



Technology, motivation, and English writing competence in EFL classroom among Indonesian undergraduate students

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Abstract

The rapid development of digital technology offers a new environment for English teaching and learning. It potentially improves the English learners' motivation and achievement in English writing skills. This paper investigated how technology usage related to the student's English learning motivation and writing skills in the Indonesian context. This study applied a quantitative method and used the test and online questionnaire as instruments. A pre-test and a post-test were used to find the significant improvement of English writing skills. Meanwhile, the a-ten online questionnaires were distributed to the students to investigate their motivation in English writing. The result shows that technology contributes to the development of the students' competence in the class of English writing as well as students' motivation in English writing learning. Significant correlations were also found between the pre-test and the post-test for undergraduate students. The implication of this study arises for English language pedagogy, especially in the Indonesian university context. The English language teaching especially focusing on writing is not only strengthened from the linguistics outcomes, but also non-linguistics outcomes such as motivation. Then, the pedagogy and technology integration must be considered to achieve English learning goals.

Keywords: motivation, English language learning, technology, English writing achievement

INTRODUCTION

It is commonly believed that foreign language academic writing skill is demanding and uneasy in English teaching and learning. Writing skills are complex and formal and the writer should use his language precisely and accurately in transmitting their idea to a written text in the target language. Celik & Aydin (2021) explained that EFL writing is constructed by grammar rules, syntactical patterns, and linguistics knowledge. In addition, Bram & Angelina (2022) stated that academic writing asks students to have critical thinking and analysis skills. Ferris (2023) stated that the second language students' written production is not free of errors.

The students need time to improve their L2 writing production because of the L2 development rates which influence some linguistic factors such as vocabulary, morphology, phonology, and syntax. Moreover, the error of second language written production can be influenced by interlanguage, the use of communication strategies, markedness, tenses, and so on.

There are some Second Language Acquisition (SLA) findings which connect to the target language (L2) writing. First, two fundamental concepts in SLA study are implicit and explicit knowledge of the L2. Suzuki & DeKeyser (2017) stated that the gap between explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge can be solved by the outcome. Krashen (1982, as cited in Esteki, 2014) explained that learning always needs conscious knowledge and effort, while acquisition is unconscious knowledge so that the explicit knowledge cannot be replaced by implicit knowledge. Furthermore, he stated that implicit knowledge is the students' conscious awareness of the L2 grammatical system, while explicit knowledge is unconscious knowledge. Thus, explicit knowledge helps the students to notice the formal features of input. Second, L2 acquisition requires attention. L2 students' attention to linguistics features is needed for language learners in L2 writing in order they can detect an error. Shintani & Ellis (2015) stated that the error will be noticed by the students based on their request and careful correction of their error. In addition, Wu et al. (2021) stated that the activity of language learning is influenced by the student's cognition of language learning. As an effect, it increases students' motivation to learn a language (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2017).

Third, practice can contribute to L2 skill development. Wischgoll (2017) sees writing as an academic skill that needs strategies to produce the texts. The skill involves the development and thought presentation in a systematic way and L2 writers need to consider the audience, purpose, organization, style, flow, and accuracy. Myles & Robinson (2012, as cited in Deb, 2018) argue that L2 writing requires a conscious effort and constant practice in composing, developing, and analyzing the idea. The skills in English writing are not naturally acquired, yet they are studied or culturally transferred as a set of practice in the formal instructional setting. Hence, practice contributes more to L2 skill development since the writer learns through experience or process.

Writing as a process is defined as the recursiveness of writing or the writing activities which are divided into some stages. White and Arndt (1991, p.5, as cited in Vijayakumar, 2017; Zhou, 2015) illustrated the recursiveness of the writing model below.

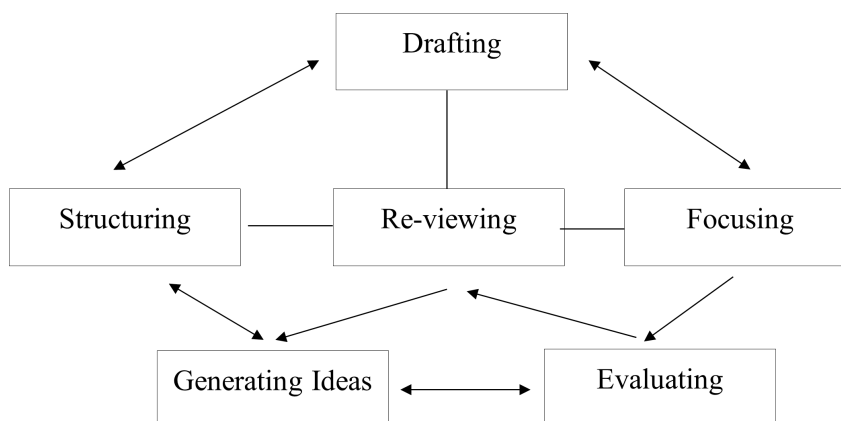


Figure 1. White and Arndt's Writing Model

Figure 1 above shows that White and Arndt's writing model has some processes which start from generating ideas, focusing, and structuring (pre-writing) to organize the drafting ideas which leads to a conclusion with a sense of completion. Then, the writers evaluate the text before doing a review to present the final product. When the writers have an error in either the grammatical rules or mistyping, their writing will be less accurate which can cause misunderstanding to the readers. Setyowati & Sukmawan (2016) stated that the complexity of second language writing leads students to have negative attitudes toward writing.

The term "motivation" comes from the word "*movere*" in the Latin language. *Movere* means "to move" or "be moved to do something better". In other words, motivation can push someone to one action in a particular direction as well as create engagement in a certain activity. In the English language learning context, motivation refers to the interest of the students in learning the language to achieve the goal of English language teaching learning. Harmer (1991, as cited in Sase, 2015; Selimovic, 2022) stated that there are two goals of language learning namely short-term goal and long-term goal. A short-term goal is the hope of language learners to pass their language class with high scores while a long-term goal is the students' desire to get a better job with a high salary as well as to communicate with target language users effectively and proficiently. It is thus very important to increase language learners' motivation to achieve English writing learning goals. In addition, Deci and Ryans (1985, as cited in Prameswara & Hapsari, 2023) categorized two different motivations namely intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is the students' interest in the classroom, while extrinsic motivation is learning a language because of reward or punishment. Moreover, Gardner (2010, as cited in Chapman & Shinya, 2020) classified learning motivation into two categories, instrumental and integrative motivation. Instrumental motivation is a practical value for good careers, power, prestige, or degree. Integrative motivation, in contrast, is a personal interest in the L2 community and culture.

In terms of online learning, there is research on the effect of online EFL learning on language learners' motivation. It is believed that online activities on foreign language learning increase students' engagement and self-confidence. Ilic (2015) stated that video conferences motivated L2 learners to practice their speaking because they did not feel nervous. Gedera et al. (2015) investigated the factors influencing learners' motivation and engagement in the online course for seven postgraduate diploma students in the New Zealand context. They found that the tools of online learning and community were the factors in increasing students' motivation and engagement. Lai (2015) also found that Chinese middle school students were happy learning English more and had better performance through online learning. In the Indonesian context, English is taught as a foreign language in Indonesian schools and universities in a traditional way. Meanwhile, the majority of young people use technology in their daily lives and communication. The gap between the young generation and traditional English teaching methods might cause a big challenge for English teachers to increase students' engagement and competence. Lestariyana & Widodo (2018) stated that technology develops students' writing ability outside the classroom. From those studies, it can be seen that they did not investigate the relation between technology use and English writing performance in the classroom. Therefore, this study investigated the influence of technology toward motivation and undergraduate students' English writing performance in the Indonesian classroom context.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research applied the quantitative method and descriptive analysis. Sugiyono (2014, p.8) stated that “quantitative methodology is applied to see the impact of a particular treatment by gaining the data in the form of numbers”. To obtain quantitative data, this study used two writing tests (pre- and post-test) and an online questionnaire. The participants of this study were 30 undergraduate students comprising of 15 females and 15 males around 19-20 years old. They enrolled in Academic Writing subject and learned English writing once a week (90 minutes) for one semester. The participants had different sociocultural backgrounds and some of them were from low-middle class families. They were bilingual students who had competence in their local language and national language. Their English competence was at the elementary level, but they had been exposed to English since they were in elementary school. The participants were informed that they were joined in this study to find their development of English writing skills and asked to answer some questions relating to personal background namely name, class, age, class, gender, language background, and parents’ job through Google form.

This study conducted pre-test and post-test to obtain the English writing achievement of Indonesian undergraduate students. The pre-test was conducted in the first meeting, while the post-test was conducted in the final meeting. The participants were asked to write their opinions related to the topics and given 90 minutes to do the tasks in their classroom for both tests. They must write their opinion in full English and take a picture of their work. Then, they submitted it by uploading their writing production to the academic portal and the teacher gave the score through the academic portal for both tests. To assess students’ writing, Sugiyarni & Rini (2023) explained that there are five components that can be scored. They include content (30 points), organization (20 points), vocabulary (20 points), language use (25 points), and mechanics (5 points). Then, the total points of those components are broken down into four mastery levels namely excellent to very good, good to average, fair to poor, and very poor, which can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Writing Assessment Criteria

Category	Score	Criteria
CONTENT	30-27	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: knowledgeable; substantive; through development of thesis; relevant to assigned topic
	26-22	GOOD TO AVERAGE: some knowledge of subject; adequate range; limited development of thesis; mostly relevant to
	21-17	FAIR TO POOR: limited knowledge of subject; little substance; inadequate development of topic
	16-13	VERY POOR: does not show knowledge of subject; no organization; not enough to evaluate
ORGANIZATION	20-18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: fluent experience; ideas clearly stated/ supported; succinct; well-organized; logical sequencing; cohesive
	17-14	GOOD TO AVERAGE: somewhat choppy; loosely organized but main ideas stand out; limited support; logical but incomplete sequencing

LANGUAGE USE	13-10	FAIR TO POOR: non fluent; ideas confused or disconnected; lacks logical sequencing and development
	9-7	VERY POOR: does not communicate, no organization or not enough to evaluate
	25-22	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: effective complex constructions; few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/ function, articles, pronouns, prepositions
	21-18	GOOD TO AVERAGE: effective but simple constructions; minor problems in complex constructions; several errors for agreement, tense, number, word order/ function; articles, pronouns; prepositions but meaning seldom obscured
	17-11	FAIR TO POOR: major problems in simple/ complex constructions; frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/ function; articles; pronouns, prepositions and /or fragments, deletions; meaning confused or obscured
	10-5	VERY POOR: virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules; dominated by errors; does not communicate; or not enough to evaluate
VOCABULARY	20-18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: sophisticated range; effective word/ idiom choice and usage, word form mastery; appropriate register
	17-14	GOOD TO AVERAGE: adequate range; occasional errors of word/ idiom form, choice, and usage but meaning not obscured
	13-10	FAIR TO POOR: limited range; frequent errors; of word/ idiom form, choice, and usage; meaning confused or obscured
	9-7	VERY POOR: essentially translation; little knowledge of English vocabulary, idiom, word form, or not enough to evaluate
MECHANICS	5	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: demonstrates mastery of convention; few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing
	4	GOOD TO AVERAGE: occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, but meaning not obscured
	3	FAIR TO POOR: frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing; poor handwriting; meaning confused or obscured
	2	VERY POOR: no mastery of conventions; dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing; handwriting illegible; or not enough to evaluate

Table 1 describes the scores for each category of writing clarified into some mastery levels. Then, the scores of each category are added to find the total score before it is classified into 5 levels as follows.

Table 2. Score Classification

Range/ Score	Criteria
80-100	Very good
70-79	Good
60-69	Sufficient
50-59	Less
0-49	Fail

Table 2 above indicates the score classification of students' writing. The score ranges from 0-100 which belongs to 5 criteria including Fail, Less, Sufficient, Good, and Very Good respectively.

After giving pre-test to the participants of this research, the teacher was asked to use technology or social media during English writing teaching learning process such as giving and submitting assignments, presentations, and so on. For example, the students must read the material from the internet, use WhatsApp chat for discussion, and so on. The treatment was conducted every meeting until the last meeting of the Academic Writing subject. The treatment involved giving online tasks, using YouTube or multimedia to explain the materials and students' work must be typed and submitted through the student academic portal. The total meetings of this subject during one semester were 16 meetings including mid-test and final examinations.

Moreover, this study distributed the data based on the score range category for the pre-test and post-test which were later counted using statistics. After collecting the data, this study implemented a paired sample t-test to analyze the obtained data. A paired sample t-test is implemented to determine the significant improvement of English writing ability in both tests: the pre-test and the post-test. The p-output must be lower than significance $\alpha=0.05$ to find the significant result in which the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted, while the null hypothesis (H_o) objected. Then, this study made two online questionnaire parts: the first part for personal background (name, class, age, gender, parents' job, religion) and the second part for measuring learning motivation. The questionnaire was developed based on the context to give the real effect of educational technology towards students' motivation to learn a language. The online questionnaire can be seen in the table 3 as follows.

Table 3. Questionnaire toward Students' Learning Motivation

No.	Statement
1.	Using technology for our English class increases my desire to learn English writing.
2.	Technology must be used for every meeting.
3.	The use of technology makes fun classroom environment.
4.	Online writing assignments improve my writing skills.
5.	Online forum discussions increase my desire in learning English writing.
6.	I like English writing learning online although my internet network is poor.
7.	Educational video is fun and easy to understand.
8.	I like reading online materials which are downloaded from the Internet.
9.	Technology helps me to rich my knowledge for exploring and developing my ideas on the English writing topic.

-
10. Authentic materials from the internet develop my English writing.
-

Table 3 presents 10 questions related to students' learning motivation. The questionnaire is scored by implementing a 5-Likert scale which are displayed in the table below.

Table 4. The Questionnaire Score

Answer	Score
Absolutely Agree	5
Agree	4
Neutral	3
Disagree	2
Absolutely Disagree	1

Table 4 presents the scoring categories for the questionnaire responses. The score ranges from 1-5 corresponding to Absolutely Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Absolutely Agree respectively.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

This study begins this section by answering the first research question. Next, the second research question will be answered.

1. Does the use of technology improve English writing skills among Indonesian undergraduate students in EFL classroom?

The data of this study were obtained from the pre-test and post-test of the students' English writing test. The distribution of data is as follows.

Table 5. The Distribution of Students' English Writing Scores

The Interval of Score	Category	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
		f	%	F	%
80-100	Very good	11	36,66	24	80
70-79	Good	8	26,67	6	20
60-69	Sufficient	5	16,67	-	-
50-59	Less	6	20	-	-
0-49	Fail	-	-	-	-
TOTAL		30	100	30	100

Table 5 above indicates that there was a significant difference in the score category between the pre-test and post-test. The total number of undergraduate students who achieved the highest score in the first test was bigger than in the second test, 11 students (36.66%) and 24 students (80%) respectively. Meanwhile, the lowest score of writing achievement in the pre-test was around 50-59 with the Less category. In addition, 8 persons received Good scores, and 5 persons achieved Sufficient results in the pre-test session. Interestingly, the lowest level of English learners' writing score was in the Good category, with a score interval between 70-79, for 20% in the post-test. Sugiyarni & Rini (2023) stated that giving an assessment will determine the score of students. Thus, it can be easily seen in the comparison of students' scores before and after treatment.

Table 6. The Result of Paired Sample Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-Test	69.20	30	11.56	2.11
Post-Test	82.90	30	6.50	1.19

Table 6 above indicates that the total number of participants (N) was 30 English undergraduate students in the pre-test and post-test. Before having treatment, the mean of English learners' writing achievement was 69.20 with a standard deviation of 11.56. Surprisingly, the mean score increased to 82.90 in the post-test. Then, those data were compared by implementing a paired sample t-test to examine the significant difference as seen below.

Table 7. Paired Sample Test

Table 7: Paired Sample Test								
	Paired Difference					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pre- and Post-Test	-13.70	11.35	2.108	-18.01	-9.39	6.4988	29	.0001

Table 7 shows that there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test results in the English writing work of undergraduate students. The mean of the pre-test and post-test equals -13.70 with a 95% confidence interval of this difference from -18.01 to -9.39. In addition, the t value was at 6.4988 with the probability or significance level at 0.0001 (p -value < 0.05) so H_0 was rejected or the mean scores of both tests were not identical. It can be argued that there is a significant difference between the English students' writing scores before and after treatment. In this regard, this finding is in line with Ratnaningsih et al.'s study (2019) which found that technology gives opportunities for learners to attain academic achievement in language learning. Kosasi & Sulastri (2021) believed that students' academic achievement can be improved through technology. In terms of writing errors, students can recognize their errors in English academic writing due to technology support (Nurmayanti & Suryadi, 2023). Thus, educational technology contributed to the improvement of English writing skills among Indonesian undergraduate students.

2. Does the use of technology increase undergraduate students' English writing motivation in EFL classroom?

The use of technology shows a positive result toward the development of writing competence in the EFL classroom. It can be seen as follows.

Table 9. The Result of the Motivation Questionnaire

Interval Score	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Category
30-60	1	3,33	Absolutely Disagree
61-80	5	16,67	Disagree
81-100	1	3,33	Neutral
101-120	15	50	Agree
121-150	8	26,67	Absolutely Agree
TOTAL	30	100	

Table 9 shows that the category of Agree was the highest number in the English writing motivation which was around 50%, while the lowest number of categories were Absolutely Disagree and Neutral at the same percentage, 3.33%. Meanwhile, the category of Disagree was only 16.67%, followed by Absolutely Agree at 26.67%. Based on the data, English learners had high motivation in English writing by using technology although the poor internet connection is an obstacle for students to improve their writing skills. This finding is in line with Gayed et al. (2022) who found a positive effect of technology on students' engagement in writing class. Faisal & and Carabella (2023) stated that educational technology increases English students' writing skills for academic purposes. In addition, King & and South (2017) stated that technology enables students to have more motivation to learn. It indicates that technology contributes to students' academic achievement and gives better learning for the students. Boholano (2017) also believed that technology contributes to students' motivation as well as increases the level of learning attainment. Therefore, it is important to integrate technology and writing skills (Zulfa, 2023).

CONCLUSION

This research empirically studied the influence of technology on English learners' motivation and achievement in writing. The result shows that the implementation of technology improves English writing skills among undergraduate students. Despite the participants being demotivated, the majority of students achieved high scores after having the treatment by using educational technology such as learning management systems, social media, and so on. Besides, this present study also found that the motivation of English learners especially in writing skills was high because new classroom environment. As an implication, the teacher should have creativity in designing the material and ability in the implementation of educational technology. The teacher also totally used technology for students' task submission, giving feedback, lecturing, and so on. The limitation of this research is using argumentative essay to find English writing skill for pre- and post-test. For future research, it is better to use another type of essay including descriptive and narrative essay. In addition, the teacher's English writing competency must be taken into account to give more reliable data. In addition, the digital literacy of students should be considered to find the significance of students' motivation level in online English classroom contexts.

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