

# **Blogging as a tool to enable students to write more effectively**

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## **Abstract**

Blogging is usually associated with the posting of informal texts, but academic blogs have also become quite popular as they facilitate the exchange of ideas in many fields of study. This paper explores the scope of blogging in making tertiary level students more aware of a few important aspects of academic writing. The two objectives of this paper were to determine whether blogging can i) enable students to understand and practice the mechanics of academic writing, and ii) motivate the learners to write longer texts. The study was a quasi-experimental research that was conducted by the researcher in the classroom. The findings indicate a significant difference in the way learners understand the mechanics of academic writing due to blogging. The findings also revealed that learners are more motivated to write longer text while blogging. This study recommends the use of blogging as a tool in order to teach academic writing at the tertiary level. However, the lack of familiarity with technology among a number of students in India is still a cause for concern.

**Keywords:** academic writing, blogging, mechanics of writing, motivation

## **Introduction**

Teachers and academicians are always exploring ways to enhance the writing skills of their students. As more and more students are expressing themselves through blogs, there is a growing interest among academicians to find whether or not blogging as a tool or habit has the potential to develop academic writing skills among students.

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Blogs are online websites that publish entries or posts that appear in reverse chronological order. They are usually associated with informal journal-style texts, but nowadays academic blogs are also becoming popular. This popularity can be attributed to the wider reach of the blogs and their easy access to an identifiable audience. Mabuan (2018) defined blogs (short for “web logs”) as ‘free, manipulable, and personalized online websites that look like a journal or diary’. According to him, blogs have become a powerful medium for self-expression and empowerment as people become more critical and aware of their writing while writing in blogs. Therefore, blogging can be considered as a potential tool to develop the academic writing skills of students.

As the demand for proficient English language skills increases in the international labour market, it has become imperative for the universities to equip students with effective communicative skills, i.e. English spoken and written skills. In India, students are not adequately trained to write in schools and colleges. Lin and Morrison (2021) had observed in their study that L2 students find academic writing difficult. Most of them do not know how to begin a paragraph, develop it, support their ideas and conclude it. Their writings mostly lack unity and coherence, and are poorly organized. This is mainly due to the lack of training in academic writing. The characteristics of academic writing can be identified as highly coherent and cohesive writing that are considered as criteria to assess the quality of the text. (Witte and Faigley, 1981 cited by Wischgoll, 2017).

Realizing this problem, the department of English Language Teaching (ELT) of Gauhati University in India, where the researcher is a faculty member, had introduced a course in academic writing in their postgraduate programme. However, students at the tertiary level tend to become more rigid in their writing styles, and it becomes more difficult to make them relearn. They resist the actual teaching of the writing process, and it was observed in several batches of students that the application of the academic writing skills is limited to the academic writing class. Students rarely try to transfer the skills learnt in the academic writing class to writing assignments for other courses. Moreover, it was observed that students do not try to ‘consciously’ apply the mechanics of writing that they learn in the academic writing class while writing class assignments. Therefore, the researcher decided to explore the process of blogging as a potential tool in making students more aware of the mechanics of academic writing. The aim was to make the students appreciate and become more mindful of the writing process through blogging. The belief in the effectiveness of blogging as a tool was further strengthened by studies like the ones

conducted by Begoña Montero-Fleta Carmen Pérez-Sabater (2010) that proved that blogs can be considered as a potential tool for the development of linguistic skills. It is also believed that this work will highlight the effectiveness as well as challenges faced in a country like India, where internet penetration is still low, and most students are unfamiliar with the blogging process.

### ***Objectives***

This paper aims to determine whether the findings of the studies mentioned above hold true in the context of this research and to contribute to the literature on blogging as applied in ESL writing contexts. For the purpose of this research, three aspects of academic writing were focused on: i) writing a proper introduction and conclusion, ii) supporting the main point with relevant supporting points and iii) using appropriate semantic markers. This was done to limit the scope of the research work so that the researcher could measure the improvement due to blogging with respect to these three aspects.

The present study aims to determine whether blogging can enable students to become more aware of the mechanics of academic writing vis-à-vis the three aspects mentioned above and to ascertain whether it can bring about a positive attitude towards the writing process.

The researcher formulated the following three research questions in order to carry out the study.

1. Is there a significant difference in the mechanics of writing between the control group and the experimental group post-intervention?
2. Is there a significant improvement in writing from the pre-intervention to the post-intervention stage of the experimental group?
3. Do students have a more positive attitude towards writing long texts when they blog?

### **Literature review**

Studies on the potential pedagogic goldmine of using Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the field of education are increasing exponentially. Blogging as an effective ICT tool is being explored by researchers all over the globe. Studies like the one carried out by Defazio et al. (2010) corroborate the researcher's observation that learners might find writing to be a laborious exercise trying to put thoughts into paper. Their study was a result of the realization that students who entered the undergraduate programs lacked the necessary writing

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skills for studies and after graduation. The challenge for most educators is how to make students successful communicators in the limited time of the course. Nowadays, students mostly communicate through text messages and emails relying heavily on abbreviations and informal language. Trinder (2019) maintains that the language development of learners has been facilitated by the internet through social networking sites, emailing etc. However, the learners' awareness of this medium as a learning opportunity has not been studied adequately.

According to Mabuan (2018), in order to encourage writing among ESL learners, blogs can be used. However, some of the hurdles in using blogs are lack of time, lack of skills and less participation from students. Campbell (2003), as cited in Mabuan (2018), commented that bloggers can create, edit and publish blog posts. Blogs can be used to teach writing because they have user-friendly features like easy to use interface, frequent text update, and interactive comment area. In their study, Kuimova et al. (2016) studied the use of blogs in foreign language teaching and their benefits. A weblog can be used in various levels of education for learning different disciplines, and it is also user-friendly. They highlighted the popularity of blogs among students and stressed the effectiveness in developing writing skills among others. Blogs enable learners to work at their own pace, use real communication in authentic learning environment, increase their writing amount etc. Learners also get an opportunity to initiate real dialogues with people who read and comment on the blogs. They also help in making the shy learners open up. Blogs assist in developing writing skills, as learners are more concerned about posting grammatically correct and well-organized texts. A similar study conducted by Zahoor and Kasour (2018) in Pakistan found that the participants responded positively to blogging, and it was recommended that blogging should be incorporated into the traditional teaching of writing skills. These findings gain significance in the context of the present study because the teaching-learning contexts of Pakistan and India can be considered to be quite similar.

Studies like the ones conducted by Vurdien (2012), Md. Said et al. (2017) and Alsamadani (2018) are also significant as far as the present work is concerned because the findings of these studies indicate that blogging-based writing is more interactive and participatory. It looked at the difference between individual blogging and group blogging and concluded that the latter was more effective. In the present study, however, the primary focus was individual blogging.

A common aspect that was observed in different studies conducted in this area is the positive attitude of the participants towards blogging. In order to assess the

motivation level of the learners, the thematic analysis used by Akdak and Ozkan (2017) in their study was found to be compatible with the objective of this research work. The present work fills the void in literature dealing with blogging as a means of teaching writing in the Indian context.

## **Method**

The experiment was conducted on 30 participants who were students in the second semester 2020/2021 post graduate programme of the department of English Language Teaching (ELT) of Gauhati University, India, over the course of a semester. The average age of the students was 22. They had to pass an English language proficiency test in order to be considered eligible for the postgraduate ELT programme. Therefore, it could be assumed that the students had an average proficiency of intermediate level in the English language. The experience with technology use varied among the students. Fifteen students volunteered to be in the experimental group that used blogs to practice their writing skills during the intervention, and the rest volunteered to be in the control group that did not blog in order to practice the writing skill during the intervention.

A quasi-experiment was conducted in order to determine whether there were significant differences in the performances of the two groups post-intervention. The researcher considers this study as quasi-experimental as the participants for this study were all students in the same department, and they themselves opted to be either in the control group or the experimental group. During the intervention, the experimental group was taught the mechanics of writing and made to practice using blogs, and the control group was taught the mechanics of writing in the traditional way.

Two structured questionnaires were designed, one each for interviewing the control group and the experimental group. While creating the questionnaires, the checklist provided by Engel and Schutt (2010, p. 179) was followed. Throughout the creation of the questionnaire, Research Question 3 was the primary basis. The questionnaire was pretested on a couple of colleagues in the department to check for ambiguity, and a small pilot study was conducted on a group of five students from the batch immediately below the target group. This was done to ensure that the pilot group was almost similar to the target group.

## ***Procedures***

The participants were divided into two groups: the experimental and control group. In order to determine the effectiveness of the intervention, a pre-test and a post-test were conducted. The intervention was followed by interviews of both groups by using open-ended questions in order to determine whether the intervention brought any significant change in their attitude towards writing long texts.

Only primary sources of data were consulted to gather information. The data collection consisted of collecting samples of writing both pre and post-intervention. First, the pre-test writing assignment that was common to both the groups was checked by the researcher. The intervention was carried out over a period of three months. In this period, the experimental group used online blogging for writing practice and the control group wrote different assignments given by the teacher researcher. The writing class was conducted for an hour with two sessions per week. The researcher taught the different parts of an essay, how to organize the main and the supporting points and how to use relevant semantic markers. This study was conducted during the first semester of the academic year 2020-2021, from August to November. Free prior informed consent was sought from the participants.

This was followed by scoring the post-test writing assignment of both the groups.

Both the pre and post-intervention assignments were given scores out of ten based on the following three aspects of writing.

- introduction and conclusion,
- supporting the main point with relevant supporting points and
- use of appropriate semantic markers

A grading rubric was designed to assess the students' assignments. (see Table 1)

Table 1. *The grading rubric used to assess the writing assignments*

	4	3	2	1	0
Introduction and conclusion	A well-structured introduction and a conclusion can be seen. There is an	Both introduction and conclusion are there. Either the intro or the	Both introduction and conclusion are there but not very	Either introduction or conclusion is there, but faulty	No introduction and conclusion

	attempt to write an interesting introduction, and a conclusion that summarizes or gives the author's view on the topic.	conclusion is well-structured and interesting.	clearly given		
Main idea and supporting points	Main idea is clearly stated along with well-organized and relevant supporting points.	The main idea is clearly stated but the supporting points are not organized well.	Both the main idea and the supporting details are not very clearly stated	Only the main idea can be made out.	Could not write anything
Semantic markers (total points: 2)	.....	.....	Use of relevant semantic markers	Not very relevant	No use of semantic markers

It was followed by a questionnaire-based survey that was carried out to determine the attitude of the participants towards writing longer texts through the use of blogs for the experimental group and just by traditional means of writing for the control group. The data were analyzed qualitatively. As mentioned in the literature review, the thematic analysis used by Akdak and Ozkan (2017) was adopted for this research work.

## Procedure

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### *Pre-intervention*

Both the experimental group and the control group were made to write an assignment based on the content of the course taught by the researcher as part of the regular curriculum. This was carried out in order to determine the strengths and weaknesses in their writing. The assignments were checked and given scores on a scale of ten for the three aspects using the grading rubric in Table 1. The results (see Table 2) show that there was no significant difference between the means of the pre-intervention scores of the experimental group and control group. This confirmed that the participants in both the groups had similar levels of proficiency in their writing ability before the intervention.

Table 2: Comparison between experimental and control group pre-test

Group	N	Mean (pre-test)	S.D.	t-statistic for mean difference
Experimental group (Bloggers)	15	3.6	1.24	1.19
Control group (Non-bloggers)	15	3.2	1.14	

### *Intervention*

Next, both the experimental and the control group were made to practice writing an introduction and a conclusion, main points and supporting points and using relevant semantic markers. They were given assignments at periodic intervals that were related to the content of the subject matter being taught in the ELT course. The experimental group posted their assignments on their blogs created on the blogging site Blogspot and the control group wrote or typed them in loose sheets of paper.

The participants in the experimental group were encouraged to visit their fellow participants' blogs and leave a comment. The researcher also brought in some of her colleagues to visit sites of students who were writing blogs on courses taught by them and asked to leave comments on both the content and the writing. The control group, on the other hand, was made to write down their assignments and check each other's writings for the three aspects mentioned above as well as the content.



The researcher brought in teachers of other courses to give assignments and visit the blogs and leave comments and queries. Students' offline writing assignments were checked for changes in writing.

### ***Post-intervention***

After three months of practice, both the groups were given a final writing assignment. The researcher scored the assignments on a scale of ten based on the three aspects given in Table 1.

A survey was also conducted using two questionnaires (see Appendix) that were administered to determine the difference in attitude of the participants towards writing longer texts through the use of blogs for the experimental group and just by traditional means of writing for the control group. Their motivation was qualitatively assessed by using a thematic analysis on the basis of their survey responses.

### **Findings**

The results in Table 3 below show that the bloggers performed significantly better in the post-test. A t-test for independent samples was conducted to compare the means between the experimental and the control groups. The t-statistic obtained was  $-9.5^{***}$ , which showed that the mean value of the experimental group post-test was found to be more than that of the control group. This means that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental groups and the control groups on the post-test in overall performance in favour of the experimental group.

Table 3: Comparison between experimental and control group post-test

Group	N	Mean (post-test)	S.D.	t-statistic for mean difference
Experimental group (Bloggers)	15	5.3	1.04	-9.5 ***
Control group (Non-bloggers)	15	3.9	1.2	

**Note: \*, \*\*,\*\*\* indicates 1 %, 5%, 10% level of significance respectively**

Next, the results in Table 4 below show that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and the post-test in writing skill in favour of the post-test. The paired samples t-test was used,

and the results are shown in Table 4. A t-test for independent samples was conducted to compare the means between the pre-test and the post-test scores of the experimental group. The t-statistic obtained was 4.17\*\*\*, which showed that the mean value of the experimental group post-test was found to be more than that of the pre-test.

Table 4. *Pre-test and post-test results of the experimental group in writing skills*

Group	N	M	S.D.	t-statistic for mean difference
Experimental group Pre-test	15	3.6	1.2	4.17***
Experimental group Post-test	15	5.3	1.0	

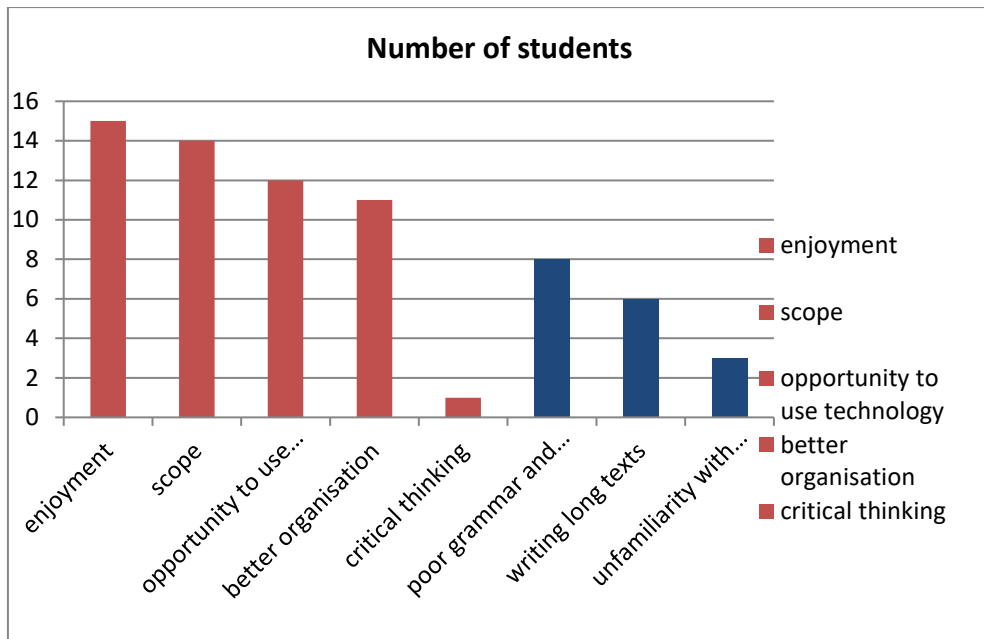
**Note: \*, \*\*,\*\*\* indicate 1 %, 5%, 10% level of significance respectively**

In order to determine whether students are more motivated to write longer texts when they blog, a thematic analysis was performed on the responses of the participants in the interview.

### **Thematic analysis**

Qualitative data collected from the interviews were analyzed using a thematic analysis. The interview questions were mostly open-ended (see Appendix). In the thematic analysis for the experimental group, 5 positive and 3 negative themes emerged (see Tables 4 and 5)

Fig. 1. *Graphical representation of positive and negative themes for experimental (blogging) group*

Table 4. *Positive aspects of blogging*

Positive themes	No. of students (n=15)
Enjoyment	15
Scope	14
Opportunity to use technology	12
Awareness about better organization (incorporating writing strategies)	11
Critical thinking	1

Enjoyment (n:15)

Enjoyment emerged as the most notable positive theme for the bloggers. This trend is supported by the study of Montera-Fletaa, Perez-Sabaterb (2010), that revealed that blogging can raise the motivation of students and make them more conscious of being correct.

The following statements regarding enjoyment were recorded.

S15: *I enjoyed the blogging experience because I love to work with technology.*

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S4: *I enjoyed the blogging experience because I love to work with technology and it was a new experience for me.*

S9: *Writing is more fun when you blog and it is more exciting to share your ideas.*

S7: *It is more fun to do than usual writing and people can get to read them and leave their comments which help me improve my writing style.*

S9: *Writing is more fun when you blog and it is more exciting to share your ideas.*

S11: *I enjoyed the blogging experience because it was a new experience...*

Scope (n:14)

The second most notable positive theme according to the respondents was the wider scope of blogging. According to Kuimova et al. (2016), learners also get an opportunity to initiate real dialogues with people who read and comment on the blogs. Blogging is an excellent way for learners to communicate with one another in a socially based context through technology (Lamonica, 2010, p. 5)

S5: *It is a platform with a wider audience and many people can read and comment.*

S11: *I will continue to blog as I enjoy the process and it has a lot of scope. I received mostly positive comments.*

S9: *Writing is more fun when you blog and it is more exciting to share your ideas.*

S15: *I like to explore the writers across the globe, and notice how they interpret things and jot down in their writings.*

S5: *I received mostly positive comments.*

Opportunity to use technology (n:12)

The opportunity to use technology was another factor that made the experimental group engage in blogging. This was the third most notable positive theme that emerged in the thematic analysis. According to Ward (2004), the reason why blogs have so quickly been embraced by the educational staff and learners may simply be owing to their interactive media features, simplicity and potential to foster autonomy.

S4: *I enjoyed the blogging experience because I love to work with technology, and it was a new experience for me.*

S3: *I liked the blogging experience because I 'got acquainted with technology'.*

Better organization (incorporating writing strategies) (n:11)

Twelve of the bloggers claimed to have been able to incorporate the writing strategies in their writing. The use of blogging in writing classes could help students improve their writing performance when they receive well-organized instructions (Wu, 2005). Some of the statements made by the students are provided below.

S4: *I am more aware of the importance of organising my writing....*

S11: *I am more aware of the mechanics of writing like organizing etc. I consciously try to incorporate the techniques I learnt in the aw class*

S6: *I have become more systematic in my writing.*

Critical thinking skills (n:1)

Only one participant mentioned development of critical thinking skill. Though it is not notable as there was only a single mention of critical thinking, it is relevant because the participant who mentioned it was one of the faster learners. Gunduz (2016) observed that most of the participants in a study carried out to determine the development of writing skills via blogs believed that blogging encouraged them to use their critical thinking skills. The statement that the student in the present study made about developing critical thinking skills is given below.

S3: *The academic writing classes have helped me to think more critically.*

There were 3 negative themes that emerged during the interview with the experimental group.

Table 5. *Negative aspects of blogging*

<b>Negative themes</b>	<b>No. of participants (n=15)</b>
Poor grammar and vocabulary	8
Writing long texts	6
Unfamiliarity with technology/ blogging	3

Writing long texts (n:6)

The most notable among the negative aspects was the reluctance of the participants to engage in writing long texts. Huerta et al. (2017) have been quoted by Zhang (2019) that student writers often face anxiety associated with writing since they find the intricacy of writing very challenging. The following statements have been stated verbatim.

S16: *I don't like writing long texts because I struggle with sentence construction*

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S8: I do not enjoy writing long texts because I am not proficient in writing English.

*Poor grammar and vocabulary (n:8)*

The second notable negative aspect was their lack of proficiency in grammar and vocabulary while writing blogs in English. Though for this exercise, accuracy in grammar and vocabulary were not the focus of the study, participants were still found to be worrying about the sentence-level writing. This attitude finds resonance in Zhang (2017), according to whom students are always anxious about their academic literacy as they want to focus primarily on grammar and vocabulary.

*S8: I am not proficient in writing in English, and I cannot find suitable vocabulary.*

*S2: I lack the proficiency and I find it difficult to write with suitable vocabulary and sentence construction.*

*S16: I struggle with sentence construction.*

*S1: I lack suitable vocabulary*

Unfamiliarity with technology (n:3)

Another negative theme that emerged from the responses of the control group regarding blogging was the unfamiliarity with technology, but it was not very significant. Only three participants mentioned it.

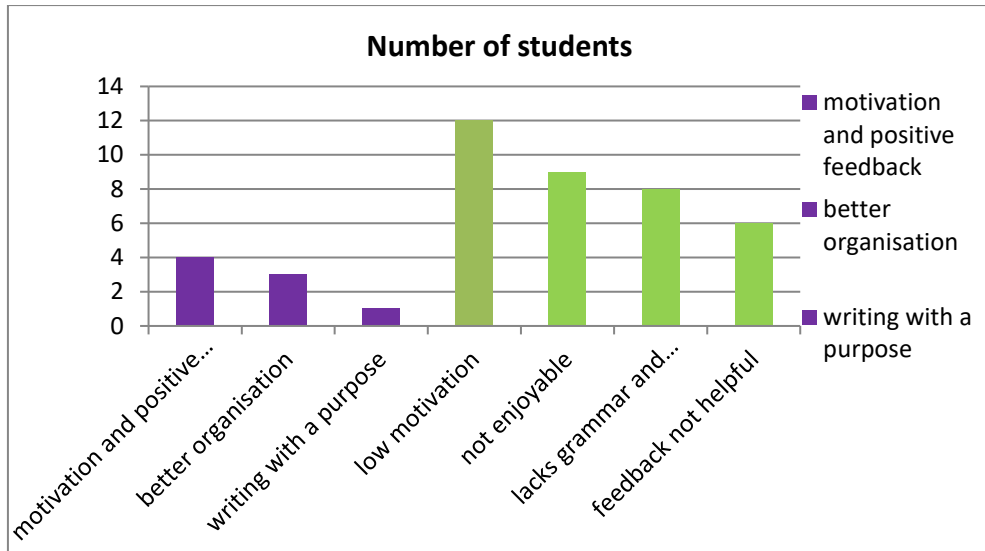
*S1: I did not like to blog because I had never tried it before and I thought it would be very difficult*

*S3: I have never blogged in my life, so I found it a bit difficult. Personally, I like to write more!*

### **Control group**

In the case of the non-bloggers, 3 positive and 4 negative themes emerged. A graphical representation is provided below.

Fig. 2. Graphical representation of the positive and negative themes for the control (non-blogging group)

Table 6. *Positive themes related to non-blogging*

Positive themes	N=15
Motivation and positive feedback	4
Better organisation	3
Writing with a purpose	1

#### Motivation and positive feedback (n:4)

Though they did not blog, there were a few participants who liked to write long texts because they mostly received positive feedback from their teacher and peers. It may be mentioned here that the ones who commented favourably were the ones who were slightly better in writing than their fellow participants. Some of the statements recorded are provided below.

S22: *I enjoyed writing the assignment and I received mostly positive comments*

S19: *I wanted to write more and I got positive comments.*

S26: *I love to write and I got positive and detailed comments.*

#### Better organization (n:3)

Three participants in the control group claimed that they could write with better organization post-intervention. Some of the statements are given below.

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S17: *I can write in a more organized and interesting manner.*

S19: *I found the academic writing class very useful, and I did try to incorporate the different aspects of writing taught in the writing class in my writing because it helped me to focus on things in a more detailed manner with patience.*

S22: *The various aspects helped me improve the manner in which I presented a text or an answer and even while preparing for something, i.e., an assignment, test and so on.*

Writing with a purpose (n:1)

One lone participant claimed that the writing practice made them more aware of writing with a purpose.

S21: *It has helped me write not just for the sake of writing, but to write with a purpose.*

Table 7. *Negative themes related to non-blogging*

Negative theme	N(15)
Low motivation	12
Not enjoyable	9
Lacks grammar and vocabulary	8
Feedback not helpful	6

Lack of motivation (n:12)

Lack of motivation to write long texts emerged as the most notable negative theme in case of the control group. Some of the statements made by the participants are given below.

S28: *I did not feel motivated enough to write the assignments given by the teacher.*

S20: *Not very motivated but had to write since it was an assignment.*

S21: *I was not very motivated but had to write because it was an assignment*

Lacks enjoyment (n:9)

Another significant negative factor that emerged was that most of the participants in the control group did not enjoy the writing process. Some of the statements are provided below.



S28: *I do not enjoy writing long texts because I am not proficient in writing in English*

S30: *I do not enjoy writing long texts because I struggle with sentence construction and cannot find suitable vocabulary*

Lacks grammar and vocabulary (n:8)

Eight out of fifteen participants who did not participate in the blogging process mentioned that they did not enjoy writing long texts because they lacked appropriate grammar and vocabulary.

S28: *I do not enjoy writing long texts because I am not proficient in writing in English.*

S26: *I do not like writing long texts because am not proficient in writing in English, I cannot find suitable vocabulary and I struggle with sentence construction.*

S21: *I do not enjoy writing long texts because I struggle with sentence construction and I cannot find suitable vocabulary*

Feedback not helpful (n:6)

Most of them did not find the feedback very helpful. Statements similar to the one provided below were made by the participants.

S21: *I am not sure about the feedback I received.*

The above responses of the control group who did not take part in blogging indicate that some of the participants were not very motivated to write longer texts, partly because of poor English writing skills, and partly due to the fact that it was a regular class assignment which did not appeal to them.

## **Discussion**

In the pre-intervention stage, it is evident from the findings (see Table 2) that there was no significant difference between the performance of the experimental and the control group. Both the experimental group and the control group were seen to have similar problems in writing. Their writing lacked organization, and an absence of

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proper discourse markers was observed. Some of the assignments were written in bullet points. Some of the common problems are listed below.

- i. Absence of both introduction and conclusion.
- ii. Introduction is there but no conclusion
- iii. Very little use of semantic markers (e.g. *However, Therefore, But, Moreover* etc.) in their writing
- iv. Tendency to digress from the main topic
- v. Tendency to write in bullet points rather than in paragraph format

### ***Post-intervention***

The experimental group can be seen to have scored higher in their writing assignments post-intervention. Findings indicate that blogging as a tool can make students more aware of the mechanics of writing. The results confirm that students who were blogging were more careful about the organization of their writing and maintaining unity and coherence in their blogs as compared to their non-blogging peers. The experimental group with a mean score of 5.3 showed a significant improvement from the control group with a mean score of 3.9 in those aspects of writing after the intervention (see Table 2). There was also a significant difference between the mean scores (from 3.6 to 5.3) of the experimental group before and after the intervention (see Table 3). This is in line with the findings of Kuimova et al's (2018) study that concluded that blogs are highly effective in developing writing skills of the students.

The results of the thematic analysis show very clearly that the students who opted to blog showed a more positive attitude towards the writing process. This finding corroborates with the work of Montera-Fletaa, Perez-Sabaterb (2010) that revealed that blogging can raise the motivation of students and make them more conscious of being correct. It can be seen in Table 4 that five positive themes emerged that were reported by more participants in the experimental group than the 3 negative themes that were reported by only a few in the group. The bloggers were more motivated, as is evident from their responses. This finding is supported by studies conducted by Kuimova et al (2016), Mabuan (2018) and so on. The bloggers claimed to have enjoyed the process of writing more, the reasons being enjoyment, wider scope, opportunity to use technology, positive feedback and development of critical thinking. On the other hand, only three positive themes were mentioned by a small number of non-bloggers as opposed to four negative themes that emerged from the analysis of their interview responses.

It is to be noted that only three negative themes emerged in the blogging group: poor grammar and vocabulary, reluctance to write long texts and unfamiliarity with technology. However, these themes cannot be ignored as they are serious issues that need to be addressed if we want to explore technology as a potential tool in the teaching of a foreign language. Mabuan (2018) had also highlighted the problems associated with blogging in his study. They were lack of time, lack of skills and less participation from students. In the present study, students were allowed to opt for either blogging or traditional writing. Interestingly, three participants who had volunteered to blog mentioned unfamiliarity with technology as a problem. This indicates that learners in a country like India are still not comfortable with the use of technology.

## **Conclusion**

Academic writing is an important skill, but one that is often neglected in the teaching and learning of English. As a result, it becomes more difficult to teach academic writing to students at the tertiary level of education. This difficulty can be mainly attributed to lack of proficiency in writing in English. The present study investigated the role of blogging in developing three predetermined aspects of writing in a group of tertiary level ESL students. It was found that blogging is a user-friendly platform that is participatory and interactive. Students can develop their academic writing skills using blogs, and it is confirmed by the post-test scores of the experimental group in this present study. The students were also found to be more motivated when writing in their blogs. Though a number of positive aspects emerged, there were also a few issues that emerged that need to be addressed in order to make blogging a viable and effective tool to teach language skills to students.

Similar studies can be conducted to determine the effect of blogging on different aspects of writing, and also on other aspects like grammar and vocabulary and reading skills. Another potential area of study can be the teacher's role in integrating blogging in the language classroom, especially in a country like India where lack of infrastructure and unstable internet connection are real concerns. The teacher should ease students into blogging and encourage those who are not very technologically savvy to take up blogging as a medium for practicing their writing skills.

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## Appendix

### Questionnaire for Bloggers (qualitative data)

Please respond to the following questions.

1. Why did you choose to join the blogging group?  
.....
2. What do you have to say about your experience with the blog?  
.....
3. What kind of responses did you receive mostly for your blog posts?  
(positive, negative, neutral...)  
.....
4. Did the academic writing class help in improving your writing skill? How?  
.....
5. What problems (if any) did you face while blogging?  
.....
6. Did your writing improve after you started blogging? If yes, why? If no,  
why not?  
.....

### Questionnaire for Non-bloggers

Please respond to the following questions.

1. Why did you choose not to join the blogging group?  
.....
2. Did the academic writing class help in improving your writing skill? Give  
your reasons.  
.....
3. Do you enjoy writing long texts? Why? Why not?  
.....
4. Did you enjoy completing the assignments given by the teacher? Yes/ No  
.....

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5. What kind of comments on your writing did you receive from your friends? (positive, negative, neutral etc.)  
.....
  6. Did the academic writing class help in improving your writing skill? Why do you think so?