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EXPRESSIVENESS IN BLOGS VS. PEN-PAPER WRITINGS

A thesis submitted in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family who has supported me throughout this entire process. Special gratitude to my mother who has been my source of inspiration, and whose words of encouragement, unconditional love and support have made me stronger and guided me throughout this journey. I am also thankful to my sister for giving me strength and confidence and for always being there for me.

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the expressiveness in two types of writing modes: the pen-paper and the blog entries. It also studied the students' attitude towards implementing these tools. This paper was conducted through a mixed method approach. Eleven participants of the age range 15-16, were from one of the groups in the Experimental English Courses at the American University of Armenia. Data collection was from the students' reflective writings and two interviews. The reflective writings were analyzed quantitatively through Excel program to find the percentages and create the visuals. The qualitative data from both semi-structured interviews was analyzed descriptively. The study concludes that blog helped students express themselves more freely than in writing in terms of the three criteria of expression chosen for this study.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

There are many methods and tools for teaching writing. In today's world of technology there is a growing aspiration among students and educators in using technological resources for learning and teaching purposes. One of these technological tools that is widely used in institutions and classrooms is blogging. A blog is a website where information is typically updated in a chronological order by an individual. There is a wide range of blogs for different purposes. Although the history of this new genre of writing has started since 1990, only recently it became popular in the field of education, and has a substantial impact on a traditional way of teaching. Today, blogs are turned into new educational tools serving as a platform for new ways of teaching by presenting examples of good collaborative work (Winer, 2002).

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a brief description of results of the pedagogical research project: Comparison of EFL learners' writing experiences, using blogs vs. traditional tools: pen and paper in non-structured reflective writing assignments, in Armenia.

Firstly, this research points out the impact and effectiveness of blogging in improving students' writing performance in terms of self-expression and articulation, and the attitude towards non-structured writing in English based on the general observation of its features and its implementation in education. It further describes students' attitudes using traditional writing method with pen and paper and its influence on their non-structured writing performance. This thesis also discusses how to engage students' reflective learning in English writing through the blog.

1.1. The Purpose of the Study

Not many researches have been conducted with similar intention to find some differences between blogging and pen-paper writing tools in terms of self-expression. One of the recent qualitative studies shows that tools do not determine the quality of writing, and improvement in the students' writing performance, students' performance does not depend on the Internet, however it states that the use of technology, the Internet may motivate the EFL learners to be more engaged in learning process, since it is different from traditional ways of teaching writing (Kashani, Mahmud, Kalajahi, 2013).

My goal is to see to what extent the Armenian students are engaged in the writing process using different tools and to see the differences in the outcomes. If there is any difference in students' self-expression using blog vs. traditional method, pen-paper as writing tools.

1.2. Research Questions

The objectives of this study:

Is there any difference in students' expressiveness when it is communicated in pen-paper writing and blogs?

What are the students' attitudes and opinions towards the pen-paper writing and blogging?

1.3. The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis comprises five chapters:

Chapter 1: The Introduction

Chapter 2: The Literature Review discusses theoretical literature about Writing and the blog as a median to boost students' expressiveness.

Chapter 3: Methodology describes the way this research was conducted, i.e. setting, instruments, procedure and the data collection

Chapter 4: The Results provides the data analysis and the answers to the research questions.

Chapter 5: The Discussion and Conclusion provides the summary of the results, the pedagogical implications of the study, the limitations and delimitations, recommendations for further research and conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Current literature review intends to discuss different viewpoints about blogging as an educational tool in ESL/ EFL. Furthermore, it will illustrate different arguments about advantages and disadvantages of using it as a tool in education, as well as talk about writing and its challenges. Based on the literature review blog is assumed to be a tool that can help EFL learners to enhance their vocabulary and writing.

This is a research conducted through a mixed method approach, with a goal to compare students' attitude in writing using traditional tools: pen and paper and blogging. There is an intention to compare students' writings using two types of writing modes: blogging vs. pen-paper. Despite the current valuable study contributions in the field of writing, there haven't been much research conducted that measure the differences in students' expressiveness in their writing performance between using blog and pen-paper. It would be also interesting to observe and see the attitude and preference of using those tools in Armenia.

2 .1. Writing

2.1.1. What is writing?

Writing is another way of communication. Despite the fact that physical act of writing can promote more complex consideration and focus on their task, develop the syntactic complexity in the language which is usually a norm to measure the student's language proficiency, however, it still does not motivate students enough to stay on task and be engaged at all times. “ Writing is much more than production of symbols, just as speech is much more than the production of sounds. The symbols have to be arranged,

according to certain conventions, to form words, and words have to be arranged to form sentences” (Byrne, 1988, p. 1). But can this still be considered as writing, if we are writing just lists of words? Writing is when we produce sentences related to each other with their meaning (Byrne, 1988, p. 1). It is a productive skill that requires a lot of practice; therefore it is one of the most challenging components of the language acquisition (Armstrong 2010). It is thinking, creating and composing process. There have been significant amount of studies focusing on different developmental process in writing. For example, composing and revising strategies. Other studies were focused on “cognitive load and language proficiency” (Reid, 1993).

2.1.2. Types of Writing

Different kinds of writing tasks focus on different kinds of information. For example, analytical writing requires a complex concentration, note taking develops comprehension, it sharpens the concentration thereby intelligence. Students develop certain skills depending on the given writing task. Teachers are recommended to consider the expected results and consequences before choosing tasks for writing (Langer and Applebee 1987).

2.1.3. Expressiveness in Writing

Expressive writing is all about expressing ones own thoughts, opinions, and feelings, related to the personal experience. Many studies have shown that humans’ expressiveness is directly linked to their psychological state of mind, emotions. Expressive writing creates an opportunity to put their thinking on the paper and connect their learning to their own experiences and concerns (Bean, 2011).

Expressive writing comes in different forms: journals diaries, personal websites, blogs, etc. There have been studies highlighting the benefits of expressive writing in health area. Studies have reported that putting down feelings and emotions onto the paper lowers the stress level, helps rediscovering oneself and figuring out the confusing situations. This is one of the important, useful and commonly used tool in the psychology to help patient to come out of the trauma, tragic event they have been. Psychologists often mention its therapeutic benefits of expressive writing.

The main characteristics of expressive writings are the use of first person pronouns, feelings, emotions, personal experiences, values, etc. The characteristics that are considered to be minor for expressive writings are the use of slang, figurative language (“Expressive Purpose”n.d.).

2.1.4. Pedagogical Perspective and the Benefits of Expressive Writing

From pedagogical perspective, expressive writing improves the writing skills, boosts the students’ confidence, performance level, and fully engaged them in the learning process.

Teachers’ role is to help students discover themselves and constructively build on the existing knowledge; expressive writing is the best way to integrate new knowledge constructively and in an authentic way (Fulwiler, 1987).

There are different linguistic indicators through which the expressiveness can be measured. In many studies researching this area observed the linguistic indicators of expressive writings. The use of first person “I” is noticed in many reflective writings where the authors express their own thoughts, feelings and a personal experiences. It is

important to teach children skills on organizing their thoughts coherently on the paper. Studies also highlight the importance of bringing out the individuality in person.

According to the study results of Rude, Vane and Whitney (2002), Students who used the first person pronoun references “I” and not for “me” or “my”, found to be more depressed.

2.1.5. Challenges of Writing.

Byrne (1988) explains the difficulties of writing bringing three main reasons. First reason is the psychological problems. Unlike speaking, where we communicate with someone who is physically present and communication is happening in context with feedback of some kind, writing requires to create the context on our own, it is purely and activity with no interaction or feedback. Second reason that makes writing difficult is related to linguistic problems. As it was mentioned above writing involves no physical interaction with anybody, which in its turn may hinder the reader’s comprehension of the writing is it is not done clearly, and well structured. In speaking however, physical presence and the alive context help the normal interaction. Unlike writing speech is more spontaneous and there is a limited time to organize sentences correctly.

Third challenge is related to cognitive problems. The first thing we do without making much effort is learning how to speak, and we do it without giving much thought to it. Writing however is learned through the instruction. It is taught and needs efforts to learn structures, organize our thoughts so clearly that can be understood by the reader (Byrne, 1988).

2.2. Blogging

2.2.1. What is Blog?

A blog is a website where information is typically updated in a chronological order by an individual on a regular basis content of which can be texts, photos, videos, etc. (Cameron, & Anderson, 2006). As opposed to emailing blogging has wider audience who has an option to comment on the content written in the blog. “Blogs have emerged from early mail lists and instant messaging communities as a means of informing a dedicated reader base about items of interest to the authors, news, and personal information” (Williams, 2004).

“One can think of a blog as a web based, multimedia publishing system, that is very low cost (often free), very easy to use, customizable, in terms of look and feel, content, target audience and hyperlinked to other content spread across the Internet” (Cameron, Anderson, 2001). There is a wide range of blogs for different purposes.

Blog content diverse. It covers from single theme entries to multiple genres, such as “classic logs”, “life logs”, etc. (Ford 2000). Although the history of this new genre of writing have started since 1990, only recently it became popular in the field of education, and have a substantial impact on a traditional way of teaching (Bialik, 2005).

2.2.2. Who and why should they blog?

Blogging started its skyrocketing increase in gaining popularity between 2002 and 2005. Bloggers share everything within their interests, their opinions. It represents an individual's identity that publishes his/her life (Weil, 2006). Recent studies show however, some interesting results about blogging. Based on those findings, technology researchers stress the importance of blogging and explain the reasons why it is recommended to have a blog regardless the status of being an individual, business owner, or an organization. For example statistical findings show that active bloggers in business have more chances to be competitive and have more loyal customers (Kaplan, 2011).

With the recent increase use of technological tools and interest towards blogging researches have been done also in the field of education to see the effects and impact of blogging in teaching. Richardson (2010) explains the advantages of blogging and recommends its integration in education for teaching purposes. According to him blogging is really an effective tool to enhance students' writing skills critical thinking and promotes improvement in students' overall language performance.

Blogging is perceived to be a helpful digital tool because it can create a platform for online communication; it is free, accessible software with no installation requirements and with easy steps to create an account. Blogs' flexibility in terms of time and editing features are very useful for students (Murrey & Hourigan, 2008). It is true that anyone can blog. According to Richardson, students can benefit immensely from blogging because they can read, analyze synthesize, comment on their peers blogs thus increasing the language proficiency and confidence in communication which in their turn will be only motivating. As it is stated in Murrey's research Blogging can be individual or

collaborative in nature, however even in an individual blogging case students can have a sense of collaboration, knowing there is some audience who can read their posts (Murrey & Hourigan, 2008). There are many other built in features in blogs, such as customizing, designing editing, spell checking, etc that makes blogging more attractive place to be and interact. Kaplan (2012) gives a clear answer to the question as to why there are so many teenagers using blogs nowadays. As he stated, teens can write creatively; document their daily lives, express their thoughts, share ideas, dreams, interests such as books, movies, etc. In many cases blogging helped teens to become famous (Kaplan, 2011).

2.2.3. Features of Blogging

Blog offers a feature that allows expressing ones thoughts and establishing the online identity, their voice.

- Modern user friendly writing tool at no cost (Murrey and Hourigan, 2008)
- Instant publishing
- Sharing, commenting, providing feedback
- A place for discussions
- Easy customizing
- Searchable
- Subscription, RSS Feeds and other useful gadgets

2.2. 4. Blogging as a teaching tool in education.

Today, in technology driven world, blog has become very popular not only among regular users but also media, writers, journalists, and educators. It has turned into new

educational tools serving as a platform for new ways of teaching by presenting examples of good collaborative work (Murrey et al., 2007). Blogging is considered to be effective teaching tool because it allows educators to be via connected with their students, comment and interact. It also gives an option for interaction between peers. Students may receive feedback both from teachers and peers.

As opposed to a traditional way of writing using pencil and paper tools, blogging has several other advantages. It allows students to revisit their work and edit, pay attention to their spelling as the spell checker indicates with a red line if there is a spelling mistake. Finally students have a more creative approach to their work and are more engaged (Carpenter & Slater, 2000). Many veteran educators face the challenge in trying to incorporate technology in their classrooms. Studies indicate that teaching through blogging can.

The technical specifications such as, drafting, revisiting the work, editing, spell check and grammatical check makes blogging a more flexible user-friendly tool (Carpenter & Slater, 2000; Murrey, et al. 2007). According to Scoble, there are five elements that makes blogs “hot”: “ease of publishing”, “discoverability”, “cross-site conversations”, “perm linking” such as URL, and “syndication”- replication of content elsewhere (Lovink, 2008 p. 4).

There are many reasons that make blogging-appealing tool for educational purposes. According to Richardson (2010) blogs have had a great impact on every aspect of our life, such as politics, business, personal passions, etc. He believes that web can make a distinctive transformation in our beliefs about teaching and learning. It makes educators rethink the teaching principles and think of ways to prepare our students for

their post education lives. Richardson strongly believes that incorporating technological tools such as blogging, wikis, etc. has an influence on the class performance (2010). There have been studies findings of which shows the significant changes in students' performances. The study findings of Ward (2004) showed the students the positive attitude and motivation towards blog as a place to self-express and share thoughts, showed big positive changes in students' and reading writing skills. Fageeh (2011) states it is a tool to give students freedom to self-express in a target language maintaining authenticity.

We are taught to write our mother tongue from the early ages.

As it was mentioned earlier in this research blogging is great educational tool because it allows students to get feedback not only from their classmates but also from other audience, which makes the learning more authentic, motivating. However, despite of its benefits of providing a more collaborative learning environment beyond the classroom walls, there can also be drawbacks. One of them is its accessibility for other people to comment freely. Even though this is considered to be a powerful, positive teaching tool, it can also be harmful and discouraging because of some negative or irrelevant comments. So the teacher's role is to find the balance and talk about these issues with students (Richardson 2010).

Teachers and educators can implement blogs many different ways. Three main types of blogs can be implemented in ESL/EFL. The first type is defined as "tutor blog" that suggests practice reading skills on daily basis. Students need to do readings and comment on them. The second type of blog is a collaborative group activity- "the learner blog". The role of this type of blogging is to teach students useful technical skills, for

example to construct blog where they have to do some writing. Through this students will establish teamwork skills, sense of ownership, as well as increase the awareness of ethical issues in blogging. Last but not least, the third type of blogging is called “the class blog” when the entire class works as a big community to reach a certain goal (Cambell, 2003).

Richardson (2010) states that weblog has become a commonly used technological tool by many teachers who share his beliefs about making the learning and teaching process more fun, engaging and productive. One of the distinctive features that makes blogging useful for educational purposes is its feature of connecting users together. Being connected and working together in blog fosters students’ collaborative skills. Students can learn from their peers share their ideas, thoughts, opinions, comment on each other’s blog and give each other feedback According to Zuwati (2009, Krish, 2011) it increases confidence hence making the learning more effective. It stimulates the participation of less active students. Students are more comfortable to express themselves using blogs than in class, because making mistakes in blog is acceptable, thus reducing the anxiety of making mistakes (Zuwati, 2009; Krish 2011).

There was a study that was to compare the effectiveness of two tools blog and pen-paper. The study findings revealed that students were motivated using this method of learning, they were more creative in writing and learning rather than using traditional methods (Kashani, Mahmud, Kalajahi, 2013).

Motivation is another key features to learn a language. The more motivated and excited the students are about the subjects the better learners they will be. Blog is also claimed to be a great motivational tool in education. It can be instrumental in decreasing

students' anxiety of making mistakes, hence increasing students' motivation to be engaged learners (Smith, 2009).

2.3. Blog in ESL/EFL

Benefits and Challenges

From the students perspective blogs in EFL/ESL is a great place to find authentic material in English, and express their thoughts, opinions, reactions, ideas using L2 thus improving their reading speaking, writing skills in targeted language.

2.3.1. Benefits

Writing has been considered one of the most important and difficult areas in teaching a language (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Today there is a noticeable emphasis on the importance of teaching writing. Thankfully, advancement in technology allows teaching to be more effective and the learning process more engaging. Blog is a great space to conduct both in and outside collective class discussions about the read material or anything they have covered in class. Students may get uncertain about to clarify. It fosters interaction between peers enhancing reading and responding to alternative ideas.

The results of extensive amount of research show the benefits and challenges of incorporating blogging in teaching a language. We can draw a parallel between blogging and pencil paper-traditional writing because both are writing with several distinctive differences, which make the whole writing process different.

One of the most captivating features about blogging is its feature of sharing the content with the world and being open for comments. Many features worth mentioning are uploading pictures, videos, designing the page, the layout, updating, deleting, adding or posting comments. These salient features make the learning process more appealing

and engaging. In addition to these blogging also carries the RSS feature that feeds the reader with new information that appears on the blogger's account from different sites.

Blogging can enhance a range of various skills in second language acquisition. Besides improving writing skills it also can be used to enhance reading, synthesizing, drafting, redrafting skills as well as speaking and listening skills (Midgley, Rigby, Varham, Woolnough , 2009).

In many ways bloggers are considered to be writers, however they are not the same. Blogging is more than just writing or publishing. A valid question would be how blogging differs from other websites? There is a set of clear differences between blog and regular websites, some of those differences are to the advantages of blog that make the difference in learning process. Unlike regular websites blogs are interactive and efficient of drawing reader's attention to their topics without using an email for it. Bloggers can frequently upload things either for specific or general audience (Weil, 2006).

Besides, blogging teaches how to interact and establish your voice in the Net (Racoma, 2009). Blogging teaches how to interact and establish your voice in the Net (Kaplan, 2011). From pedagogical perspectives blogging allows learning outside of the classroom, in other words the boundaries are pushed back setting more opportunities for students to enhance their critical thinking, develop and establish their own voices and online identity (Du& Wagner, 2007 in Sun and Chang, 2012). Talking about advantages, Hussain mentions several of them in his journal. Blogging advantages are its accessibility 24/7, convenience. It is enjoyable encouraging, collaborative, etc. (Hussain 2012). Wu (2005) defines a blog a space for students to feel more comfortable express themselves.

2.3.2. Challenges of blogging:

Several disadvantages are mentioned in Hussain's journal Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Blogging activity in a College Euclidean Geometry Course. From the educator's perspective the first thing Hussain mentions is the blogs' complexity for new bloggers in terms of technology. Some students who do not have any experience in blogging might find it frustrating and difficult at first. Another disadvantage is the imposing students to work together. No matter how much would student benefit from collaboration and interaction, some students refuse to work in groups or in pairs because of the existing different learning styles in the classroom? The enforcement according to Hussain might put some pressure on students who are used to work on their own. Giving or receiving feedback could be a personal dislike for some students (Hussain, 2012). As students stated in Hussain's research (2012) they do not like commenting on other's work, neither do they enjoy other participant's comments.

Wu (2006) mentions talks about the security issue in blogging, and criticism which in many cases will de-motivate students. Safety issue in blogging is something to consider and talk about with students how to avoid problems of getting viruses and being hacked.

Criticism or bad comments are also concerns and need to be discussed with students. A lot of times especially among teenagers, there is a tendency to make harsh, unpleasant comments, consequently students will be demotivated and disengaged from the learning process. To prevent those students should be introduced to the class policy

that forbids rude, harsh comments. Teacher has to explain the expectations and the consequences when teaching working on blogs (Wu, 2006).

Like it was mentioned in the benefits how blogging reduces the anxiety level of making mistakes, however Smith gives a clear explanation of some of the challenges both teachers and students may face during the class. He brings up the differences between students' language use and learning styles stating that students who make a transition into colleges may feel insecure facing new academic environment and new expectations. Saying that, student's errors must not be targeted, on the contrary, educators have to have academic expectations from students within their capacities (Smith, 2008). Blogging can be instrumental in decreasing students' anxiety of making mistakes. It will create a working area with less anxiety. According to Mike Rose, more mistakes are expected from students who transfer into college. Teachers have to engage all the students despite their errors. Rose stated, "Error, marks the place where education begins" (Smith, 2008). However, the potential challenge here is to maintain the freedom of making errors. Despite the belief that students usually do not tend to make many mistakes, encouraging making errors doesn't facilitate the improvement in learning a language. The main purpose of this study is to show the effectiveness of blog as an interactive tool for teaching and a place to help student self-disclose and enhance their mastery of the target language and sophisticated thinking in a more authentic learning environment.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the method employed in conducting this research, the participants and the setting of the study, data collection techniques and the instruments. It also defines the research design and the procedure, as well as the data analysis.

3.1. Research question Restatement:

This study aims at finding out the answer to the following research questions: Is there any difference in students' expressiveness when it is communicated in pen-paper writing vs. blogs. Furthermore to find out the students' opinions and attitudes towards the pen-paper writing and blogging. Both qualitative and quantitative types of data were collected to answer this question.

3.2. Setting:

This research took place in one of the groups of Experimental English Classes organized by the MATEFL department at the American University of Armenia. EEC classes lasted for 10 weeks, twice a week, 2 hours per session. The current study experiment lasted 10 weeks but the actual treatment was 8 weeks. The first and the last weeks were used to interview the participants.

3.3. Participants:

EEC students from level pre-info 3 that is considered to be an intermediate level, constituted the participants of this study. Students were enrolled in this course to improve their English proficiency with the focus of developing their communication skills. In the beginning of the study, there were 12 students, 5 girls and 7 boys aged from 14-15. One of the participants (a boy), dropped the course in the middle of the study. The final number of the participants was 11. It was a convenience sampling, i.e. the researcher received the available group at EEC matching the minimum requirements of the research, such as the English proficiency level that should be Intermediate or up, the equal number of gender distribution.

3.4. Instruments

The researcher interviewed the participants on voluntary basis using a recording device: in the beginning and at the end of the treatment. Students' proficiency level allowed the researcher to conduct both interviews in English. Both times the students were interviewed one by one.

The first interview aimed at finding out the students' experience with blogs. It comprised 15 semi-structured questions including follow-up questions. Each participant's interview ranged from 10-15 minutes. The second interview aimed at finding students' opinions and attitudes towards using both types of writing tools. It consisted of 20 semi-structured questions, including follow-up questions. Each student was interviewed for 10-15 minutes. Both times participants were interviewed one by one. Interview were partially transcribed and analyzed by grouping the participants' responses. From both

interviews I picked and analyzed the questions that would be more contributive to my study keeping it on the right direction.

Students' were to write 8 reflections for each mode of writing: Pen-paper and Blog. The total of writing prompts given to students were 16. (See Appendix A). The obtained data from Interviews and students' reflective writings were analyzed.

3.5. The Research Design

Mixed method approach is used to conduct this study. Quantitative data was collected from interviews. Quantitative data was collected from the students' writing assignments. All assignments had the same main requirement to write a reflection based on the given topic. The only difference was that students were to post their writings in their blogs once a week and use pen-paper once a week to write their assignments.

3.6. The Treatment

The treatment duration was 8 weeks. Participants were trying blogs for the first time. They have done computer-based assignments and knew how to type. Their assignments were reflections and students were accustomed to these types of writing assignments. The topics were different, that were related to what they had covered in class as well as some controversial topics. The word limit for each topic ranged from 200-250.

The first interview took place in the beginning of the study; the second interview was at the end of the study. The treatment began right after the first interview. Students were to use pen-paper and blogs for their writing assignments. The researcher had a tutorial session to help participants create their own blog accounts. At the end of the treatment the second interview was conducted.

- Tutorial workshop
- Students were shown step by step on how to create a blog account
- How to upload a picture or a video
- How to subscribe to others blogs
- How to subscribe to other websites.
- Participants also were emailed a You Tube tutorial to help them cope with technical difficulties they might encounter at home.

3.7. Data Collection

The study aims at measuring students' expressiveness in their writings, using pen-paper and blogs, and to see if there is any difference. The instruments used in this study were two interviews and the students' reflective writings. The data collection lasted 10 weeks including the two interviews. After the first interview, the participants were shown how to create an account in blog step by step and how to use the basic features of blogs, such as how to subscribe, upload a picture, publish their reflections, comment. A YouTube video tutorial was emailed to all the participants to guide them through creating their own a blog account at home for this study. That week students learnt how to create blog account and the features. That week students were to do their first pen-paper assignment. Throughout the experiment the participants were to have 8 pen-paper writings, and 8 blog posts. The treatment comprised writing assignments using pen-paper and blogs. Throughout the study participants were contacted through email to make sure the instructions are clear and to provide help to those who would face technical issues.

Classes were twice a week for two hours each class session. For each week students were asked to write their reflections on different types of topics both in pen-paper writing and blogs. In both cases students were told they would not be corrected on grammar or spelling to lower their anxiety level thus making them feel more confident.

Figure 1 presents the summary of the assignment procedure and the sequence of the topics on weekly basis for 8 weeks. In all their assignments students were asked to write their reflections about the given topics. The students were getting assignments twice a week, one pen-paper writing, and one blog entry. There were three main types of writing assignments: guided questions, prompt statements, and videos. Sometimes, students were given freedom to choose their own topics to reflect on. The assignment topics were carefully chosen to be related to each other to make the comparison more valid and possible. For example Week 1 pen paper assignment was about advertisement and blog topic was Advertisement and business that was relevant to the pen-paper topic. Students' pen-paper writing assignments were collected from the teacher the next day after their weekly class session. Blogs posts were seen in my blog as soon as they posted them.

WEEKS	Pen-Paper (P-P) TOPICS	Blog (B) TOPICS
WEEK1	P-P1 Advertisement	B1 Adv. Business Growth
WEEK 2	P-P2 Honest Business	B2 Corruption
WEEK3	P-P3 Free Choice	B3 Free Choice
WEEK4	P-P4 Free Choice	B4 Free Choice
WEEK5	P-P5 Clothing/Designer	B5 Luxury or Necessity
WEEK6	P-P6 Expressing Personal Feelings	B6 Authentic Self-Expression
WEEK7	P-P7 Free Choice	B7 Free Choice
WEEK 8	P-P8 Tracey Spicer (video)	B8 Norms, Who sets them? (video)

Figure 1. Shows the sequence of the assignments and the topics for each week.

3.8. Data Analysis Procedure:

The students' writing data was analyzed using the mixed approach. Students' reflections were compared and analyzed considering the following three criteria: visuals (pictures, drawings, illustrations in the form of doodling.), excessive use of punctuation, and the first person references, such as "I, me, my, myself, mine". The quantitative data was calculated by Excel program to find the ratio and the percentage of the used personal references. All the interviews were partially transcribed and synthesized

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

This study aims at finding out if there is a difference in students' expressiveness when it is communicated in pen-paper writing vs. blogs to see where students are more expressive, where their individuality is more highlighted in terms of writing, pen-paper or blog? The following linguistic indicators were considered to measure the expressiveness in students' reflective writings: personal references: "I, me, my, myself, mine", pictures and punctuations, as well as the students' attitude towards using pen-paper and blog as writing tools. This chapter presents both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the findings for the research.

4.1. Analysis of the findings of the first research question

Proper grammar and spelling were not required in the study. In both cases, Students' grammatical and spelling errors were ignored to lower the anxiety level in students and let them feel more comfortable in expressing themselves. In both cases students were told about their freedom of using creativity and reflect their own way but were not encouraged or hinted on how to do it. To find out the answer to the research question first the participants' pen-paper work was compared with their blog entries in terms of the of pictures used in each mode of writing (see Figure 2).

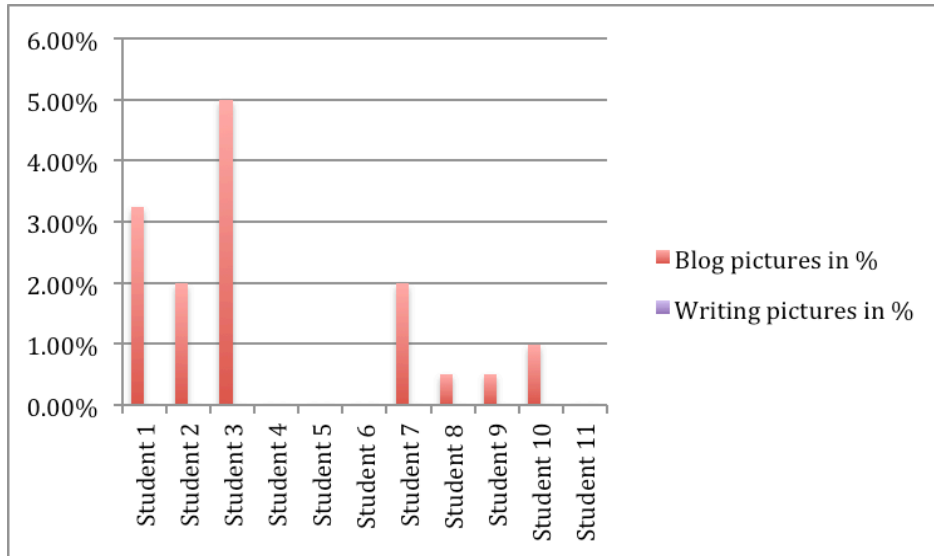


Figure 2. The percentage of number of pictures used per student in Blog and Pen-paper for eight-week assignments.

64% of the class used pictures in their blogs, however comparison of their blog entries with pen-paper reflections reveal that no student used any form of illustration in pen-paper writing form of illustrations.

Another criteria of expressiveness in this study were the extensive use of punctuation or expressive punctuation. Generally, the punctuation is viewed as a linguistic indicator in grammar, however this study results revealed the use of punctuation had a purpose of expressiveness. The findings show that punctuation helps to be more expressive in feelings and emotions. All types of punctuation were considered as long as they were expressive, i.e. more than the normal amount or occurring very frequently: more than once in one paragraph. Only the following types were found in

blogs: !!!,??? ,... “” The results revealed 6 out of 11 students used expressive punctuation in blogs (see *Figure 3*).

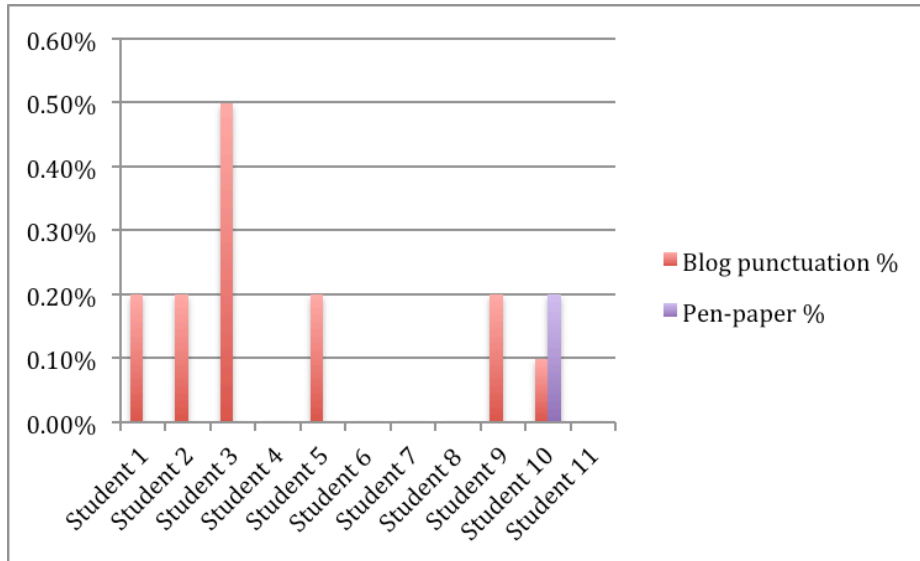


Figure 3. The use of expressive punctuation per student in Blog and Pen-paper for eight-week assignments.

These numbers were converted into a percent to show the overall picture of the expressive punctuation usage. The results were different in pen-paper writings. None of the students used any type of expressive punctuation given the same freedom.

To find out the results for the personal reference words “I, me, my, myself, mine” both pen-paper and blog post reflective writings were compared in amount of the usage then converted to a percent. Students were given a limit for 200-250 words per assignment. There were 8 pen-paper assignments and 8 blog assignments. For one person there was a limit of 1,200 words in each type of writing.

For 11 students there should have been 13,200 words. However the results showed more words in pen-paper 17,235 for 11 students, and for blog they had in total 13,502. The frequency of personal references was calculated per 17,235 and 13,502 words. It is important to show the frequency of personal reference occurrence to determine where students chose to be more visible.

Table 1

The use of Personal references in Blog and Pen-paper writings in percent per number of words.

	Blog words	Blog personal references %	Pen-paper words	Pen-paper personal references %
Student 1	1678	0.5	2058	0.48
Student 2	1077	2	1488	2
Student 3	2789	2	2218	2
Student 4	126	2	1441	2
Student 5	977	3.48	1213	0.6
Student 6	620	2	1083	1
Student 7	958	3	1269	2
Student 8	673	2	1380	1
Student 9	1017	3	998	4
Student 10	1594	3	2854	1
Student 11	993	3	1233	5

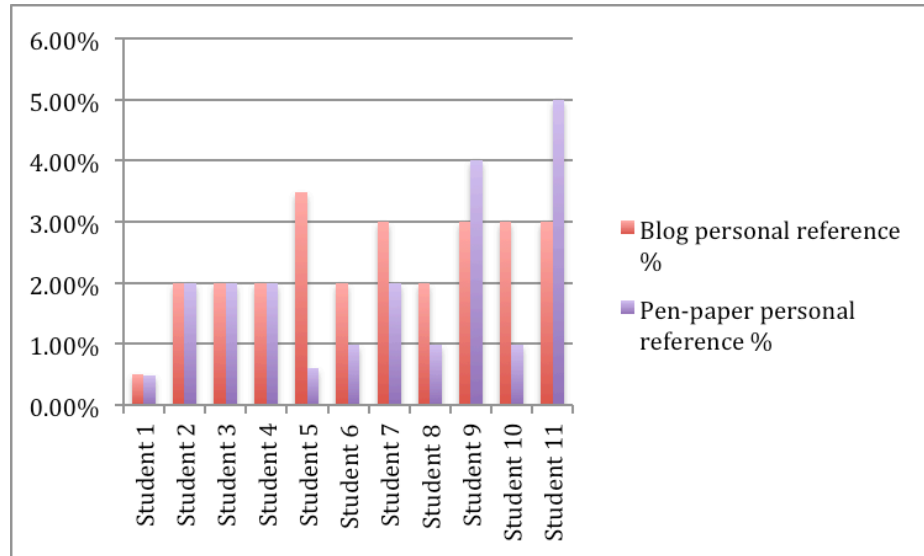


Figure 4. The use of personal references per student in Blog and Pen-paper for eight-week assignments.

From comparison it was seen that students chose to use the references when they wanted to be more visible. The sum of personal reference words of the total class was divided by the amount of the words used in blog to find out the percent of the personal reference words used in their writings. The same procedure was done for the pen-paper writings (See Figure 5).

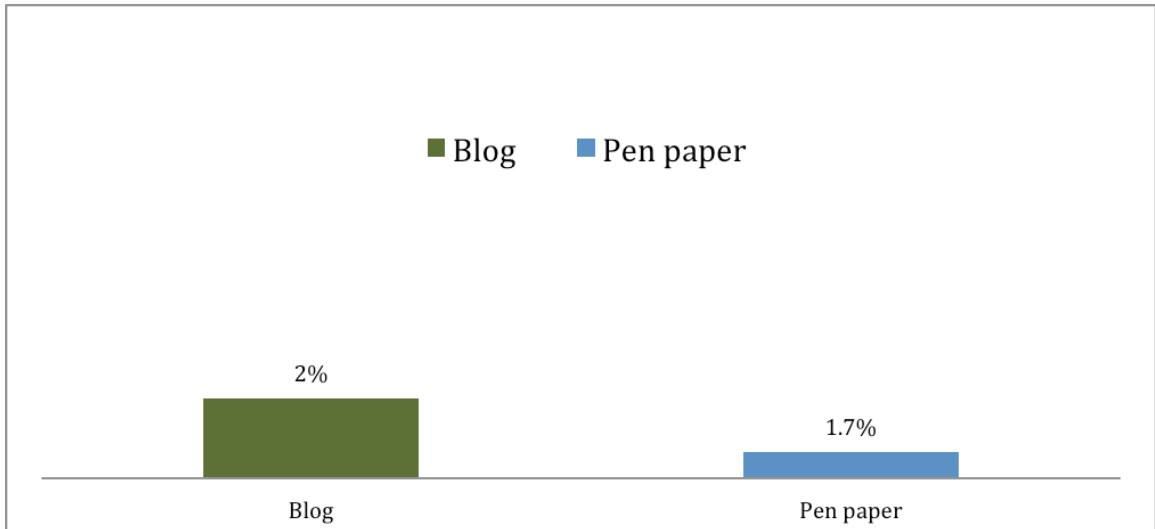


Figure 5. The use of personal references in Blog and pen-paper writings.

In this bar graph we see there is a not a very significant difference between blog and pen-paper results. The blog results are slightly in advantage over the pen-paper results. This allows us to assume that the participants were slightly more expressive in blogs in terms of the use of personal references.

4.2 Analysis of the results of the second research question

The interviews were the second part of the analysis of the findings. The purpose of the first interview was to find out the students' background in using the Internet, what are they typically use it for, particularly find out the familiarity with blogs and their interest towards learning it. It comprised 15 semi-structured questions. The purpose of the second interview was to find out the students' attitude and opinions towards using pen-paper and blog as a writing tool. It comprised 20 semi-structured questions. Analyses are conducted through grouping students' responses. The students' responses from both interviews are grouped and synthesized. The most significant questions are discussed in this chapter. See the questions for Interview 1 in Appendix B, Interview 2 Appendix C.

a)The students' learning experience before and after the treatment:

From the answers to this question it became clear that all 11 students are digitally literate, they know how to use Internet and spend a lot of time in it about 3-4 hours a day, however one of the students stated he had a vision problems and cannot spend in front of computer more than 15-20 minutes, his eyes start hurting.

Before the treatment 8 out 11 students did not know how to blog and had heard about the term. Their perception about blog was a place to share your ideas, thoughts on daily basis, like personal diary, they all expressed willingness to participate in this study in expectation of learning new things about technology, life events, etc. For 7 out of 11 students this was a positive experience. Two students remained neutral stating it was neither nor, or not sure. The other two students stated clearly they prefer writing and did not like blogging because it was time consuming. Even those who did not have positive

opinions stated it was something new and no regrets in learning new things. All eleven students stated it helped them not only improving their English skills but also stay connected with other sources and learn about lots of events.

b) Privacy issues before and after the experiment:

Ten out of 11 students stated they do not see a problem sharing it with the world or their peers. 1 student remained neutral stating. Here are some of the responses: “I would be comfortable because it would be so interesting”; “I think it would be great to express your feelings”; “I’ll see, I don’t know yet”. Security issue became a concern for many students. Most of them expressed they feel not very comfortable sharing personal thoughts and opinions, from personal experiences, however they did not mind sharing their reflections on general topics that does not immediately relate to themselves. The results were different after the treatment.

c) Students’ preference of the writing mode preference:

In the beginning of the treatment all 11 students stated about their familiarity in computer based homework tasks, they had to do their homework in typing from time to time, however the typing skills varied among students. Eight out of 11 students preferred pen-paper writing because it is faster, easier, whereas 3 students felt comfortable with using typing because their typing skills were better and they stated it is neater, more fun and interesting. One student stated: “I like to write pen-paper because I like to feel it, but in blogs it was more interesting, clearer my writing my grammar was better, in pen paper I do not pay attention on my grammar skills”; “I prefer pen-paper because it is faster and I can see what I write, with typing I have to look at the screen and it is not comfortable”

After the treatment 6 out of 11 students clearly stated they preferred blogging to pen-paper because it was fun, convenient in terms of typing and motivating. These students stated blog helped them improve their writing skills. One student stated she usually likes pen-paper, however she saw the benefits from using blogging. Two out of 11 students thought it made not much difference; they were neutral in their responses. Two other students clearly stated they do not like blogging because it was time consuming and they prefer pen-paper as a writing tool. “Overall, it was a good learning experience for me. I learnt the differences between using pen-paper and blog. I tried to work better in blogs than in pen-paper because of my readers. I think it improved my grammar skills”; “Typing looks nicer”.

Students’ opinions and attitudes towards the two modes of writings:

a) What did you like best about pen-paper writing and blogging?

The overall impression from participants’ responses was that Pen-paper was much faster in writing, and blog was slower because of the poor typing skills for 8 students in the group, easy, they didn’t have to turn the Internet on for it, however they stated that in blogs they were writing more carefully because of the bigger audience and it improved their writings skills. Despite the fact that spelling and grammar error were ignored during this study, still most students said they still had to pay attention to the correctness of their writings when they were blogging. Seven out of 11 students liked blog because of the features it suggested, such as uploading pictures, different background setting, colors, fonts, emoticons, sharing their thoughts, and being connected to the world. “Blog was something new for me, it was more comfortable,

and I felt more enthusiastic about it because you can see what other people share on their blogs, their opinions and reflections”.

b) What you did not like in pen-paper and blog?

Nine out of 11 students found pen-paper inconvenient in terms of editing their work, as the erasing process was not as easy as in blog, as a result of which their work looked messier. “I didn’t like the part when I had to cross over the written sentence or correct my spelling, it looked very messy on my paper, and I had to rewrite the whole thing again on a new sheet of paper which I didn’t want to do”.

Despite the fact they liked to share their thoughts and opinions, however the security issue was a concern for most of them. They felt more openness in blog and felt they express themselves freely and sometimes forget about when to stop.

Even though most students showed positive attitude towards blogging, however they encountered some technical difficulties in the beginning that was irritating. One student stated he would prefer to see page numbers in blog; he also had some trouble with uploading pictures.

c) Where do you feel more expressive in pen-paper or blog?

To this question 7 out of 11 students felt more expressive in blog than in pen-paper. Two out of 11 students were neutral or not sure, the other 2 students clearly stated they felt more expressive in pen-paper. Students who felt more expressive in blogs stated that blog provided them a lot of features to play with, such as uploading pictures, change the background the layout, use different kinds of emoticons, expressive punctuation.

To the follow-up question as to why they did not use any drawings some of the students stated they did not know they could use pictures in pen-paper writing. It slightly affected their self-expression in the beginning of the treatment in a way that they got a little frustrated, as a result of which some of the students who faced the challenges did not post pictures in the beginning, however they overcame some of the challenges with technology very quickly.

d) The amount of time and the learning behavior students demonstrated during each type of writing mode:

Most students stated that their assignments took them about 15-30 minutes. They stated there was no overload. Five participants visited their peer's blogs for reading purposes. Some of them found visiting other's blogs was encouraging and woke up a sense of competitiveness, which made them go back and make changes in their blogs to make it look better. Most of the participants liked being commented, and respond to the comments, however did not like to take an initiative to comment on others' themselves. Three participants stated they did not see the point in commenting and being commented also did not make a difference.

e) The students' interest in using blogs in the future for personal or educational purposes:

Even though students showed positive attitude towards blogging, they still did not seem to be more enthusiastic in continuing blogging. Most of the students stated they would like to use it but not for sharing personal information, they did not mind using blog for learning purposes as they stated they clearly saw the educational benefits of blogging.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter reports on the summarized findings of the two research questions of this study. The goal of this research was to find out the difference in expressiveness through pen-paper writing and blog on the bases of the following three criteria: pictures or illustrations, extensive use of punctuation, personal references. It also wanted to see the students' opinions and attitudes towards using both tools in their writings. Furthermore it discusses the pedagogical implications, limitations as well as recommendations for further research.

5.1. Discussion of the Results

The overall compared results of students' reflective pen-paper writings and blogs demonstrates the there is a difference and the expressiveness is more highlighted in blog than in pen-paper. The statistical results for the first criteria: the number of used pictures showed that students used pictures in blogs. Expressiveness was also identified through the pictures that conveyed meaningful messages through an illustration or conceptualized text, whereas there was no form of illustration used. The implication to this is maybe the Armenian mentality as a collectivistic country where the individualism is not the most developed part. Students are used to always follow directions and even if they want to come out of the shell they will not take the initiative to do so, because of the fear of not getting the teachers' approval. The pen-paper writing has always been seen more official thing in Armenia, hence students were treating those writing as official homework type of paper that prevailed them to open up, whereas their perception about blog was non official type of work that is why they said they felt more confident there. Some students

stated that even if they realized clearly they could draw, they still would prefer not to because according to them they are not talented in drawing things.

The extensive use of punctuation was observed in blogs, and only one student in pen-paper writings. The analysis of the personal references showed no significant difference between the two modes of writings. The use of personal references, such as “I, me, my, myself, mine” emphasized their voice and confidence in expressing their own opinions and feelings.

The use of pictures and personal references are typical for both pen-paper and blogs. The linguistic of expressive punctuation is more typical to blogs and is incompatible with pen-paper writing, however the purpose was to show that blog gives that space to express through extensive use of punctuation and pictures.

In response to the first research question, the results from quantitative analysis testify that there is a difference in expressiveness between pen-paper writing and blog considering all three criteria discussed above.

The descriptive analysis of the interview two shows that all students had overall positive experience. According to their responses to the open-ended questions it is clear that most participants found blogging to be convenient, interesting useful and fun. Answers of interview two shows that most participants found blog to be a way to improve the writing skills. The sense of responsibility towards their readers made them write more carefully to avoid grammatical or spelling errors, despite the fact they were told not to worry about the mistakes or errors much. Participants wrote more carelessly because they had only one reader and they were expressing themselves using only the existing vocabulary without making many efforts to check the correctness. These findings

demonstrate blog creates a platform for students to that student using blogs were acquiring the language willing to expand the knowledge. One of the main reasons to choose blogging to conduct this study was the motivation.

Students responses show the evidence that blogging was motivating because of different features that made their writings look better hence making the process fun.

One of the biggest inconveniences and the factor that affected students' attitude towards blogging was the typing. Most participants mentioned in both interviews that were feeling a little irritated because of the poor typing skills, however according to them it did not prevail them to express themselves freely. One of the vocal students expressed his negative attitude towards blogging in the middle of the research. This participant was not pushed on doing his homework. By the end of the treatment, however this participant changed his attitude and also admitted that it was an interesting experience for him.

Another factor that impacted on their attitude towards blog was the technical issues in the beginning, such as uploading the picture, subscribing to others' blogs or making their blogs public to only peers. However they stated they overcame these difficulties and later found it easy convenient tool to use.

The findings about students' opinions and attitudes towards both modes of writings demonstrates their preference more towards blog because they felt it is user-friendly and helps them to be connected with the world, however students also mentioned that pen-paper was comfortable because of the poor typing skills, and security reasons.

It is worth discussing the legibility of the pen-paper writings. They were not very clear and most of the time was hard to understand the signature, whereas in blogs this issue does not exist. Towards the end of the study, due to frequent writing assignments,

students seemed to have gained some confidence in expressing themselves. Most of the students stated they learnt how to express themselves, and how to reflect more effectively.

There were two students who stated they do not like blogging however only one student continuously refused to do the assignments in blog. In the middle of the study he formulated a negative attitude and articulated his opinion about it. That student was not forced to participate in the study, however he showed his objections only against the blog or the Internet type of tasks, he did all his pen-paper assignments. There was one main contradiction between students' responses and their actions in terms of missing homework assignments. 16% of missing homework was from pen-paper, 35% in blogs. The implication to this is the desire to meet researcher's expectations or poor typing skills may have played a role in turning in the assignments. According to the students' responses the missing homework in blog was a result of technical problems, because it was new and they were trying to understand, figure it out. By the time they managed to cope with technical difficulties it was already close to the end of the study.

To sum up the findings we see that most students had a positive experience. Comparison of the two modes of writings shows that blog is a place where students feel more comfortable in terms of self expressing their thoughts. It was motivating to have a bigger audience with whom they shared their ideas, opinions. They found it to be a helpful learning tool in developing language skills because of the sense of responsibility to the audience they had to work hard to improve their writings, whereas in pen-paper they did not care much about the content quality. Towards the end of the study students seemed to have gained more confidence in terms of self-expression and as they stated

learnt how to express themselves. The findings showed there was a security concerns among a few students, about expressing themselves in blogs, To the question if they will blog in the future for personal purposes the responses did not sound very enthusiastic. These students did not like discussing personal experience, relating the given topic by bringing their own examples, but they were positive on discussing things from the general perspectives. Most students, however mentioned they would like to see expressive writing through blogs be incorporated into their curriculum as a part of class.

5.2. Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

As most studies, this study also has some limitations and delimitations.

5.2.1. Limitations:

- There are some weaknesses that limited this study results. Time constraints were the most significant limitation in this study. The study duration was 8 weeks plus two days for the interviews. The results can be generalized tentatively.
- The desire to meet the researcher's expectation may have impacted on the results
- The attrition was another limitation; one student dropped the course in the middle of the study.
- Another factor that could have had a negative impact on students' self expression and attitude towards this experiment was the intensity of the course and the overload of homework assignments.

5.2.2. Delimitations:

The delimitation of this study was the comparison blog with writing choosing the following three criteria: picture, expressive punctuation, and personal references, such as I, me, my, myself, mine.

5.3. Pedagogical Implications:

To conclude, current study provides evidence to the effectiveness of the blog in bringing out the expressiveness in writing. The findings of this mixed data analysis indicate that blog creates a platform for self-expression. The analysis of the interview two shows that students felt themselves more expressive in blogs because of various features it offers, such as uploading pictures, or using expressive punctuation, set different kinds of backgrounds and layouts, being commented. They also felt it improved their writing skills. It stimulated learners' willingness to expand their vocabulary, whereas in pen-paper writings they limited themselves with the existing vocabulary, and according to most of them they did not pay attention to any mistakes when they were using pen-paper as a writing tool. Another benefit participants liked and mentioned in the interview two was feature of being connected to the world. Being able to subscribe to other channels and websites keeps the students in touch with the world.

5.4. Recommendations for further research:

This section presents some recommendations that are worth to look at closely in the future studies. It would be interesting to conduct this research with a group of students who are not novice in blogging. It would be interesting to find out their attitudes and opinions and to what extent they are expressive in their writings in blogs and pen-paper. This study provides analysis about self-expression through two various writing tools considering three criteria to measure self-expression: Pictures, expressive punctuation and personal references, however, it would be interesting to see the self

expression measured through comparing males and females, to see if there is any difference between them in expressing themselves and to what extent it is highlighted.

It would be interesting to compare writers who chose to be visible with those who avoid mentioning themselves and restrict their identity principally. Additionally, the further research should examine self-expressiveness through other criteria such as the use of positive negative words, words with connotative meanings, genres.

5.5. Conclusion

Expressive writing can play an important role in teaching. Teaching through expressive writing can be time consuming and requires creativity, however it is rewarding and could be the key components in effective teaching. To conclude, I suggest implementing blog in teaching offering students opportunity to feel more comfortable in expressing themselves in a target language. Blog provides an authentic setting where students feel more relaxed and confident, and where they can increase the mastery of the target language and a more sophisticated thinking.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Homework Prompts

Week 1

Pen-paper

TOPIC: Advertisement (200-250 words).

1. Your feelings and opinion about advertisement.

- How do you feel about advertisements?
- Do you buy products because of advertising?
- Is there a truth in advertising?
- What 's the most memorable advertisement that you remember? (Funny, shocking, irritating, etc).
- What kinds of advertisements do you like and why?

2. Advertisement on alcohol and cigarettes should be banned.

- Do you think advertisements on alcohol and cigarettes should be banned? why or why not?

3. Advertisements targeting young people.

- Should advertisers be allowed to advertise to children?
- How easy do you think it is to influence children with advertising?
- Bring 2-3 serious problems with advertising for children.

Blog

TOPIC: Advertisement Helps Business Growth (200-250 words)

- Do you think advertisement can help business growth? If yes, how does it help? If no, explain.
- Advantages and disadvantages of using advertisement in promoting business.
- What's your opinion on the ethics of advertising in Armenia? (is it poor, developed, high standard, etc).
- How do you feel about getting fliers and random phone calls from companies advertising their products you are not interested in? (irritating, annoying, informative, etc -explain your position and tell us why does it make you feel a certain way?)

Week 2

Pen-paper

TOPIC: Honest Business (200-250 words).

Honest business practices are more profitable than dishonest ones.

Please write your thoughts about this topic relating it to Armenia (with examples).

What's your opinion on the matter?

Bring arguments to support your thoughts (with examples).

Should the system be changed or reformed? Why? Why not? (with examples).

How should the system be changed or reformed? Bring some suggestions (with examples).

Blog

TOPIC: Corruption (200- 250 words)

"Corruption refers to a lack of integrity or honesty (especially susceptibility to bribery) and the use of a position of trust for dishonest gain"

How much corruption do you think there is in your country?
(bring examples comparing with other countries).

It is believed that in our country jobs are given to friends or relatives. This is also known as another form of corruption. Are you aware of any such cases? (bring examples).

What are the reasons and how frequent do you think such cases happen? What do you think the consequences are?

Imagine you were the boss of a large company or government ministry and you were in a position to help your friends and relatives to get a job. What would you do ? What would you think about the ethics?

Week 3

Pen-paper

TOPIC: Free choice

Please pick a topic of your choice that you are interested or passionate about and write an essay (200-250 words).

Blog

TOPIC: Free choice

Please pick a topic of your choice that you are interested or passionate about and write an essay (200-250 words).

Week 4

Pen-paper

TOPIC: Free choice

Please pick a topic of your choice that you are interested or passionate about and write an essay (200-250 words).

Blog

TOPIC: Free choice

Please pick a topic of your choice that you are interested or passionate about and write an essay (200-250 words).

Week 5

Pen-paper

TOPIC: Clothing/Designer clothes/Brands (200-250 words)

OK folks, now let's talk about clothing. What is clothing to you? Does it represent you?

Yes/No, how? (bring some examples).

It is believed that people buy designer clothes or follow brands because it is assumed that those are made of the best material, hence the best quality. Many of you probably have had or seen clothes that carry the brand name yet they have no quality.

Why do you think people continue buying expensive designer clothes knowing the quality is not superior?

Describe your overall opinion on clothing design. Do like shopping for expensive brand name clothing? Yes/No , Why? (bring some examples).

Blog

TOPIC: Luxury or necessity? (200-250 words)

We often think of luxuries as expensive items: that wonderful new perfume, first class air travel, a car, etc...

What do you think, where is the boarder between luxury or necessity? Are limits the same between people with different socioeconomic status , for example, college students, university students, professors, managers, supervisors, etc...

Week 6

Pen-paper

TOPIC: Expressing Personal Feelings (200-250 words)

"Expressing personal feelings directly isn't easy for everyone. While some do so comfortably, others may require more indirect means of self-expression. Some people struggle to find the right moment, fearing judgment or criticism from others, or feeling a sense of uncertainty about what they have to say"

- Which is the way you express your emotions or feelings better, directly or through writing? (Examples please).

Blog

TOPIC: Authentic Self-Expression (200-250 words)

Watch the video and post your reflections on it in your Blogs (200-250 words).

Reflect all your thoughts, opinions about the parts in the video you find important or you relate to, or the parts that got your attention in general. Express your views on the points the speaker brings up. Here is the link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ati3O3-iZls>

Week 7

Pen-paper

TOPIC: Free choice

Please pick a topic of your choice that you are interested or passionate about and write an essay (200-250 words).

Blog

TOPIC: Free choice

Please pick a topic of your choice that you are interested or passionate about and write an essay (200-250 words).

Week 8

Pen-paper

TOPIC: "The lady stripped bare" (200-250 words)

Please watch the video and reflect your opinions, thoughts about it. Do not write what is the video about. I more interested in knowing what you think, your personal thoughts on the content of the video. I need your own reflections. You may relate yourselves to what is spoken in the video and think of these questions below, in addition to other thoughts you might want to express (200-250 words).

- Does the society have an impact on you, your decisions, and your personal choices in life?
- Do you care what others think of you or the way you act or behave?
- To what extent does the society have a pressure on you, if it does?

Here is the link to the video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PENkzh0tWJs>

Blog

TOPIC: "I Choose to be Happy" (200-250 words).

Please watch the video and reflect your opinions, thoughts about it, as well as about the comment with questions highlighted in bold. Do not write what is the video about.

Write your reaction, your personal thoughts on the content of the video.

There are many people like Lizzie, with different physical disorders. Some do not look like it is accepted by the "norms" of the society, some are obese (overweight), or can't gain weight like Lizzie, in other words, some people are just "different". Many of these people suffer from the society pressure, and bullying. They have to hide from the society, like they do not belong to it. Some of them find a solution and harmony in life, some don't, and may even put an end to their lives....

- What are norms and who sets them?
- Where do you see the core problem is? How to cope with it? Do you see any solution?
- What is the key to Lizzie's success?

Here is the link to the video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sohGDfNQV7M>

APPENDIX B

Questions for Interview One: 8 out of 15 semi-structured questions are presented.

1. Do you use Internet and how much time do you spend on the Internet a day?
2. What are you using it for and what are favorite places to visit in the Internet?.
3. Does the Internet help you with your English?
4. Have you ever heard about blog?
5. Would you like to learn how to blog?
6. What are your expectations from this experience, (pen-paper and blog)?
7. Would you be comfortable sharing your thoughts with the world or peers?
8. Which way do you prefer doing your homework assignments, typing or pen- paper?

APPENDIX C

Questions for Interview Two: 12 out 20 semi-structured are presented.

1. What was the overall impression and opinion about the whole experience?
2. Which of the two modes of writing did you like using most, pen-paper or blog, and why?
3. What did you like best about pen-paper writing and blogging?
4. What you did not like in pen-paper and blog?
5. Where do you feel more expressive in pen-paper or blog?
6. Did you encounter technical issues?
7. Did the technical issues play a role in your self-expressiveness?

Students' attitudes and opinions about the homework assignment /topics

8. How did you like the topics? Were they interesting boring?
9. Which of the three choices of assignments, topics with prompt questions, videos, with prompt questions, free choice did you like the most?
10. How much time did you spend blogging and writing to do your homework?
How did you spend your time?
Which one was more time consuming?
11. How did it make you feel knowing that grammar and spelling mistakes were ignored?
12. Will you use blog in the future for personal or learning purposes?

