

## Using Blogs as a Medium for Learning Feature Writing Skills

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### ABSTRACT

Blog is a digital media many people use to express themselves and share information. In addition, blogs can be used as a medium for learning feature writing skills. This research is motivated by students' difficulties in generating story ideas, organizing stories, and balancing facts and narrative. This study aims to describe the use of learning media in the form of blogs in learning feature writing. This study is a qualitative research. The data collection techniques used were interviews, observations, and document studies on the results of students' feature writing. Based on the data analysis, it was obtained an overview of the skills in feature writing, 15 students got grades in the good category and 5 people got grades in the fair category.

*Keywords: Learning Media, Blog, Feature Writing.*



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### INTRODUCTION

The progress of science and technology is influenced by the prevailing attitudes and beliefs of society. Technological advancements occur rapidly, necessitating prompt responses from individuals. While change is inevitable, many people feel compelled to keep pace with these developments in their daily lives. Technology often provides solutions to complex problems. As a component of societal progress, technology evolves and adapts to meet contemporary needs. Technology is widely used in various fields, including education (Mutia, 2018).

One factor contributing to the success of education is the use of learning media. Learning media refers to physical equipment, such as books, video recorders, slides, or parts of a delivery system, used to deliver learning materials. The benefits of learning media include fostering learners' motivation, improving mastery, and allowing repeated access to the media (Nufus et al., 2015). The use of media can enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the teaching and learning process. Additionally, learning media can improve interaction and communication between teachers and students, facilitating better conveyance of messages or information (Widyaningsih & Triyanto, 2022).

One interesting learning medium is a blog. A blog is a web application that allows a person, commonly called a blogger, to post on a variety of topics according to their interests and expertise. Blog posts can be read and enjoyed by internet users around the world. Blogs are described as a web-based area where anyone can write, edit information, and publish it directly through the web. Additionally, blogs allow for interaction.

Communication between blog visitors and blog owners has also been studied (Mutia, 2013; Pancawardhani et al., 2022). The use of blogs in learning, particularly in learning to write, can increase student interest and develop writing skills independently. Additionally, blogs can improve students' writing skills through positive responses from their peers to posts on their blogs (Febianti, 2020; Rooroh et al., 2022).

Writing skills allow individuals to express their thoughts, feelings, and information in writing appropriately. However, mastering writing skills can be challenging. According to a survey of Indonesian language teachers, learning to write is the least favorite lesson among both teachers and students (Sari et al., 2017). Writing features is not a common task for students, and they often face problems such as lack of time and limited topics to write about (Nufus, Barkudin, et al., 2022). According to Noprina & Handayani (2021), students face challenges in generating ideas and initiating the writing process. Students need to develop these skills to improve their writing abilities. Additionally, Arianti (2016); Nufus et al (2022) found that students struggle to write effective titles and complete writing structures that adhere to feature characteristics.

The process of writing can be challenging for students, and therefore, an effective medium for teaching writing is necessary. Blogs can enhance learners' writing skills through a series of steps that include planning, writing, editing, posting, and receiving feedback. These steps enable students to retain information for a longer period, understand it deeply, and write it in a refined manner before publishing it on the blog (Suadah, 2014).

In their research of Fahreza et al (2017) found that the use of weblogs can improve students' writing skills in all aspects. Therefore, weblogs are recommended as an effective medium for teaching writing. They offer significant benefits to students when learning writing skills. Additionally, the use of blog media in classroom learning, particularly in Indonesian language learning, is a suitable alternative for providing students with new perspectives and motivational aspects, enabling them to express their opinions through writing despite distance barriers (Fageeh, 2011). Writing serves as a means of self-expression and reflection on the blog, enhancing the ability to produce language fluently (Rooroh et al., 2022). Based on the description above, it is important to use effective learning media to train and improve students' writing skills, particularly in the area of human interest features.

## METHODS

Feature writing is one of the topics of writing skills that need to be understood by students in language and literature studio courses. The feature is creative writing designed to inform and entertain about a situation or aspect of a person's life (Arianti, 2016). Feature is a type of writing in newspapers that is not news, reportage, or other writings such as editorials, columns, or opinion articles. Feature is included in the category of creative writing with a fictional writing style that is not stale and human interest (Nufus et al., 2022; Suharsono, 2020).

As creative writing, features are based on objective and factual reality as a series of information built from the results of visitation, confirmation, and investigation. In writing objective reality in the form of a story, the learning process must go through the stages of

observation, observation, and interview. Therefore, there is a systemic courage by course caregivers that writing to find ideas outside the classroom through the process of observation, investigation, and reporting (Zainudin & Nurjanah, 2023).

The feature has its characteristics. Feature news has a structure of title, lead, body, and closing. (Zainudin & Nurjanah, 2023).. Information is managed professionally and has high credibility so that it provides its theme. Because it has its characteristics, it is expected to increase the image of the media in the eyes of the audience. (Sri Murti & Lazuardi, 2020). To cultivate writing skills, practice and persistence are required. Writing activities in the millennial era now make it very easy for someone to publish their writing. The development of this increasingly advanced technology makes writing products quickly get readers and can be of interest to many people. One of the digital technologies that can be used is by utilizing a personal blog. (Suciartini & Sumartini, 2019). Blog stands for weblog. A blog is a type of website developed and maintained by individuals using online software or a very user-friendly host platform, with space to write. Blogs feature instant online publication and invite the public to read and provide feedback as comments. Blogs as one of the application services of the internet can be utilized by lecturers and students as an unlimited learning resource. (Nufus et al., 2022). Through blogs, blog writers can share. Through the blog, writers can share their thoughts with others. Blogs can also be utilized as an arena or container for storing writings (documentation). A blog can function as a documentary for someone. Manuscripts stored on a computer or a flash disk are often lost due to viruses. If the blog writer saves the script on the blog, besides being able to be read and utilized by other readers, it is also documented safely without fear of getting a virus.(Fageeh, 2011; Suciartini & Sumartini, 2019).

The utilization of blogs can be broken down into several types, namely 1) Education blogs, which contain information about the world of education, and usually the authors and owners are educators, teachers, or lecturers; 2) Literary blogs, better known as lit blogs (literary blogs), contain issues related to the world of literature. The authors are teachers, lecturers, writers, and literary observers; 3) Personal blogs, also known as online diaries, contain one's daily experiences, complaints, poems or verses, ideas, and conversations with friends; 4) Topical blogs, which are blogs that discuss a particular issue/topic, and focus on a particular subject; 5) Health blogs, more specifically about health. Health blogs mostly contain patient complaints, the latest health news, and health information; 6) Political blogs contain political news, activists, and all blog-based issues (such as campaigns); 7) Travel blogs, focus on travel stories that tell travel information; 8) Research blogs, containing issues about academics such as the latest research news; 9) Legal blogs, about legal issues or legal matters; also known as blawgs (Laws Blogs); 10) Media blogs, focusing on the lies or inconsistencies of the mass media; usually only for newspapers or television networks; 11) Religion blogs, discussing issues related to religion; and 12) Business blogs, used by employees or entrepreneurs for business promotion activities.

This research is mixed. This research was conducted on 6th-semester students of the Indonesian Language Education Study Program - at Adzkiya University, totaling 12 people. The data collection techniques used in this research were interviews and feature writing performance tests. Interviews were conducted with students related to the utilization of blog media and constraints in filling the blog. Meanwhile, the test was in the form of performance in writing features on students' blogs. Feature writing was analyzed by using feature writing guidelines in terms of content, writing structure, and language. Data

analysis techniques are carried out by analyzing qualitative data from the results of interviews, analyzing quantitative data from feature writing tests, and making conclusions from qualitative data and quantitative data. In making conclusions, the research was carried out by looking at the tendency of whether blog media can be utilized by students to improve their ability to write features or not.

## RESULT

In this section, the analysis begins with the following steps: 1) analysis of interview results; and 2) analysis of feature writing results. The following is a description of the data obtained:

### 3.1 Utilizing Blogs in Human Interest Feature Writing

Blogs provide an opportunity to make learning more interesting and interactive. Through blogs, relevant material sources can be published so that they can be accessed by students. Related to the utilization of Blog media as learning media. Here is one form of feature writing written on a blog, namely:

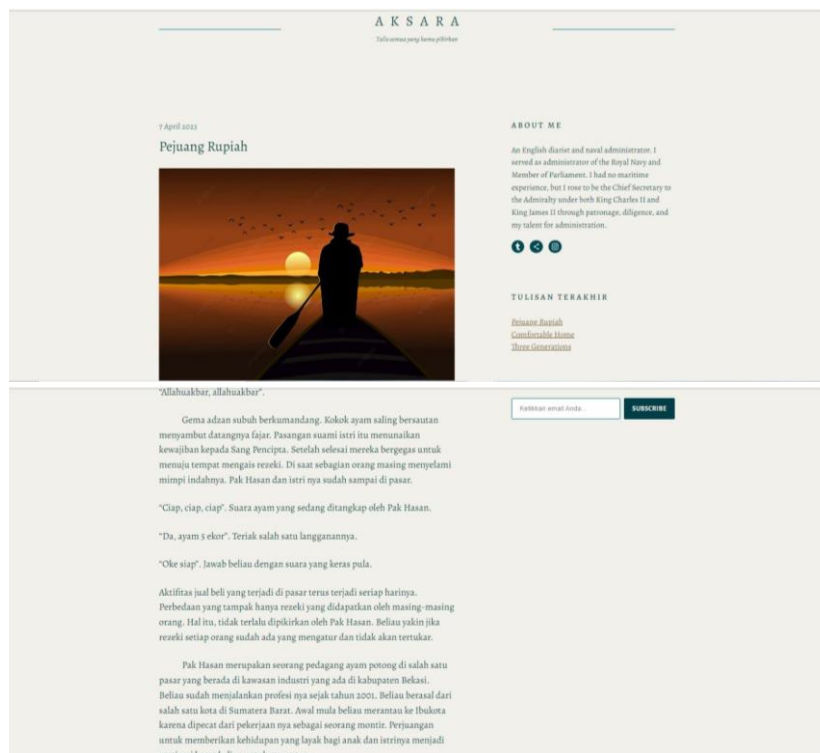


Figure 1. Student Feature Example

The use of blogs provides many benefits, based on the results of interviews conducted with students who take literary studio courses, the following data were obtained: 1) Students who often use blogs to write features every week get answers from 8 people,

while students who only write every month are 4 people; 2) Students find it easy to write using blogs as many as 10 people. While 2 people answered neutrally; 3) Students stated that they obtained many benefits from writing on blogs, including improving writing skills, becoming more creative, and increasing knowledge and insight; 4) 10 students stated several things that need to be considered when writing a blog including theme, relevant sources, writing style and accuracy of information; 5) challenges faced by students when writing features on blogs. A total of 8 students answered determining the language style in feature writing; 6) The last question of the interview was that students were asked to give tips on how the benefits of blogs on feature writing skills. Most students answered, that with the use of blogs, they are trained in writing skills and can get the results of writing reviews from various parties and increase motivation to write.

This is in line with the results of research conducted (Murti, 2021) that the use of blog media can increase learning motivation. Furthermore Fahreza et al (2017) about the use of Weblogs in improving student writing skills. The study concluded that the use of weblogs can improve students' writing skills in all aspects. Therefore weblogs are recommended as a good medium in teaching writing. Weblogs have significant benefits for students when teaching writing skills. Furthermore, Wismanto et al (2022) regarding blogs as a writing platform also supports this research. This study explained that blog media can be a support in writing skills. Blog media can help in improving writing skills and the quality of writing.

### 3.2 Feature Writing Results

In addition to interviews, feature writing is also done by assessing student writing using the rubric in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Feature Writing Assessment Rubric

Assessment Aspect	Assessment Criteria	Explanation
Idea Creativity	1	Less Creative: The feature writing ideas are less original and less creative.
	2	Quite Creative: The feature writing idea is original and creative enough, but could be further developed.
	3	Creative: The feature writing ideas are original and creative, with interesting angles and no clichés.
	4	Very Creative: The feature writing idea is very original and very creative, with a very interesting point of view and no clichés.
Topic Selection	1	Irrelevant: The topic is not relevant to the desired context.
	2	Moderately Relevant: The topic is moderately relevant to the desired context, but still needs to be adjusted.
	3	Relevant: The topic is sufficiently relevant to the desired context.

Assessment Aspect	Assessment Criteria	Explanation
Idea Development	4	Highly Relevant: The topic is highly relevant to the desired context and very interesting to discuss.
	1	Less Detailed: The development of ideas is less detailed and less elaborate.
	2	Detailed Enough: The development of the idea is quite detailed and elaborate, but still needs to be further developed.
	3	Detailed: The development of the idea is quite detailed and elaborate.
Writing Quality	4	Very Detailed: The development of the idea is very detailed and very elaborate.
	1	Poor: The quality of the feature writing is poor, with many spelling and grammatical errors.
	2	Good enough: The quality of the feature writing is quite good, but there are still some spelling and grammatical errors.
	3	Good: The quality of the feature writing is good, with few spelling and grammatical errors.
	4	Very Good: The quality of the feature writing is excellent, with no significant spelling and grammatical errors.

Based on the results of the performance test given to students, the following score (in Table 2) is obtained.

Table 2. Feature Writing Score Acquisition

Score	Figures	Letter	Number of Students	Student Score Presentation
76-100	4	A	10	90%
51- 75	3	B	1	5%
26- 50	2	C	1	5%
1-25	1	D	0	0
0	0	E	0	0
	Total		12	100%

From the data described above, it can be seen that the assessment of writing features obtained as much as 90% obtained an A grade, while 5% obtained a B grade and 5% obtained a sufficient grade. So it can be concluded that the use of blog media in learning to write this feature is effective for improving student learning outcomes. This is to the results of research conducted by (Sartono, 2016) about the utilization of blogs as an alternative learning media in schools concluded that the average score achieved by students before and after using blog media as writing media also showed a significant increase. Nufus et al (2022) explaining the utilization of blog learning media in improving students' feature writing ability concluded that the activity of having and creating a blog is not a difficult thing. Writing features in a blog is easier than writing in a book or conventionally. Further

Wismanto et al (2022) explain blogs as a writing platform also supports this research. This research explains that blog media can be a support in writing skills. Blog media can help in improving writing skills and the quality of writing. Utilization of blog media can be skilled to create more attractive and innovative writing resource products so that they can spark student interest in learning.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The use of blogs as learning media can overcome various problems faced in the learning process. The use of blogs as learning media can help improve students' writing skills. Blog media can support in writing skills and improve the quality of writing made. Especially in feature writing, the use of blog media can help students practice writing, and improve their writing through reader comments, increasing motivation and creativity. In addition, it can improve students' feature writing skills.

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