Blog Writing for Learning

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Abstract Blog has played a major role in enhancing writing among second language learners. However, at times, the messages written are confusing and not being delivered appropriately especially among second language learners. Therefore, this study focuses on the use of blog writing in learning the Malay language. The objectives of the study are to identify and analyze the adjectives and verbs in the blog. The samples of the study consist of six volunteered female subjects from a class of Malay language at a university in Korea. The subjects are given a task as in writing a story about their stories, experiences and feelings towards the autumn season. The subjects are told to write at least a hundred words of writing in the blog. The writings from the subjects are analyzed by using the discourse analysis theory. The results of the study revealed that each subject managed to write at least five adjectives and five verbs in the writing. The subjects also managed to write interesting experiences and stories in the blog. The result of the study also revealed that the subjects managed to write more than one story and show that they are happy with the task given to them. This showed that blog writing helps in the process of learning the second language. It is hoped that future studies will focus on blog writing for other means of grammar usage.

Keywords Blog, Adjective, Verb, Writing, Second Language Learning, Bilingualism

1. Introduction

Writing in a blog has been a favorite activity for teenagers and adults. Blog writing has given them the opportunity to write about their personal views or experiences that they wanted to share with other bloggers or even readers. Students at the university have also started writing in the blog as a means of releasing their stress while studying and also partly to share their happiness or even sadness with their friends and family. Moreover, writing in the blog has given the space for the students to create new ideas in writing and improve the target language that they are learning. Blog writing is also an activity that gives the opportunity for the students at the university to enhance the learning of the second language. With the use of blog, the students can share things that they learnt with other readers and the students can also read other blogs to gain knowledge or ideas in writing. Some blogs consisted of knowledgeable information that gives them tips on either learning or about survival in life. Consequently, blogs help students in finding the truth about the real life situation without asking someone else but through reading other's personal experiences. This way, they learn through someone else's experiences.

As a blogger, a person can write about anything that crosses his/her mind [1]. Either the writing is about one personal feeling or about their happiness or sadness due to events and tragedy. Some writings in the blogs even have funny stories that can bring laughter and enjoyment in

reading. On the other hand, famous blogs focus on food blogs or travel blogs too. Some even have places of interest blog where one can find tips of places to visit. Blogs based on education were also found among educators and even students. Subsequently, blogs based on education were researched by researchers in order to find out the content of the writing and the implication towards the education world. Overall, good writings in blogs [2] consisted of the following:

1. A catchy title that brings attention to readers.
2. An interesting story that attracts the readers.
3. Include funny lines and jokes to make it more interesting.
4. Make sure to have points that best describe your writing.
5. Relate the writing with the latest news.
6. Simple words and sentence structure.
7. Readable and understandable for the target age.
8. Able to communicate with the readers.
9. Moral and aesthetic values in the writing.
10. Knowledgeable for educational writing.

Sithaletchery Krishnaiyer et al,[3] study on reflective journal among law students revealed that the students were able to reflect on their learning and record their responses to what they have learnt in the blog. The objectives of the study were to investigate the effect of reflective journal in blog writing. The study focused on both qualitative and quantitative research in order to facilitate students' reflection in the blog journal writing and the effectiveness of teacher input. The effects of the teacher's input in the classroom were discussed in the students' journal. Sithaletchery Krishnaiyer et al [3] findings revealed that blog writing enhances and facilitates students' reflection and the model introduced on reflection that enhanced to the great extent on the quality of reflection in students' entries. Thus, blogs have proven to be useful platforms for students to reflect on their learning although students need much guidance on how to better structure their reflections [3]. Normaliza Abd Rahim [4] agreed with the statement by Sithaletchery Krishnaiyer et al, [3] and adds that blog has given the opportunity for students to write on their experiences in the second language and share the knowledge with others. On the other hand, Normaliza Abd Rahim [4] argues that blog writing is not only restricted to students' reflections but also towards their views towards the betterment of the learning process.

Nadzrah Abu Bakar & Kemboja Ismail [5] agree with Sithaletchery Krishnaiyer et al, [3] and Normaliza Abd Rahim [4] and postulate that blog writing was a platform for students to post their reflective entries and students perceive blogging as an interesting and motivating learning the second language environment. Studies on blog writing for reflective writing were widely researched and helped in enhancing students' motivation in learning [4, 6-13].

Accordingly, Normaliza Abd Rahim [4] postulates that blog writing has given the opportunity for Korean students

in learning the Malay language. The objectives of the study were to identify and discuss the use of blog writing from the perspective of Korean learners learning the Malay language. The subjects involved in the study consisted of 60 male and female volunteered subjects from six classes of Malay language at a university in Korea. The subjects had the experience in writing in the blog from the previous semester. The subjects were given a set of questionnaires and interviewed based on their opinions on blog learning. The results of the study revealed that more than 80% of the female subjects while more than 65% of the male subjects stated that they wrote in the blog for literature, language and multimedia learning. The results also revealed that all the subjects had increased in motivation and confidence in writing specifically in the Malay language. Thus, this showed that blog writing has improved students' confidence in learning [14, 9, 13, 4].

According to Osterman & Kottkamp [15] in Sithaletchery Krishnaiyer et al, [3], a journal is as one form of narrative writing which often associated with reflective practice and entries that can also be reflective of events, where the writer shares questions about these experiences and often shares thoughts with others. This showed that journal writing in blogs can also be regarded as a process of writing of all types of experiences [4]. Also, writing in blogs can be a process in helping and enhancing the students' motivation in life. Thus, writing in blogs can be a means in communication for all students and share their experiences, views and comments towards the topic of discussion. Blog writing has given the opportunities for the students to share their knowledge with others and vice versa in the second language[16, 14, 9, 13, 17, 4]. Besides that, blog writing has given educators the opportunity to discover the needs of the students throughout the process of learning. Educators will be able to plan the process of teaching in order to increase the motivation of the students and the students will get the benefits.

Zaini Amir et al, [17] studied Malaysian teen bloggers and revealed that the bloggers have used the blogs as a means of expressing their daily issues about life. The teen bloggers have used the informal language which was similar to spoken language. The teen bloggers felt that the informal language has helped them in feeling at ease and not having stress and being restricted to the formal ways of writing. This way, it helped them to express their feelings in second language writing. Zaini Amir et al, [17] revealed that there were differences between male and female teen bloggers in the frequencies of five language features which are 'intensifiers', 'hedging', 'tag questions', 'empty adjectives' and 'adverbs'. The results of the study show that differences in language use among teenage bloggers were based on gender and socialization. On the other hand, another study on blog writing by Zahra Shahsavari & Tan Bee Hoon [18] showed that cognitive style affects bloggers' attitude in an online learning environment. The study was on the students' attitudes toward blogs on three factors: blog anxiety, blog desirability, and blog self-efficacy. The

results of the study revealed that from the interview questions support the notion that students obtained positive attitudes towards using blogs in a learning environment. Positive attitudes in learning will create a happy environment [19- 20]. The effectiveness of using a blog has shown that students will have different types of learning environments and therefore, it will motivate them in trying new things [1] [19].

The objectives of the study were to identify and analyze the adjectives and verbs in the blog among students at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Korea.

2. Methodology

The samples of the study are six volunteered female subjects age between 20-23 years old from a Malay language class at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Korea. The subjects are Korean and majored in the Malay language and therefore it is their second language. However, they are in their third semester and they are at an intermediate level of the language. The subjects were given a task in writing a post in the blog. The writing must be at least 100 words and consisted of adjectives and verbs that they had learnt during the semester. The writing would be in the Malay language and they were to write based on their stories, experiences and feelings regarding the autumn season. The subjects' writing will only focus on the verbs and adjectives identified. Therefore, full writing will not be included in the discussion. The use of blog is to inculcate technology in learning and one of the tools used in the classroom. The subjects writing in the blogs were analyzed by using the discourse analysis method [21]. However, the theory only focused on presupposition where a thing tacitly assumed beforehand at the beginning of a course of action. The use of blog has shown a significant towards learning [1] where students are motivated when writing in their own space. Here, it can be seen that the blog is their own private space which they can write about anything at their own pace. In addition, blog is used to serve in the learning process hence to enhance effective learning.

3. Results and Discussion

The subjects wrote in their blogs consisting of their stories, experiences and feelings on the autumn season in Korea. The e-mail must have at least 100 words in one post using the adjectives and verbs that they learnt in the classroom. The analyses were based on individual posts in the blogs.

Subject 1

Subject 1 wrote that she loved the autumn season since the weather was not too hot and not too cold. She loved the serene environment and she liked to spend most of her

time outside appreciating the surroundings. Subject 1 had written five adjectives in the blog. The adjectives were 'beautiful', 'serene', 'lovely', 'happy' and 'nice'. The subject stated that the scenery during autumn was 'beautiful' and 'serene'. It made her feel 'happy' at all times. She has 'nice' feelings when it was autumn and the surroundings were 'serene' to her heart. She also tried to relate her views on her autumn story with verbs. The verbs involved in her writing were 'backpacking', 'walk', 'jog', 'jump', 'laugh' and 'look'. The subject was trying to inform that she went 'backpacking' with her friend during autumn to Pohang over the weekend. She also loved to 'walk' and 'jog' to the mountain near the university. She would 'jump' with joy when she was invited to join for mountain climbing during the weekend. She also stated that she would 'laugh' with her friend over the stories about their time during autumn. Lastly, she would 'look' at the leaves falling to the ground when it is autumn. The subject's writing showed that she was able to describe her feelings and write about her story about autumn. This showed that Subject 1 has the ability to write by using the adjectives and verbs in the autumn story.

Subject 2

Subject 2 blog also showed that she loved the autumn season. She stated that she was able to appreciate the beautiful scenery of the mountain near the university. Since she stayed in the hostel at the university, she was able to view the changes in the surroundings. Subject 2 had used the adjectives as in, 'beautiful', 'quiet', 'love', 'colorful' and 'happy'. She stated that the scenery during autumn was 'beautiful' and 'quiet'. She 'loves' the feelings that she had during autumn which was the 'happy' feeling in her. Besides that, the trees and mountains were 'colorful' during autumn since she said that it changes colors from green to yellow to brown. She loved to watch the changes every day and appreciated the views during the season. Other than that, Subject 2 had used five verbs to describe the autumn story. She has written the verbs 'walk', 'look', 'sit', 'read' and 'write'. She stated that she would 'walk' up the hill to the faculty every day and appreciate the weather. She would also 'look' at the leaves falling to the ground near the window of her room. She loved to 'sit' outside at the bench near the bus stop and 'read' her books while waiting for the bus. Lastly, she loved to 'write' short poems to describe her feelings when it was autumn. The writing from Subject 2 showed that she managed to write good writing to describe the autumn story. The use of adjectives and verbs in her writing showed that she loved the autumn season and looked forward to another autumn the following year.

Subject 3

The blog writing from Subject 3 showed that she was able to give a good description of the autumn season. She

wrote about her first year experience in the hostel at the university since she was a first year student. Since she lived at Busan which was in the south of Korea, she felt that the autumn season was different from what she had before. Moreover, she stated that she was really lucky to experience the first autumn at Yongin. She had used the adjectives 'pretty', 'lovely', 'beautiful', 'relax' and 'serene' in her blog. She stated that the scenery around the campus was so 'lovely', 'beautiful' and she had 'serene' feelings every time she appreciates the view. She mentioned that she would feel more 'relax' with the autumn season and the scenery was so 'pretty' to her eyes. The adjectives that she mentioned showed that she loved the new environment besides her hometown which she found it predicted to face the season. Besides that, Subject 3 also wrote verbs in her blog. The verbs were 'walk', 'sit', 'read', 'write' and 'look'. She stated that she 'walked' up the hill to the waterfall over the weekend. She would also 'sit' near the window to 'look' at the leaves from the trees falling to the ground. She loved 'reading' storybooks near the window at her room. Subject 3 was similar to Subject 2 that she loved to 'write' poem about the autumn season. Subject 3 stated that the poem resembles her feelings towards the season. The writing from Subject 3 showed that she appreciates the autumn season and she shares her feelings with others by writing in the blog.

Subject 4

The writing from Subject 4 showed that she has good writing in expressing herself towards the autumn season. The story that she wrote reflected her feelings and most of her feelings were about her family members. The writing has shown that she appreciated the weather at Yongin which was her second year at the university. The adjectives that she used in her writing were 'beautiful', 'serene', 'relax', 'happy' and 'sad'. She stated that the university was so 'beautiful' when it was autumn since the university had mountains around it. She mentioned that she would feel 'serene' when she was alone in her room while looking outside the window. She felt 'relaxed' and 'happy' with her friends around her. Thus, she felt 'sad' missing her parents at all times especially during autumn. Besides that, she also used verbs in her writing. The verbs were 'sit', 'misses', 'cry' and 'write'. She wrote that she 'sat' on her bed every night while writing in her blog. She had 'missed' her parent so much and would 'cry' every time she 'missed' them. She 'wrote' letter to her parents by using the blog. Subject 4 stated in her writing that her parents died during autumn in a car crash. She 'missed' her parents so much and every time when it is winter, she would appreciate the season while monologue and expressed about her feelings towards her parents. Subject 4 was really brave when she revealed her parents in her blog. She stated that she did want any sympathy from others since she only wants to share how she felt every

time when it is autumn. Her autumn story had made her stronger to go on with her life.

Subject 5

Subject 5 wrote about her stories during her childhood lives at Ulsan. She stated that she missed her childhood lives with her two siblings and cousins who lived near her house. The writing showed that her family was close to each other and their grandparents lived nearby as well at that time. The adjectives that she used in her writing were 'beautiful', 'lovely', 'relax', 'happy' and 'joy'. She stated that everything around her at that time was 'beautiful' and 'lovely'. She felt so 'relaxed' while playing with her siblings and cousins. She also felt 'happy' and her feelings were bundle with 'joy' with everyone around her all the time. She also wrote a number of verbs in her writing. The verbs were 'play', 'run', 'built', 'rained', and 'throw'. She stated that she 'played' with her siblings and cousins and 'ran' around the village to play. She mentioned that they 'build' a small hut play and whenever it 'rained', they ran around 'throwing' mud to each other. She had missed the moments when she was at Ulsan with the family and she knew that she will never experience the same situation again. Subject 5 seemed to be happy when she wrote in her blog. It seemed that she wanted to share the happy feelings that she had with the readers. She also seemed missing Ulsan, her hometown and village which she said was totally different every time she goes back during the university holidays. Subject 5 was able to write using the adjectives and verbs in her writing and it revealed that her experience during her childhood had made her writing more interesting.

Subject 6

The writing from Subject 6 showed that she wanted to share her stories with her friends in the classroom. Since she is her final year, she has so many stories to write. She has experience four autumns with her friends around her. She had three other friends whom she felt so close together. In her story, she has used adjectives as in 'close', 'happy', 'together', 'sad' and 'beautiful'. She stated that she was 'close' with her other three friends during the years at the university. She was 'happy' with them and felt the 'togetherness' had made her feel so close. She mentioned that when she was 'sad', she has her friends around her. Besides that, she appreciates the 'beauty' of the surrounding around the university. The mountains around the university were so 'beautiful' to her eyes. Subject 6 also used a number of verbs in her writing. The verbs were 'play', 'run', 'climb', 'write', and 'sing'. The subject stated that she 'played' hide and seek with her friend at the hostel and they 'ran' around the building at nights when it was exam week. She mentioned that during the weekend, she and her friends 'climbed' up the

mountain near Yongin. She loved 'writing' short stories in her note book and when she was alone, she 'sang' new songs from her favorite artist. She loved Boa so much. She felt that Boa has a very good voice. Subject 6 was able to write using the adjectives and verbs. The writing revealed that her stories about her life at the university were interesting and adventurous. Her experiences with her close friends had made it an enjoyable year to study.

Based on the results and discussion from the six subjects above, it can be summarized that all the subjects were able to use the adjectives and verbs that they learnt during the semester in their blogs. The subjects had written in the Malay language and it seemed that they managed to use the correct adjectives and verbs in the sentences. The Malay adjectives that all the subjects had used included 'close', 'together', 'happy', 'sad', 'beautiful', 'lovely', 'relax', 'joy', 'serene', 'quiet', 'colorful' and 'nice'. Other than that, the Malay verbs used by all the subjects were 'play', 'run', 'climb', 'write', 'sing', 'built', 'rained', 'throw', 'sit', 'misses', 'cry', 'walk', 'sit', 'read', 'look', 'backpacking', 'walk', 'jog', 'jump', and 'laugh'. All the adjectives and verbs were taught during the semester. The subjects also managed to write stories based on their experiences related to the autumn season. Therefore, the autumn stories that they wrote had given them the chance to reflect or even look forward to the season. Moreover, the autumn season had made the subjects appreciate the upcoming weather. However, Subject 5 seemed to be missing home and the writing is more focused on her home town and childhood. The findings of this study were similar to the results of the study by Strampel & Oliver [22] where using blog for students at the university was beneficial for learning. On the other hand, the results of the study by Sithaletchery Krishnaiyer et al, [3] were similar to this study when the subjects used the blog as a means of reflection on their daily lives at university. Different types of activities in the classroom will motivate students in learning [1, 20, 23]. This showed that the subjects were able to communicate with the readers regarding their study in blog writing. The study also showed that the subjects managed to use the second language in their blogs.

4. Conclusions

The study implicates educators in taking into consideration the use of blog writing in learning the adjectives and verbs. The adjectives and verbs in the Malay language were difficult for the students but after giving them the opportunity to write in their own blogs, the students seemed to be confident in using them. Blog writing has given the students the opportunities to share their knowledge and understanding of the Malay adjectives and verbs and they shared it into writing in the blogs. This way, the students were given the chance to

create their writing while learning the Malay adjectives and verbs. It is hoped that future studies will focus on blog writing for other means of grammar usage. research needs.

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