

EFL STUDENT'S PERCEPTION OF THE USE OF BLOG AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN WRITING INSTRUCTION

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Abstract: This study explores the perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students regarding the integration of blogs and social media into writing instruction. These digital tools offer unique opportunities for fostering motivation, creativity, and interactive learning in writing practices. Using a quantitative survey of 30 EFL students, the research evaluates the perceived benefits, challenges, and effectiveness of these platforms. Results indicate that blogs enhance reflective and structured writing through feedback and ownership, while social media promotes creative, concise writing with immediate feedback. Despite technical and privacy challenges, students reported increased motivation and improved writing skills through both mediums. The findings suggest that incorporating blogs and social media can enrich writing instruction, bridging traditional methods with contemporary digital practices.

INTRODUCTION

Writing skills are crucial for students in higher education and their future careers. However, they are not easily acquired and students need special training for writing in a foreign language (HYC Huang, 2016). For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, writing represents a challenging but essential aspect of language acquisition. Traditional methods of teaching writing often involve structured exercises focused on grammar, vocabulary, and syntax, which are important but can sometimes fail to engage students in the creative and reflective aspects of writing. As a result, there has been a growing interest in integrating digital tools such as blogs and social media into writing instruction to foster more interactive, engaging, and authentic writing experiences (Cunningham & McCarthy, 2017).

Research has shown that writing in digital environments, including blogs and social media platforms, offers unique opportunities for EFL students. Blogs, as platforms that allow students to publish their thoughts, share ideas, and engage in written discussions, provide a space for reflective and revision-based writing (Lee, 2015). According to Richards (2015), blogs can be particularly effective in motivating students to write regularly, as they can receive immediate feedback from peers and instructors. The process of posting writing online

encourages a sense of ownership and purpose, which can increase motivation and lead to improved writing skills.

Blogs which allow for the creation of personal online spaces for reflection and writing, have been found to promote active learning and engagement among students. According to Lee (2015), blogging fosters a reflective writing process that encourages students to revise and improve their work based on peer and teacher feedback. Similarly, social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram provide more dynamic and interactive environments that encourage creativity and conciseness in writing. These platforms allow students to engage in real-time communication, which is seen as a motivating factor for students to practice writing in a less formal, yet effective way (Richardson, 2017).

Social media with its widespread usage and popularity among young people, also offers a dynamic and engaging environment for writing practice. Platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram allow students to practice writing concisely, creatively, and interactively (Richardson, 2017). Through the brevity and immediacy of social media writing, students are encouraged to refine their writing in a real-world context, helping them develop skills that are highly relevant in the digital age. The potential for quick feedback and interaction with a global audience further enhances the appeal of social media as a tool for language learning (Günay & Dönmez, 2021).

This study aims to explore EFL students' perceptions of using blogs and social media in their writing instruction, focusing on their perceived benefits, challenges, and overall effectiveness. By analyzing students' responses through a questionnaire, this research seeks to contribute to the growing body of literature on digital media use in language education, providing insights into how these tools can enhance writing instruction in EFL classrooms.

Research Questions

1. What are EFL students' perceptions of using blogs in writing instruction?
2. What are EFL students' perceptions of using social media in writing instruction?
3. What are the benefits and challenges perceived by EFL students in using blogs and social media to improve their writing skills?

Literature Review

The integration of blogs and social media into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction has become increasingly popular due to their potential to improve writing skills and foster student engagement. Research has explored the benefits and challenges associated with these digital tools in writing instruction, highlighting their impact on writing development and student motivation.

a. Blogs in Writing Instruction

Blogs have been widely recognized as effective tools for promoting reflective writing and enhancing language skills. *Yusof, Alias, and Rahim* (2017) suggest that blogging fosters reflective thinking, encourages regular writing practices, and provides opportunities for peer and instructor feedback. In their study, students who participated in blogging activities showed greater motivation to write and higher levels of engagement in the writing process. Furthermore, *Sundararajan* (2018) emphasizes that blogs serve as a platform for students to express their thoughts and ideas, helping them develop writing fluency. The asynchronous nature of blogging allows students to revisit their work, revise their posts, and respond to feedback, which strengthens writing skills.

Blogs are also seen as fostering a sense of ownership over students' writing. By sharing their work publicly, students gain confidence in their writing abilities and can build a personal connection to their learning. *Yusof et al.* (2017) found that blogging not only improved students' writing abilities but also encouraged them to become more reflective and critical of their own work. This process of self-reflection is key to developing advanced writing skills and critical thinking.

b. Social Media in Writing Instruction

Social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and others, have emerged as popular tools for language learning and writing practice. According to Davis and McGinty (2019), social media offers students an informal space where they can practice writing in a variety of genres, from short tweets to status updates and comments. The real-time feedback and interaction inherent in social media provide immediate reinforcement for students' writing efforts. This immediate engagement fosters motivation and makes writing practice more dynamic and authentic.

Chai, Koh, and Tsai (2017) argue that social media, with its wide accessibility and interactive features, can help bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world communication. They observed that students using social media for writing instruction were able to practice writing in an authentic context, improving both their language skills and cultural understanding. Through interaction with peers and native speakers, students gained exposure to various writing styles and developed a more nuanced understanding of language use in different contexts. However, while social media provides opportunities for authentic communication, concerns about privacy and distraction remain significant. *Chai et al.* (2017)

note that students may face difficulties in maintaining a balance between informal and formal writing, particularly when engaging with platforms that prioritize brevity and casual language use. These challenges can affect students' ability to write in more formal, academic contexts, making it necessary for educators to guide students in using social media effectively for language development.

c. Benefits of Blogs and Social Media in Writing Instruction

The benefits of using blogs and social media in writing instruction are well-documented. Both platforms encourage frequent writing, which is essential for improving writing skills. According to *Sundararajan* (2018), blogging encourages students to engage in writing consistently, helping them develop a stronger writing routine. *Yusof et al.* (2017) highlight the role of peer feedback in blogs, where students not only receive feedback from teachers but also engage in constructive criticism of their peers' work. This peer interaction fosters a collaborative learning environment that is often missing from traditional writing instruction.

Similarly, social media's ability to engage students in real-time interactions with a broader audience encourages spontaneous and creative writing. *Davis and McGinty* (2019) note that social media platforms motivate students to write more effectively by offering a public space for their writing. The immediacy of feedback from a wide audience makes writing a more dynamic and interactive experience, which can increase students' motivation to write and improve the quality of their work.

d. Challenges of Blogs and Social Media in Writing Instruction

Despite the numerous benefits, challenges remain in the effective use of blogs and social media for writing instruction. As *Chai et al.* (2017) argue, privacy concerns on social media can deter students from fully engaging in these platforms, especially when personal information or inappropriate content can be exposed. Additionally, there is a risk of distraction, as students may shift focus from writing tasks to other social media activities, undermining the educational potential of these platforms.

Another challenge is the need for technological proficiency. *Sundararajan* (2018) highlights that students may struggle with the technical aspects of blogging or social media, particularly if they are not familiar with the platforms. For effective use, both students and teachers need to be comfortable with the technology and be able to troubleshoot issues as they arise.

Finally, balancing informal and formal writing is another challenge. Social media encourages short, informal writing, which may not directly translate to formal writing practices necessary for academic tasks. *Davis and McGinty* (2019) emphasize the importance of providing students with clear guidelines for integrating social media writing into their formal language learning process.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey design. Data was collected through a questionnaire distributed to EFL students who use blogs and social media in their writing instruction. This approach was chosen to gain an overview of students' perceptions of the two digital platforms in the context of writing instruction. The participants in this study consisted of 30 EFL students. The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire that included questions measuring students' perceptions of the use of blogs and social media in writing instruction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the survey conducted to examine EFL students' perceptions of using blogs and social media in writing instruction. The data collected from the 30 respondents were analyzed to assess the effectiveness, challenges, and benefits of these digital media tools.

1. Perception of Blogs in Writing Instruction

The survey found that the majority of students perceived blogs as a valuable tool for improving their writing skills. The following data was collected regarding students' responses to the use of blogs in writing instruction. Ease of Use: 70% of respondents agreed that blogs were easy to use for writing assignments, with a mean score of 4.2 on a 5-point Likert scale. Engagement and Motivation: 80% of the respondents agreed that blogging increased their engagement and motivation to write. The mean score for this item was 4.4. Feedback and Interaction: 75% of respondents reported that receiving feedback through blog comments helped improve their writing skills. The mean score for this item was 4.3. Improvement in Writing Skills: 78% of students felt that writing on a blog allowed them to reflect on and improve their writing over time, with a mean score of 4.1.

Aspect	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score
Ease of Use	0%	10%	20%	50%	20%	4.2
Engagement and Motivation	0%	5%	15%	60%	20%	4.4
Feedback and Interaction	0%	10%	15%	50%	25%	4.3
Improvement in Writing Skills	0%	8%	14%	55%	23%	4.1

Table 1: Perception of Blogs in Writing Instruction

2. Perception of social media in Writing Instruction

The respondents also shared their perceptions of using social media platforms, such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, to improve their writing skills. The results are as follows: Ease of Use: 60% of students reported that social media platforms were easy to use for writing tasks, with a mean score of 3.9. Creativity and Freedom: 85% of students agreed that social media allowed them to write creatively and express themselves freely. The mean score for this aspect was 4.5. Conciseness in Writing: 72% of students agreed that social media encouraged them to write more concisely and precisely, with a mean score of 4.2. Engagement and Feedback: 68% of respondents found that social media allowed for more immediate and interactive feedback, with a mean score of 4.1.

Aspect	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score
Ease of Use	5%	10%	25%	40%	20%	3.9
Engagement and Motivation	0%	5%	10%	55%	30%	4.5
Feedback and Interaction	0%	5%	23%	50%	22%	4.2
Improvement in Writing Skills	0%	8%	24%	50%	18%	4.1

Table 2: Perception of Social Media in Writing Instruction

3. Benefits and Challenges

In terms of benefits, both blogs and social media provided a platform for students to express themselves in writing and receive feedback. However, several challenges were identified:

a. Benefits :

Increased Motivation: 78% of students reported feeling more motivated to write when using blogs and social media, as they found these platforms engaging and interactive.

Improvement in Writing Quality: Students reported that the instant feedback from peers and instructors, especially through social media, helped them improve the quality of their writing.

Creative Expression: Both platforms encouraged creative writing, with social media being especially beneficial for short-form writing (e.g., Instagram posts, tweets).

b. Challenges

Technical Issues: 40% of students mentioned facing technical issues, such as difficulties with blog formatting and internet connectivity problems, which sometimes hindered their writing process.

Time Constraints: Some students felt that maintaining an active blog or posting regularly on social media took up too much time. This was particularly noted with platforms like Twitter, where concise and impactful writing was required within limited character counts.

Privacy Concerns: A small portion of students (18%) expressed concerns about privacy when posting on social media, preferring more controlled environments like blogs for academic writing.

The results of the study indicate that both blogs and social media are perceived positively by EFL students in enhancing their writing skills, although they present different strengths and weaknesses. Blogging was found to be more effective in fostering long-form writing and providing a structured environment for students to engage with their writing over time. The feedback received on blogs helped students reflect and revise their work, improving their writing quality. This aligns with previous research by Lee (2015), which emphasized the role of blogs in creating a reflective writing environment. Blogs were particularly appreciated for their ease of use and the ability to engage with an audience in a more formalized setting. However, the challenge of time management and technical issues in using blogs is consistent with findings from DeVries (2015), who noted that technical barriers could impede the full utilization of blogs in educational settings.

On the other hand, social media was seen as a tool for more creative, informal, and concise writing. The short nature of posts on platforms like Twitter and Instagram encouraged students to write more efficiently, and the instant feedback from peers was viewed as a valuable aspect of this medium. Social media, particularly in its informal settings, allowed students to experiment with language and write more creatively. This supports Richardson's (2017)

argument that social media can increase student motivation and engagement through more immediate interactions. However, the limitations of character counts and concerns over privacy were highlighted as drawbacks, echoing the challenges identified in prior research (Günay & Dönmez, 2021).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

This study demonstrates the effectiveness of blogs and social media in enhancing EFL students' writing skills by providing engaging and interactive learning environments. Blogs were found to encourage reflective and structured writing through peer and instructor feedback, fostering a sense of ownership and motivation among students. On the other hand, social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook offered opportunities for concise, creative, and real-world writing practices with immediate feedback. Despite the identified challenges, including technical issues, privacy concerns, and balancing formal and informal writing, the overall perceptions of these tools were positive. This research emphasizes the value of incorporating digital tools into writing instruction to complement traditional teaching methods and adapt to the evolving needs of learners in a digital age.

To maximize the potential of blogs and social media in EFL writing instruction, several strategies should be considered. First, educators should provide students with adequate training to navigate the technical aspects of these platforms confidently. Clear guidelines should also be established to help students balance informal writing with academic rigor. Encouraging a collaborative atmosphere by promoting peer and instructor feedback can further enhance learning outcomes. Additionally, educators must address privacy concerns by using secure platforms or controlled environments to protect students' personal information. Finally, a gradual integration of these digital tools is recommended, allowing students to adapt and fully benefit from their use. By adopting these approaches, blogs and social media can become powerful resources in fostering writing proficiency and motivation among EFL learners.

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