

## IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL THROUGH INTERACTIVE BLOG AT IKIP MATARAM

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### ABSTRACT

This research is aimed to improve students' writing skill through Interactive Blog at English Department of IKIP Mataram. The subjects of the research were A class students of the fifth semester of English Department that consist of 45 students. This research was a Classroom Action Research that involved critical analyses of the situation in classroom and system in which they worked. These situations were structured institutionally with some cycles that consist of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting which can help to define issues and ideas. There were four techniques of data collection that were applied in this research; they were observation, interview, questioner and objective test. The techniques of analyzing data in this research used analytical scoring rubric adapted from Weigle. There were five components presented in the analytical scoring rubric for writing, i.e., *content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics*. The result of this research showed that interactive blog could improve students' writing skill. It can be proved by some facts; first, related to the students' result, there was 82% who passed the passing grade (60). Second, the observation result of students' participation showed the good improvement from the first meeting until the last meeting. The last, the result of interview towards students and lecturer showed the positive response when the interactive blog was applied in improving students' writing skill. It created a situation of feeling free and enjoyable. The students can explore and share their idea or opinion with other friends. Therefore students can help each other to do whatever was necessary to succeed. These situation made students' writing skill and productivity were more increasing. In addition by using this media, students were able to improve their ability in working individually, students were able to build their own knowledge, students were able to find out steps in solving problem in writing. Based on the result of this research, it can be concluded that interactive blog is able to improve students writing skill at IKIP Mataram.

**Keywords:** *Writing Skill, Interactive Blog*

### INTRODUCTION

The use of technology in language teaching and learning has been around for many years. Language

labs, tape recorders, overhead projectors, TV sets and videos date from the 60's and 70's. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

appeared on the scene in the early 80's with the use of computer programs while the integration of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) came to be known in the 90's moving ahead from static language programs to the dynamic World Wide Web and the so-called web-based tools. Nowadays with the tools of the Web 2.0 geared toward individuals and groups, educational institutions, universities specifically, have to take advantage of the easy to handle and high potential of these technologies which seem to fit perfectly in project collaboration and group learning (Swain, 2008).

Weblogs or blogs are online personal journals which have been in cyberspace since 1998. In August of 1999 the release of Blogger, a free blog hosting service, led to the rapid growth of these sites (Blood, 2002). Later, blogs extended into various professional areas especially journalism and business. The cover story of the first issue of Fortune magazine in 2005 introduces "10 tech trends to watch in 2005," and blogs rank as the first one. "According to Blog Search-Engine and measurement firm Technorati," Fortune reports, "23,000 new weblogs are created everyday -- or about one every three seconds" (p. 34). No wonder the author claims that Blogs have become a force that business cannot afford to ignore.

Conejo (2006) refers to a blog as a website where regular updating takes place. The posting of various entries

is arranged in chronological order, usually published from the latest to the oldest. Blogs may share a specific theme and their content can be collected and posted by one or more authors. They are also used to organize links to other WebPages which may host videos and podcasts. Blogs generally include the option of allowing members and visitors to comment on the posts, thus promoting the interaction between users without the need to open discussion forums or threads.

In this particular experience, blogs were used as open source and easy to handle web-tools. Even people with little technical background can take part in the creation, managing and maintenance of a Blog. Blogs allow teachers and students to upload content pertinent to their courses on the web and reach out to people providing opportunities to promote student-teacher, student-student, and student-others interactions. Another reason for using blogs is that posts are published instantly, without much time investment. Blogs are accessible to all who might be interested in making contributions in a relatively lengthy period of time, without moving physically or attending face-to-face (f2f) classes. Besides, blogs have proven to be of great use in foreign language courses because images, songs, podcasts, and videos can be uploaded so students can be exposed to them in a real multimedia environment (Campbell, 2003, 2004; Dieu, 2004; Grewling, 2004).

According to Grewling (2004) the biggest reason for using blogs in language teaching is the way they are set up because they invite participation and have the potential to democratize the classroom since each student is given the chance to participate equally. Grewling (2004) also brings up the fact that issues like "shyness" become less relevant in a blog than in f2f situations and, furthermore, that quieter students' participation increases in online environments. Blogs can also be accessed practically anytime and anywhere so contributors can post and comment at their own convenience and determine their own pace and level of contribution (Grewling, 2004).

Pinkman (2005) states that blogs give students more control over their own learning and when created by students themselves. Blogs can also

give students the ownership of a personal space, a sense of belonging that is not so easily achieved in f2f environments. Panday (2007) assures that blogs offer many benefits to our students since they help to enhance the skills of communicating, sharing, analyzing, reflecting, reading, writing, keeping records and promote collaboration among grown-ups. The present study explored how blogging could be implemented to practice students' writing skill at English Department of IKIP Mataram.

The classical problem that might be faced by the language learners in mastering writing skill, especially for the beginner was "how to begin" as same as another case, begin to write is difficult. Therefore, the talent and habitual factor may have important role to support of the language learners especially who wants to be a good writer.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

**Planning :** In this phase, the researchers made a planning for the action research based on the problem that was faced on preliminary study. In this case, the researchers determined selected material using interactive blog. Besides, making lesson plan, the researchers also prepared observation sheet to observe the students' activities in learning process. And also the researchers prepared the post-test to collect the data; to know there were some students' improvement score from pre- test to post-test. The last was determining the passing grade.

**Action Cycle :** The action of cycle was done on December 19th 2015 and it was conducted in eight meetings. The first meeting up to eight meeting was the implementation of interactive blog and at the last meeting the researchers gave a test through interactive blog. The researchers implemented the action based on the lesson plan had been made.

**The action of Meeting I :** The first meeting of this action research was conducted on November, 15<sup>th</sup> 2015 at 4.10 am. The researchers prepared the material about descriptive text, it was "Describing Someone". The

implementation of this action was using interactive blog to improve students' writing skill especially to the fifth semester students of FPBS IKIP Mataram. The reseachers started by greeting the students to got in touch with the students and asked their condition. Then, the reseachers checked students' attendance. Totally, the class consisted of 45 students. The lecturer facilitating students by giving the task in picture form about "The famous actress", students work individually. The reseachers gave chance the students to think, analyze and did the tasks.

The action of Meeting II: The second meeting was conducted on November, 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015 at 5.05 pm. The reseachers started by greeting the students to get in touch with the students and ask their condition. Then, the reseachers checked students' attendance. Totally, the class consisted of 49 students. However, there was 4 students who did not attend the class. Furthermore, the reseacherss conveyed the material related to decriptive text. As usual after discussing the material the lecturer facilitating students by giving the assignment or tasks that should be done at internet directly. The lecturer gave chanced the students to thought, analyzed and did the task.

The action of meeting III: The third meeting was carried out on November 29<sup>th</sup> 2015 at 4.55 pm. The reseachers started by greeting the students to got in touch with the students and asked their condition.

Then, the reseachers checked students' attendance as usually. This meeting was attended by 43 students there were 2 students did not come without a certain reason. Furthermore, the reseachers conveyed the material related to descriptive text, and discussed the material with the students. The students were given some different topics to be selected and elaborated regarding with "Procedure Text". The reseachers asked students worked individually to make descriptive. The reseachers gave chance the students to thought, analyzed and did the tasks. The last step for the third meeting was giving conclusion to te students related to material and asked students' difficulty. Before closing the activity, the reseachers offered homework to students dealing with the material was discussed and the reseachers informed students the next lesson plan.

The action of meeting IV : The fourth meeting was conducted on December, 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015 at 5.57 pm. The reseachers started by greeting the students to got in touch with the students and asked their condition. Then the reseachers checked students' attendance. The students on the third meeting were 45 students. The reseachers asked the previous material that had been discussed. The topic was the same with previous meeting that was descriptive text, but in this case the reseachers asked them to gave comment in term of the reseachers and other members posts.

The researchers gave chance the students to thought, analyzed and did the tasks. Then the last step for the fourth meeting was giving conclusion related to material. Before closing the activity, as usual the researchers asked students for studying writing at home and the researchers informed students the next lesson plan.

The action of meeting V: The fifth meeting was carried out on December 13<sup>rd</sup> 2015 at 7.58 pm. The researchers started by greeting the students to get in touch with the students and asks their condition. Then, the researchers checked students' attendance. This meeting was attending with 45 students. Furthermore, the researchers conveyed the material related to descriptive text, and discussing material with the students. The students were give Media for Teaching Gramatical. The researchers asked students works individually to explained about other media that can be used in teaching garammatical. The researchers gave chanced to the students to thought, analyzed and did the tasks. The last step for the the sixth meeting was giving conclusion to the students related to material and asked students' difficulty. Before closing the activity, the researchers offered homework to students dealing with the material was discussed and the researchers informed students the next lesson plan.

The action of meeting VI: The sixth meeting was carried out on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2015 at 1.30 am. The researchers started by greeting the

students to got in touch with the students and asked their condition. Then, the researchers checked students' attendance. This meeting was attending with 43 students there were 2 students did not come without permission. Furthermore, the researchers conveyed the material with the students. The students were given Spelling and Punctuation. The researchers asked students works individually to make make fre topic to be explored in the blog. The researchers gave chance to the students to think, analyze and do the tasks. The last step for sixth meeting was giving conclusion to the students related to material and asked students' difficulty. Before closing the activity, the researchers offered homework to students dealing with the material was discussed and the researchers informed students the next lesson plan.

The action of meeting VII : The seventh meeting of this action research was conduct on December 28<sup>th</sup> 2015 at 6.29 am. The researchers started by greeting the students to get in touch with the students and asked their condition. Then, the researchers checked students' attendance. This meeting was attending with 44 students were 1 students who did not post into the blog. Furthermore, the researchers conveyed the material related to descriptive text, and discussing material with the students. The students were given free title of descriptive text, in thi case the reseacher asked them to wrote free

paragraph as well. The researchers asked students worked individually to made short paragraph at least 200 words. The researchers gave chanced the students to thought, analyzed and did the tasks. The last step for the seventh meeting was giving students conclusion and asking students' difficulty during teaching learning process but not one clarified their difficulty. Before closing the activity, the researchers asked students for studying writing related to the previous material at home and the researchers informed students that next meeting we would test.

The action of meeting VIII: The last meeting was conduct on January 5<sup>th</sup> 2016 at 5.20 pm. The researchers started by greeting students and asked

their condition. The researchers started the class by greeting and checking students' attendance. After that the researchers explained the rules of test, the test was coming from the researchers related to the descriptive. At the end of this meeting, the researchers asked them to made summary in term of class blog from the fist meeting to the end. In this matter, we invited them to comprehend the students' response toward the use of interactive blog in teaching writing.

Observation : After conducting the observation toward lecturer and students during teaching and learning process, the researchers found data as follows:

**Table.1 result of observation toward students' Activities**

Meeting	Indicator	Score	Category
I	10	15	Low
II	10	15	Low
III	10	21	High
IV	10	21	High
V	10	23	High
VI	10	23	High
VII	10	27	Very High
VIII	10	27	Very High

The data showed the students' score activities during teaching and learning process was improved significantly, from the first and second meeting were 15 which were categorized as low, and third and fourth meeting were 21 and 21 which were categorized as high, then in the fifth and sixth meeting improved to be 23 and 23 which were categorized as high, and the last from the seventh

to eight meeting were categorized very high with the score 27 and 27.

In conducting the observation, there were several problems such as in the first meeting two students did not attend the class, there were two students, while applying the task there were students who chated with the other students. Second meeting the researchers found six students did not attend the class. And they said

forgot to put the blogs during the investigation process. Third meeting, students had difficulty to write procedure because they were seldom to study individually. Fourth meeting, students are able to understand the meaning of picture that the researchers gave. Meanwhile, from fifth meeting up to the last meeting, students were already to conduct this task even several students still did not finish the work. Even there were problems appeared the researchers were able to fix it in every meeting.

Looking at those data, the researchers were successful in increasing students' writing skill. So this study stopped in one cycle and it did not need to continue to next cycle.

The result of Post-test: The post test was held after implementing the Classroom Action Research. It was conducted on January 5<sup>th</sup> 2016 at 5.20 pm. The allocation of time was 50 minutes and its one set of descriptive text in form of writing text or making a paragraph. Students' writing skill can be seen in table below:

**Table.2. The Score of Students Learning Test Result (Post-test)**

No	Name	Aspect of Assessment					Score	Post-test	Grade
		F	G	V	C	S			
1	EF	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	J	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	SY	3	4	4	3	4	18	72	Pass
4	AO	3	4	4	3	4	18	72	Pass
5	LEHTM	5	5	4	5	4	23	92	Pass
6	RW	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	VF	3	3	3	3	2	14	56	Fail
8	S	3	4	4	3	4	18	72	Pass
9	SW	5	5	4	5	4	23	92	Pass
10	HA	3	4	4	3	4	18	72	Pass
11	SH	3	3	4	3	4	17	68	Pass
12	HF	4	4	4	4	4	20	80	Pass
13	S	4	4	4	4	4	20	80	Pass
14	SH	4	3	3	3	3	16	64	Pass
15	I	4	4	4	4	4	20	80	Pass
16	M	3	4	4	3	4	18	72	Pass
17	AP	3	3	3	3	2	14	56	Fail
18	N	4	3	3	3	3	16	64	Pass
19	LKA	4	4	4	4	4	20	80	Pass
20	SH	4	4	4	4	4	20	80	Pass
21	M	3	3	3	3	2	14	56	Fail
22	AH	3	3	3	3	2	14	56	Fail
23	S	5	5	4	5	4	23	92	Pass
24	KAA	3	3	3	3	2	14	56	Fail
25	EM	4	4	4	4	4	20	80	Pass
26	N	5	5	4	5	4	23	92	Pass
27	QA	3	4	4	3	4	18	72	Pass

28	S	4	4	4	4	4	20	80	Pass
29	SH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
30	SR	3	3	3	3	2	14	56	Fail
31	AS	4	4	4	4	4	20	80	Pass
32	MB	4	4	4	4	4	20	80	Pass
33	SMS	3	4	4	3	4	18	72	Pass
34	U	5	5	4	5	4	23	92	Pass
35	UM	5	5	4	5	4	23	92	Pass
36	APF	3	4	4	3	4	18	72	Pass
37	DIA	5	5	4	5	4	23	92	Pass
38	AT	3	4	4	3	4	18	72	Pass
39	S	4	4	4	4	4	20	80	Pass
40	R	3	4	4	3	4	18	72	Pass
41	VST	4	4	4	4	4	20	80	Pass
42	FF	3	3	3	3	2	14	56	Fail
43	M	4	4	4	4	4	20	80	Pass
44	MM	3	3	3	3	2	14	56	Fail
45	DM	3	4	4	3	4	18	72	Pass
46	R	4	4	4	4	4	20	80	Pass
47	LK	3	4	4	3	4	18	72	Pass
48	LZ	3	4	4	3	4	18	72	Pass
49	I	4	4	4	4	4	20	80	Pass
<b>Total</b>								<b>3344</b>	
<b>Arrange</b>								<b>74,31</b>	
<b>CL (%)</b>								<b>82%</b>	

They were able to achieve a high achievement of writing elements. In analyzing quantitative data, the researchers compared the result pre test and post test. Then, the researchers saw the significant

improvement among the test. The mean score of pre test was 55,11 (24%) then improved into 74,31(82%). The detail score are as follows:

**Table.3. The Result of Pre Test and Post Test**

No	Name	Pre-test	Post-test
1	EF	-	-
2	J	-	-
3	SY	40	72
4	AO	52	72
5	LEHTM	52	92
6	RW	-	-
7	VF	52	56
8	S	72	72
9	SW	48	92
10	HA	48	72
11	SH	68	68
12	HF	56	80

13	S	72	80
14	SH	64	64
15	I	52	80
16	M	72	72
17	AP	56	56
18	N	64	64
19	LKA	52	80
20	SH	52	80
21	M	56	56
22	AH	56	56
23	S	40	92
24	KAA	48	56
25	EM	52	80
26	N	52	92
27	QA	52	72
28	S	40	80
29	SH	-	-
30	SR	48	56
31	AS	56	80
32	MB	56	80
33	SMS	72	72
34	U	48	92
35	UM	56	92
36	APF	48	72
37	DIA	56	92
38	AT	56	72
39	S	72	80
40	R	48	72
41	VST	48	80
42	FF	48	56
43	M	72	80
44	MM	48	56
45	DM	64	72
46	R	48	80
47	LK	52	72
48	LZ	52	72
49	I	64	80
<b>Total</b>		<b>2480</b>	<b>3344</b>
<b>Mean score</b>		<b>51,11</b>	<b>74,31</b>
<b>CL (%)</b>		<b>24%</b>	<b>82%</b>

The researchers compared the result of students' achievement in pre test and post test. Then, the researchers saw the significant

increasing among the students' writing skill, it can be seen at the following figure:

- Students mean score

$$M = \frac{\sum X}{N} = \frac{3344}{45} = 74,31$$

- Percentage of students learn achievement classically

$$P = \frac{n}{N} \times 100\% \\ = \frac{37}{45} \times 100\% = 82\%$$

After that, the reseachers compared the result of pre-test and post-test with the passing grade that was 60. In the pre test, the students' mean score under passing grade that was 51,11 (24%). Furthermore, the mean score of post-test was 74,31 (82%), it showed that the passing grade were achieved.

Reflection : The reflection of classroom action research (CAR) was conduct after giving the result of writing test. The reseachers and lecturer felt satisfied in effort to improved the students's writing skill has been realized. The students could understand the writing process easily. It was proven by the result of pre-test that improved in post-test.

## CONCLUSION

After having Classroom Action Research at fifith semseter students of FPBS in academic year 2015/2016, the reseachers inferred that interactive blog could improve students' writing skill. It can be proved by the following facts. First, related to the srudents' result, there was 82% who passed the passing grade 60. Within the pre-test, there were 34 students did not passed the passing grade. Second, the observation result of students' participation showed the good improvement from the first

Furthermore, they could cooperated among their teams easily and they seemed more interesting during the teaching and learning process.

After achieving the target research of post-test which showed mean score 74,31 it was higher than passing grade that was 70. Therefore, the reseachers and lecturer decided to stop Classroom Action Research because it had already succeeded. Hence, the reasearcher did not need to rearrange the next cycle. It was enough with one cycle only. According to the evaluation between reseachers and lecturer, it should be inferred that the implementation of interactive blog was able to improve students' writing skill.

meeting until the last meeting. The last, the result of interview towards students and lecturer showed the positive response when the interactive blog was applied in improving students' writing skill.

In this case, interactive blog created a situation felt free and enjoyable to explored their ideas, they also can shared their ideas, opinion and expressed their feeling through class blog and they were not ashamed to shared their ideas with other friends. Therefore students help each other to did whatever was necessary

to succeed and everyone needed to put in maximum effort. These situation made students' writing skill and productivity were more increasing. In conclusion, this research was successful in improving students' writing skill by using interactive blog. In addition by using this media, students were able to improve their ability in working individually, students were able to built their own knowledge, and students were able to found steps in solving problem in writing.

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