructor. For future practice in the classroom, language instructors might want to use 'Blogging Buddy' when implementing blog in ESL classroom. The term 'Blogging Buddy' refers to 'a student writer's editing partner, the person who checks and comments on his/her blog post before it is posted' (Blackstone et. al., n.d). It requires the learners to work collaboratively with their peers and thus will increase their confident level to write as well as gain more benefits when using blog. 'Blogging Buddy' might also be a useful way in order to overcome learners' rejection towards comments or feedbacks from other audiences and finally accepting blog as a tool to develop their writing skill.

Tertiary-level should separate the learning process between online learning and traditional face-to-face learning because most of the universities in Malaysia regardless of whether it is private or public universities they are eager to replace traditional ways of teaching and learning with online learning. However, they are not aware of the drawbacks of using online and it is too fast to conclude that online learning is an independent method where the fact is, it is still considered as dependent tool. The existence of the instructor is still crucial to facilitate learners to use this tool in learning. It is recommended that future researches to investigate deeper into the obstacles faced by the learners instead of looking at the 'grand value' of applying online learning in their syllabus.

However, this study was conducted only to small a sample and thus, conclusions made did not reflect on all Malaysian ESL tertiary-level learners' development in writing. In relation to the objective of this study, the conclusions that can be offered are even though

some of the respondents believed that blogging activities help to improve their development in writing skill, but their readiness on the implementation of blog when it comes to learning language especially writing is still questionable. In this study, the period of learning writing using blog is only a partial from the whole contact hours in one semester. Therefore, the learners are still struggling with the application of blog. It is without a doubt that learning process through online is by far, working. However, the teaching process undoubtedly requires the existence of the instructor. Learning through blog is convenience in terms of it saves time, energy and it is aligned with the technology invention but when it comes to understanding and knowledge application, blog alone is insufficient.

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