The Effectiveness Of Blended Learning Strategy On Students' Writing Competency Of The Tenth Grade Students

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Abstract

This research aimed at investigating whether or not there was a significant difference on writing competency of the tenth grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Singaraja. This research was experimental research with Pre-test and Post-test Only Control Group Design and used cluster random sampling technique to determine the samples. There were two classes chosen as samples in this study. The two groups were given treatments to obtain the required data. The experimental group was taught by using Blended Learning Strategy and the control group was taught by using conventional technique. The obtained data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially. The mean score of experimental group (81.10) was higher than the mean score of control group (78.83). Moreover, the result of inferential analysis showed that there was a significant difference on students' writing competency between the students who were taught by using Blended Learning Strategy and those who were taught by conventional technique (Sig.(2-tailed) = 0.022, p < 0.05). The alternative hypothesis is accepted in which the students who are taught by using Blended Learning Strategy achieves better than those who are taught by using conventional technique.

Keywords: blended learning strategy, conventional writing technique, writing competency

1. Introduction

English is an international language for communication that is spoken by a lot of people in many countries all over the world. It is also the language of technologies, science, computer and literature (Keshta & Harb, 2013). The goal of English learning especially in Indonesia is none other than the expectation to build human resources that can compete in this global era. Baron (2001) also confirms that there have always been some countries which have significant change in which its people speak English as a second language. It indicates that English is almost used as the language means of communication. People use English for specific purpose only. To be defined as a good English speaker, there are four major skills that should be mastered for complete communication, those are listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Writing is an interactive process which involves some elements; the writing process, task environment, and write's long-term memory (Johnstone, 2002). It needs hard effort to dig and manage the ideas which are from writer's mind and pour it into written from effectively so it will be readable. It plays a great role in constructing ideas and conveying a written message accurately and effectively. It needs higher-thinking order in conveying ideas and concept to make a good writing (Archibald, 2001). Similarly, Sun (2003) simply states that writing process does not only need a good organization of thinking order which refers to how to put an idea into paragraph, and how to make content structure, but also focuses on the mechanics, such as capitilazition, contractions, gerunds, participles, numbers, numerals, pronouns, technical abbreviations, acronyms, unit of measurement and punctuation marks. The considered aspects of mechanics emphasize the process of composing the writing which sucessfully help the writer to produce a good end product of writing (Min & Li, 2007).

The way teaching and learning process of writing has been shifted due to changes of educational system. This current process in writing focuses on process of creating writing rather than the end product (Min & Lin, 2007). It is explained that if students focus more on process, it will bring sucessful process of creating a good paragraph writing. Caroll (1990) also states that students often hate writing because they do not have any ideas of what to do .They

will constantly feel bored of feeling failures rather than successes, are focused on. It is simply said that students do not enjoy the process. He assumes that the students should know; how to construct a sentence, subject, verbs, pronoun should not be ambiguous, consistency of person and tense in writing and correct spelling, punctuation, capitilization, and proper diction.

Additionally, the teaching method which teacher uses in the teaching and learning process coventionally, such as lecturing, book oriented, and traditional environment are factors which make the students feel failed and bored in learning writing in English Foreign Langauge (Al-Khsawneh, 2010). Celce-Murcia (2001) and Olsthain (2001) also convey that writing is still dificult for EFL students to be learned. Writing is not only putting down word after word to form a sentence or writing one sentence to form a paragraph. It requires primary understanding in generating and organizing ideas into accurate, and informative paragraph in EFL writing English language (Richards & Renandya, 2004). As mentioned by Adas and Bakir (2013, p.255), there are several problems students face in writing: (1) English language learners do not use invented spelling and their written texts are restricted to words which they know, (2) The present tense is only tense used in their writing, (3) The students' writing is difficult to understand because of the ill-structured sentences in composition, (4) Students are unwilling to share their work with other students and they do not get the suitable feedback (5) When the learners read their writing aloud, they could not distinguish whether what they read or write is right or wrong.

Regarding to the problems faced by students in English language EFL writing. Zhang and Zhu (2017) states that teacher is an important role also in the process of learning especially in writing. The teacher uses process approach to help students in facing the problems. Teacher should be facilitators, feedback providers, guides and organizes of the teaching and learning process (Harb, 2013). Moreover, teacher should be aware of modern strategies used in teaching and learning process to enhance interaction with the students, to give new environment of learning, and to motivate and courage students in the learning process, especially EFL writing.

Nowadays, the teaching of the English language in EFL writing needs modern strategy, because of changes of education system in the 21st century education. Students still find difficulties in constructing the ideas through writing. Monaghan (2007) notes regarding to this problem, teaching writing required strategies, defined as a method of delivering knowledge which is integrated with ICT; multimedia tools; video, picture and Schoology. Hermawan (2006) also states in order to develop the 21st century education system, there are four education pilars which is related to the need of today's education system; learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live.

It is important for teachers to employ effective methods of teaching that enhance students' ability to communicate ideas and feelings through writing. Albertson and Billgsly (as cited in Monaghan, 2007) found that improved teaching techniques are needed, as shown by the lack of students' improvement in writing. He also states that students are weak in writing, because teachers concentrate on teaching grammar, punctuation rather than involving students in the writing process. An English teacher is required to be more creative in creating an innovative strategy dealing with students' writing difficulties through the ideas and concept students have. It is because writing needs higher-thinking level demanding ideas, vocabulary, grammar and other relevant aspects appropriately. It is also because writing plays an important role not only in the successful of learning process but in the daily life. Also, it seems very difficult to be able to produce a good writing. Sayukti (2015) states that despite a teachers' best efforts, some students should still face the difficulties in writing. It is also linked to Tehudi and Tehudi's ideas. Tehudi and Tehudi (1999, p.77) describes that "no matter how carefully the teacher plans a valid teaching strategy, there are always kids who struggle with text, who cannot process print successfully".

Nowadays, in the 21st century, people's life cannot be separated with the use of technology in many aspects in terms of ICT. For instance, gadget internet and telephone are the mostly-needed things in this global era (Permana, 2017). It has been people's life due to the changes of the 21st century that affects all aspects of people's life, especially education field in teaching writing. Tsou, Wang, and Li (2002) conclude that technology has positive

influences on students' motivation. It means that the technology has been a new platform to gain teacher and mostly students' interest in teaching and learning process. The terms "technology" refers to a development in methods and tools that is used to solve the problem or achieve goal and even for learning as well as creating new environment of teaching and learning. It absolutely affects some aspects, especially education field (Bouhnik & Carmi, 2012).

Regarding to the discussion above, ICT has already been developed a lot to support the teaching and learning process. However, it will not completely replace the traditional methods of teaching and learning process. In Indonesia, they tend to use lecturing method to deliver material to their students. If teachers do not improve it, students will feel bored of hearing teachers to explain materials without an innovative strategy and students will not be able to learn independently. It also does not bring good outcomes, in addition students will have no desire to learn in their learning process.

There have been debates of using ICT to support the teaching and learning process. It refers to the use of technology; computers-mediated and internet in language teaching especially writing such as techniques offered (Isisag, 2011). The use of the internet has also affected the educational process, teaching and learning process, the ways teachers teach students, and the field of English as a foreign language (Chuo, 2007). Online learning provides major benefit to students and teachers. The benefit includes time and convenience. Moreover, it can be integrated with multimedia tools; picture, videos which can motivate students to learn as well as facilitate the learning. Educational institutions must be aware of this changes in education field (Bates, 2000). Meanwhile, students who learn electronically are less efficient or skilled in conversation and the ability to express their ideas (Delacey & Leonard, 2002). It is supported by Harb (2013) that teacher should still be facilitators, feedback providers, guides and organizer of the teaching and learning process in the classroom. So, there will be interaction with teacher and students directly in order to maintain the relationship. This phenomenon also makes students will not only work individually, but also can work in a group in creating collaborative learning process (Frazee, 2003).

One of the examples of online learning is a virtual classroom (E-learning). Husssein and Ali (2008) also point out that e-learning makes us easily to update, get and modify information, maximizes the communication between teachers and students in the teaching-learning process, exchanges and shares ideas, experiences, and opinions in order to avoid quite crowded class situation among those students who are in the classroom. The teacher and students are in the physical environment means that both teachers and students can conduct the teaching and learning process directly face-to-face, but it is carried out via e-mail, forum through the internet Soylu (2008). However, teachers should not just let the class go on without guiding and controlling the virtual teaching and learning process. The role of teacher is still as the facilitator in the classroom, when there are students asking for question or finding difficulties in learning the teacher can help them. Graham and Robinson (2008) argue that this leads to the appearance of combining the advantages of both e-learning and face-to-face method.

Blended-learning is generally applied to the practice of new approach using both classroom learning and in person face-to-face with virtual teaching and learning process experiences. It gives an overview of how two strategies are being blended that is called as blended learning. Laster, Otte, and Picciano (2005) define blended-learning as a course that integrates online learning with traditional face-to-face class activity. It is both traditional and modern classroom activity which implements centered-learner approach by using a new innovative way of learning. Graham (2004) also points out that the essence of blended learning is the combination of face-to-face instruction and computer-mediated instruction. It is not only about using technology, but also giving better way of supporting students in achieving a good outcomes and providing both teacher and students with the better teaching and learning experiences. Furthermore, Al Fiky (2011) describes that blended learning is one of modern approaches based on the use of education technology in designing and giving new teaching and learning experience. Bath and Bourke (2010) claim that blended-leaning is an online learning which is about effectively integrating ICT into course design to enhance the teaching

and learning experiences for teachers and students in different way to engage them with their usual environment of teaching and learning process. It can involve the mix of teaching approaches integrated by multimedia tools; picture, video, animation etc. It has a good purpose to gain students' interest and achieve better students' experience and outcomes. Therefore, blended learning is simply defined as a combination of two models of teaching and learning to create better and different environment of teaching and learning with the aim of achieving good outcomes.

There are also some studies focusing on the use of blended learning strategy. Permana (2017) studied blended learning strategy towards students' writing competency in the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja. This study focused on the use of Schoology platform for the e-learning in teaching recount texts. The result shows that there is a significant effect of using blended learning strategy toward the students' writing competency. Another study was also conducted by Muthoharoh (2017) which focused on the effect of blended learning technology toward learning outcomes of English short functional text at SMP Negeri 98 Jakarta Selatan using Edmodo platform of e-learning.The result shows that there is a significant influence of using blended learning technology towards learning outcomes of English short functional text in the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 98 Jakarta Selatan.

Regarding those studies, blended learning is a powerful strategy to help students improve their language skills, especially writing. Being inspired by the results of the studies, the current researchers is interested in conducting a further research on the use of blended learning which is similar to Permana (2017) that is using Schoology. This platform is used because the school where the study took place has already applied Schoology. The difference lies on the design of Schoology which used videos. The other difference of this research to the previous ones is that Permana's research (2017) focused on recount texts and Muthoharoh's research (2017) focused on short functional text, while this research concerned with the study of descriptive text. Thus, the current study aimed at investigating the effect of blended learning toward the tenth grade students' writing competency of SMA Negeri 1 Singaraja.

2. Method

The research design of this study was an experimental research using *"Pre-test and Posttest Control Group.* There were two groups in this study, experimental and control group. Experimental group was taught by using blended learning strategy and control group was taught conventionally.

The population of this study was the tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Singaraja in the academic year 2017/2018. Every class consisted of 30 students which was in the same grade. A lottery was conducted to determine the samples of study by using cluster random sampling. Samples of the study were selected from the population of the tenth-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Singaraja. The samples of this research were class X MIPA 7 with the total number of 30 students and class X MIPA 3 with the total number of 30 other students in SMA Negeri 1 Singaraja. Class X MIPA 7 was the experimental group and class X MIPA 3 was the control group. The following table shows comparison of treatments in experimental and control groups.

Table 1. Comparison of treatment in experimental and control groups

Experimental Group	Control group
Observing 1. Teacher guides students to build their prior knowledge. 2. Teacher asks students to join online discussion on Schoology. 3. Teacher asks students to open the video link of Borobuddur Temple.	***Observing*** 1. Teacher guides students to build their prior knowledge. 2. Teacher asks students to open textbook of English. 3. The students are asked to read example of descriptive text in the textbook.
Questioning 1. Teacher leads student to find sentences which indicate descriptive text. 2. Students ask information that they do not understand yet.	***Questioning*** 1. Teacher leads students to ask several question from the text. 2. Other students can answer their friends questions. 3. Students are asked to answer questions related to text.
Exploring 1. Students are asked to state the specific information on video they have watched. 2. Teacher asks students to post their point or specific information on the column discussion on online discussion of the video. 3. Students give comment or suggestion to their friends' post.	***Exploring*** 1. Students are asked to open Schoology and join the class. 2. Teacher gives case on Schoology. 3. Teacher gives instructions about what to do next. 4. Students are asked to give information about tourism object on Schoology.
Associating 1. Teacher asks students to make a short paragraph of descriptive text based on several specific information of other students post on online discussion. 2. Teacher asks several questions if there are no questions from students. 3.The students discuss their paragraph later on online discussion at home.	***Associating*** 1. Students share their ideas and give specific points of tourism object on Schoology. 2. Other students give suggestion or comment. 3. Students make a short paragraph of descritpive text by combining their points and information.
Communicating 1. Teacher asks students to submit it on Schoology. 2. Students discuss their paragraph again on Schoology later. 3. Teacher and students conclude the lesson.	***Communicating*** 1. Teacher discusses it with students. 2. Students post it on Schoology. 3. Teacher and students have online discussion outside the classroom. 4. Teacher and students conclude the lesson.

The treament was conducted eight times. It consisted of eight meetings, six meetings were for giving treatment and the other two meetings were for conducting pre-test and post-test which took the pre-test at the beginning and post-test at the end of the class after giving tretament with the teaching scenario being prepared by the resarcher. The researcher only met them once in a week.

The data were collected by giving pre-test and post-test which were analyzed descriptively and inferentially. The writing competency test was given for both groups, experimental and control groups before receiving treatment. Pre-test was conducted in order to know whether both groups performed the same or there is no significant difference from the decriptive and inferential result analysis of the data. Post-test was conducted after both groups were given treatment in order to know the significant difference of the experimental group

which was taught by using blended learning strategy and control group which was taught conventionally.

The data were descriptively analyzed to measure mean, median, range, variance and standard deviation. They were measured by using SPSS 24.0. It was used to know and describe the basic features of the data before being analyzed inferentially. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using inferential statistics in the form of t-test. The normality and homogeneity tests of both groups were carried out before conducting t-test analysis. After that, calculation of the effect size was also administered to know to the level of effect of the treatment.

3. Results and Discussion

Below are the findings of descriptive analysis and inferential analysis of the data.

Table 2. Descriptive analysis of the result of pre-test

Statistic	Control Group	Experimental Group
Mean	68.87	66.93
Median	68.50	68.00
Mode	72	68
Range	30	30
Variance	63.319	63.926
Standard Deviation	7.995	7.995

Table 2 indicates that there were no statistical differences between the groups, experimental and control group based on the pre-test which was conducted at the beginning of the meeting. The mean score of control group was 68.87, while the mean score of experimental was 66.93, which were proved insignificantly different from t-test analysis.

In normality test of variance Kolmogorov-Smirnov showed that the significant value of experimental group group was 0. 071, while control group was 0.094. Considering the results were higher than Sig. 0.05, than the data were regarded as having normal distribution. Additionally, the homogeneity of pre – test showed that significant value was 0.951 based on the mean. It was more than the level of Sig. 0.05 (0.951>p 0.05). It means that the data were homogenous. Thus, the data were eligible to be measured inferentially.

Table 3. Result of t-test analysis of data of pre-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Scores	Equal variances assumed	.004	.951	-.937	58	.353	-1.933	2.064	-6.065	2.199
	Equal variances not assumed			-.937	58.000	.353	-1.933	2.064	-6.065	2.199

Independent Samples Test

The result of t-test analysis proved the significat value of Sig.(2-tailed) was 0.353. It exceeded Sig. 0.05, which was higher than 0.05. It can be inferred that there was no significant difference between both groups before accepting treatment. The following tables shows the result of t-test analysis of the pre-test.

Below are the result of descriptive analysis and inferential analysis of the data of post-test.

Table 4: Descriptive analysis result of post- test

Statistic	Control Group	Experimental group
Mean	78.83	81.10
Median	79.00	80.00
Mode	77	78
Range	16	13
Variance	12.420	15.541
Standard Deviation	3.524	3.942

The result of data analysis of post-test proves that there was statistical difference of students' writing competency after being given treatment which could be seen from Table 4. It was showed by the score of mean in the control group was 78.83, while it was 81.10 in the experimental group.

The normality of the data of post – test showed that the analysis of the result indicated the significant value of 0.199 in the experimental group and 0.157 in the control group. Since the significance values exceeded 0.05, the data were distributed normally. For homogeneity test, it showed the significant value of 0.242, which was higher than 0.05. It indicated the data were homogenous. Hence, t-test analysis could be perfomed.

Table 5. Result of t-test analysis of data of post-test

		Independent Samples Test							
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
scores	Equal variances assumed	1.397	.242	2.348	58	.022	2.267	.965	.334	4.199
	Equal variances not assumed			2.348	57.286	.022	2.267	.965	.334	4.200

Based on the result of t-test, the significant value (2-tailed) was 0.22. Since the value of Sig (2-tailed) was less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), then the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted. It means that there was a significant difference on writing competency betweem students who were taught by using blended learning strategy and students who were taught conventionally.

The result of effect size calculation in terms of its Eta Squared as proposed by Cohen was 0.3. It was categorized in the level of small. It indicated that the mean score between two groups had small difference.

4. Discussion

The finding from post-test shows that the experimental group could gain the mean score from 66.93 in the pre-test to become 81.10 in the post-test. The other finding taken from the result of post-test also proves that the experimental group could achieve higher score rather than the control group. It was showed by the mean score achieved by the experimental group was 81.10, while mean score of control group was 78.83. Thus, It can be confirmed that the experimental group could achieve better writing competency than the control group (81.10>78.83). Hence, this finding proved that the use of blended learning strategy is effective to use and give different experience of learning to students.

The strategy brought new experience of learning for students both in experiemntal and control groups since they used the same platform, that is Schoology in the blended learning.

The activity in this kind of learning was not only conducted in the classroom, but it was also conducted outside the classroom. This is the power of using blended learning. In the classroom of experimental group, the students worked collaboratively in discussing the videos which were used in the Schoology, while in the control group they worked collboratively in discussing the cases assissted with the pictures in the Schoology. This way of teaching helped the students to improve their writing competency, which were proved from their mean scores. This finding is in accordance to Shaykina (2015) that collaborative learning in the form of online cooperative work between the students and instructors or teachers organized in LMS on Schoology for discussions on topics of interest could encourage the students to get involved in the learning process. Online collaborative learning gives different types of activities, such as searching the information on the internet, then classifying, and analyzing it (Bonk & Graham 2004). It also supports the argumentation stated by Martyn (2003) that a successful blended learning environment consists of an initial face-to-face meeting weekly on online assessments, chat, discussion, e-mail and a final face-to-face with final examination. Therefore, the students got more chance to participate, especially the students who were not talkative in the classroom.

The strategy in blended learning asked students to participate and to be active in the discussion. So, the students did not only listen to explanation during the class and most of activities came from the teacher, but blended learning strategy could make the students maximixe their learning in a student-centered approach. This finding supports the statement by Banados (2006) that teacher is a guide and collaborator who supports students and provides feedback. The teacher challenges learners' thinking and design language learning task. Students are autonomous learners who participate actively and are responsible for their learning process. It gives the advantages for instance the learners who have difficulty in establishing communication in the classroom environment find it easier to communicate in the online environment. Hence, it is obvious that the strengths of online environment and strengths of face-to-face education are integrated in blended learning (Finn & Bucceri, 2004).

The obvious differences in the treatment were in the form of the use of videos and submission of the tasks on the Schoology given to the experimental group, while the use of cases assisted with pictures and text books given to the control group. Those differences in the teaching learning process between the two groups bring about diffferences in the result of their mean scores. It can be inferred that the different design of Schoology with different activities makes the students' writing competency is slightly difference as it is shown from the resut of effect size.

Considering the findings of empirical researchers, it can be stated that the result of this current study gives contribution in supporting previous researches. This current study proves that blended learning strategy gives new experience of teaching and learning process especially in the use of new design of using videos in the Schoology. It increases students' obligation in learning. It evolves the ability to find solutions and expand information processing skills that are important to successful independent learners (Banados, 2006). It also brings creation in the process of teaching and learning of the environment that is up-to-date and flexible and works as a whole in the 21st century education system (Neumeier, 2005). These findings supported the research conducted by Koud (2007) who proved the effectiveness of internet blended discussion group on developing composition writing skills of first year of secondary school students. In addition, the finding of this study also supports Permana (2017) and Muthoharoh (2017) in the sense that the use of blended learning could similarly have significant effect on students' writing competency.

In addition, checking from the students' perception by conducting an interview with six students, it was found out that they had different perception on the use of blended learning strategy. Some of them stated that the use of blended learning was good in terms of effeciency in learning. Thus, this finding supports Hameed, Badii, and Cullen (2008) in their study which considered the efficiency of e-learning when mixed with traditional learning. Beside that, the students also found the benefit of using blended learning was that they could be brave to share their ideas in developing their writing. This finding is in line with Shaykina (2015) that

collaboration makes the students to be more involved during the process of learning by sharing opinions one another.

However, students also reported some challenges faced during the process of implementation of learning by using blended learning strategy. It is revealed that students had trouble in the internet connection. They may sometimes lose their connection in the process of discussion session on Schooology. They had to wait for a moment to reload it again. It is line with the statement by Chilingaryan and Zvereva (2017), and Evseeva and Solozhenko (2015) which found that some students face problem in the internet access. Akkoyunlu and Soylu (2008) examine students' view on blended learning environment and discover that students enjoyed participating more through face-to-face classes supplemented with online classses. Other students assumed that online learning offered them different experiences, indeed. But they thought it sometimes was more enjoyable to have traditional class or discussion directly in the classroom when they could meet face-to-face, read textbook and had interaction among students and the teacher. Chen and Lu (2013) state that different background of the students have their own learning styles, some students are accusstomed to read a textbook, they like outlined and annoted in the textbooks.

Considering the result of the study and previous explanation, the researcher could conclude that blended learning strategy on students' writing competency was effective. It was proven by the result as explained previously both descriptive and inferential statistics analysis which the alternative hypothesis is accepted that there is a significant effect of blended learning strategy. It can also be seen by the mean score of experimental which is higher that the control group. Obviously, the study shows significant effect of blended learning on students' writing competency at the tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Singaraja.

5. Conclusion And Suggestions

Based on the result of this research it can be concluded that that there is a significant effect of using blended learning stategy on students' writing competency at the tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Singaraja. Experimental group achieved better achievement rather than the control group by the result of mean score of post-test. The experimental group has achieved 81.10 and the control group has achieved 78.83 (81.10>78.83). More importantly, it has been proven by the result of inferential statistical analysis, in which it was found that the value of Sig.(2-tailed) was higher than standard alpha level score of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). Thus, the alernative hypothesis was accepted. It obviously shows that the use of blended learning strategy is effective to be used to give different experience of learning process to students.

Reflecting on the implementation and the result of the study, there are some suggestions proposed by the researcher. Blended learning strategy is recommended for teacher especially for teaching writing for young learners as an alternative strategy. It is expected to be used as another choice of giving students' experience in learning descriptive text and other lessons in English. It is also expected to help students to make progress and share information when they are not in the classroom.

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