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Blended Learning to Enhance Writing Skills of Young ESL Learners

Manmit Kaur
Faculty of Education, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 81310 UTM Johor Bahru, Johor, Malaysia

Shanti C Sandaran
Language Academy, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 81310 UTM Johor Bahru, Johor, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact of Blended Learning on sentence writing skills among young ESL learners in the classroom. Bridging a gap in existing literature, the research enlisted thirty primary school students and adopted a mixed-method research design. For data collection, a quasi-experimental research design featuring a one-group pre-test and post-test, a questionnaire survey, and a focus group interview was implemented. Paired sample T-test analyzed the pre-test and post-test data, while frequency and percentage were employed for questionnaire data, both accompanied by descriptive statistical analysis. Thematic analysis was used to analysis the interview data. The outcomes revealed a significant enhancement in young learners' writing skills post the BL Approach implementation, signifying its effectiveness. The study also shed light on BL's role in augmenting writing motivation among young learners by transforming their negative perceptions about writing. The findings provide valuable insights into the benefits of using Blended Learning (BL) for teaching sentence writing in elementary school students. Policymakers and educators can gain a deeper understanding of teachers' perspectives on imparting writing skills to young learners, allowing language students to concentrate on building strong sentence-writing capabilities through BL.

Keywords: Blended Learning (BL), Young Learners, Writing Sentences, ESL Classroom

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Technology has fundamentally transformed the educational landscape, liberating teaching from the constraints of time and space (Alonso *et al*., 2005). The ease of accessing information with just a click, as emphasized by Felix (2003), underscores the unprecedented potential of technology in education to elevate the quality of teaching and learning. In the realm of English Language teaching, the adoption of various approaches, including technology, has become integral. Despite its prevalence, the blended learning approach, specifically in its impact on developing learners' writing skills, has been relatively overlooked (Laurillard, 2007). While writing may be considered an indirect form of communication, its significance lies in empowering learners to articulate their thoughts in accordance with social and cultural norms. For language learners, the integration of technology, such as Blended Learning (BL), opens a myriad of opportunities to enhance their writing skills (Dudeney & Hockly, 2007). Therefore, this study

aims to explore the impact of the Blended Learning Approach in teaching young ESL learners to construct sentences during their writing lesson.

Numerous studies underscore the vital role of effective approaches, such as Blended Learning in enhancing learners' writing capabilities. Hoffman (2014) asserts the efficiency of the Blended Learning Approach, highlighting learners' autonomy in accessing information online. Beauvois (1998) further emphasizes the freedom afforded by Blended Learning in expressing thoughts on specific topics, fostering a more dynamic writing process. Erkan (2013) contends that online discussions and self-directed learning contribute to the active engagement of otherwise shy learners—a sentiment supported by Bliuc (2007). Bliuc suggests that shy learners, often overshadowed in traditional pen-and-pencil settings, can gain confidence, and improve their writing skills through the Blended Learning Approach. The synthesis of online and face-to-face activities is pivotal, as underscored by Tobin (2007), emphasizing that the quality of teaching and learning significantly influences the effectiveness of the blended learning environment.

In alignment with the Malaysian Education Blueprint (MEB), Malaysian classrooms have progressively embraced 21st-century teaching and learning methodologies, with ongoing efforts to integrate technology (Mastan *et al*., 2017). Despite these advancements, young learners, for whom English is a second or third language, often encounter challenges in writing, possibly due to diverse information processing preferences (Shuib & Azizan, 2015). In response to this, blended learning emerged as an improvisational strategy, aligning with the evolving landscape of 21st-century education. While educators play a pivotal role in adopting innovative teaching methods, leveraging technology to enhance ESL learners' writing abilities presents inherent challenges (Yaacob *et al*., 2020; Yunus and Mat, 2014). Ramalingam et.al., (2021) explain that blended learning has not been sufficiently researched in English as a Second Language (ESL) context. They add that although students' blended learning experiences can show the efficacy and effectiveness of the approach, which has been widely researched, there is however more focus on other disciplines such as nursing, health, and foreign language. In addition, less is also known about the BL approach for young ESL learners (Stanford, 2019). Addressing this gap in research, the current study extends upon previous research (e.g., Yunus *et al*., 2020; Stanford, 2019; Mastan *et al*., 2017) and investigates the impact of blended learning on the writing skills of young ESL learners by looking at their blended learning experiences.

The study seeks to:
i.   investigate the impact of blended learning on the development of sentence writing skills among young ESL learners.
ii.   explore the perceptions of young ESL learners regarding the use of blended learning in the context of sentence writing.

2.0   LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, the term "blended learning" has gained prominence in academic discourse (Bates, 2005). Defined as the integration of technology into the learning process with the aim of enhancing knowledge and performance (Clark 2013; Rosenberg, 2001), blended learning has proven effective in assisting language learners, particularly in refining their language skills (Ghazizadeh & Fatemipour, 2017). Distinguishing itself from traditional face-to-face or entirely online approaches, blended learning,

according to Garrison and Vaughan (2008), embodies a student-centered, self-paced, flexible, and multi-modal approach to learning. The essence lies in the amalgamation of face-to-face and online components.

Research indicates that blended learning positively influences student motivation by granting them greater control over their learning trajectory (Wang *et al*., 2015). This approach complements face-to-face interactions, fostering a conducive environment for students to seek clarification and engage with the teacher, thereby reducing the risk of cognitive overload (Moussa-Inaty, 2017). Students exposed to blended learning tend to achieve higher grades compared to their counterparts in non-blended environments (Kenney & Newcombe, 2011). Consequently, primary schools gain a competitive edge as the increased use of blended learning correlates with improved outcomes (Matukhin & Zhitkova, 2015). In the ESL context, one of the significant benefits of blended learning lies in its positive impact on the language learning environment. Numerous studies, such as the one conducted by Zhang and Bingham (2018) in China, highlight the superiority of blended learning over traditional face-to-face methods in ESL classrooms. Students in blended learning environments consistently outperform their counterparts, underscoring the favorable impact of incorporating blended learning into language education. Notably, student perspectives align with this trend, with most ESL students expressing a preference for blended learning over traditional methods due to its motivational aspects, enhancing their learning processes and ultimately elevating their English proficiency levels (Akbarov *et al*., 2018).

Despite the evident benefits of blended learning in ESL teaching and learning, there remains a need to identify effective strategies due to various obstacles. These include a lack of technological knowledge, time constraints for instructors (Oliver & Herrington, 2003), the need for technical assistance, and concerns regarding student engagement (Lionarakis & Parademetriou, 2003). Bonk and Graham (2012) highlight two critical issues in developing a blended learning environment: understanding learners' choices and fostering self-regulation. Learners' preferences for specific types of blended learning and the teacher's role in guiding and influencing learning are essential considerations. Additionally, adequate support for both technological and pedagogical aspects is crucial for optimal blended learning implementation (Bonk & Graham, 2012). The quality of instructional and technological assistance, along with the teacher's workload, significantly impacts the effectiveness of a blended learning environment (Reinders, 2012). While blended learning enhances learner participation and engagement (Liu, 2013; Banditvilai, 2016), challenges persist in terms of teachers' attitudes toward technology (Moskal & Cavanagh, 2013). A negative attitude can impede the successful implementation of blended learning. Therefore, careful attention to teacher support, training models, and workload management is imperative for a thriving blended learning environment.

In the realm of EFL/ESL writing, a fundamental understanding of structuring ideas into coherent paragraphs is crucial (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Cognitive demands, as highlighted by Molfese *et al*. (2011) and Zhang (2018), underscore the intricacies of writing processes such as planning, organizing, translating, and revising (Shaw & Weir, 2007; Teng, 2019). Writing is not merely about creating language but organizing it effectively, posing a challenge for learners. The significance of writing extends beyond academic performance, playing a vital role in real-life needs and social interactions (Saberi & Rahemi, 2013; Finlayson & McCrudden, 2019). Mastery of writing is essential for effective communication, problem-solving, and building relationships (Oktarina & Rafli, 2018; Soiferman, 2017). Blended learning proves advantageous in addressing both cognitive and motivational challenges in writing (Clark, 2013). Strategies promoting the adoption of writing strategies, supported by studies like Mastan *et al*., (2017), highlight the positive impact of blended learning on tackling the complexities of writing education. Motivation emerges as a crucial factor in the entire writing process, influencing idea development,

planning, writing, and the final product (Soleimani *et al*., 2020; Dörnyei, 2001). Ultimately, motivation is a driving force behind successful language learning and effective writing.

Motivation stands out as a significant contributor to the lack of English writing abilities among young learners, as supported by Thang *et al*., (2011). Their findings emphasize that learners' attitudes and motivation are pivotal factors influencing their proficiency in writing. Motivation, acting as a driving force, plays a critical role in fostering the acquisition and development of specific skills, as noted by Nation (2011) and Wang *et al*. (2015). The inadequacy of teaching practices has been identified as a key demotivating factor for students studying a second language. According to Kellogg (2008), the development of writing skills commences at a young age and continues for over two decades. This underscores the enduring influence of motivation on the writing process. Numerous researchers have delved into and substantiated the apparent connection between motivation and the evolution of writing skills. In the context of writing, motivation serves as a crucial catalyst, propelling students from mere action to the creation of a final product. It encompasses the entire writing process and has been consistently described in terms of both emotional and cognitive actions (Sugumlu *et al*., 2019). Soleimani *et al*., (2020) provide empirical evidence of the positive and significant association between writing motivation and the performance of L2 learners in writing. This underscores the pivotal role of motivation in shaping the effectiveness and outcome of the writing process for young learners.

The integration of blended learning into writing skills is not only crucial for academic pursuits but also for nurturing creativity and enhancing the cognitive abilities of young learners. Bostanci *et al*., (2018) demonstrated the superior influence of the blended learning approach on students' writing skills. The use of blended learning techniques, as opposed to traditional pen-and-paper methods, significantly improved learners' writing performances. Notably, writing instruction proved effective in both online and paper-and-pencil settings, with the online mode notably aiding students in honing their writing skills, as highlighted by Neumeier (2005). Blended learning, in particular, has been identified as a catalyst for enhancing students' writing abilities. Geta and Olango (2016) advocate for teachers to readily reshape their curriculum and assessments to incorporate blended learning, citing its favorable impact on young learners' writing performance. Keshta and Harb (2013) further support this notion, demonstrating the use of blended learning to effectively improve students' writing skills. In line with these findings, Garrison and Vaughan (2013) propose that educators leverage blended learning to fortify the teaching-learning process. They emphasize the utility of blended learning in offering educational courses and workshops for teachers, serving as a versatile tool to enhance the teaching of English. The collective evidence underscores the transformative potential of blended learning in cultivating and advancing young learners' writing abilities.

3.0   METHOD

This study employed a mixed-method approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods within a quasi-experimental research design. The focus was on exploring how blended learning impacts young learners' writing of sentences in a classroom setting. For quantitative data collection, pre-test, and post-test results, along with a questionnaire, were utilized. The sample comprised 30 mixed proficiency upper elementary learners from a Chinese Medium school in Johor, chosen purposively based on their English language proficiency. The 30 students were selected, considering the characteristics of the

population and the study's objectives, with a subset of 15 students showcasing high proficiency in writing and speaking English.

The students underwent an intervention of five weeks of Blended Learning by teaching writing using Google classroom. As after each lesson there was a specific task given and the participant had to complete it within the time frame. The students read the instructions and constructed sentences. The pre and post-tests, consisting of writing a paragraph (of the same format but different questions), served as useful tools for obtaining real-time test results. A questionnaire adapted from Chang and Fisher's (2009) study, titled Web-based Learning Environment Instrument (WEBLEI), was employed. The questionnaire comprised three parts, aiming to collect demographic information, measure student preferences on different learning modes, and assess the blended learning environment. Qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews with five randomly selected students from the Year 5 sample group. The interviews aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of blended learning based on students' perceptions.

Ethical considerations were addressed through informed consent forms and a clear explanation of the research's goals and techniques. The triangulation of data, validated through both data triangulation and external audit methods, ensured the trustworthiness of the results. Data triangulation involved combining evidence from various sources, such as questionnaires, test scores, and interview transcripts. An external audit, conducted by the Head of the Panel of English Language with a master's degree, reviewed the research aspects, including instruments, scoring techniques, and interview data themes and codes. The analysis was performed using SPSS 22 to enhance the robustness of the findings (Creswell, 1998; Silverman, 2015; Padmadewi and Artini, 2019). Table 1 shows the data analysis for the study.

Table 1 Summary of Data Analysis

Type of Analysis	Data Source	Method	Software/Tools Used
Test Paper Analysis	Pre-test and Post-test papers	ESL Composition Profile (Jacobs *et al.*, 1981)	Statistical analysis (mean, paired sample t-test)
Questionnaire Analysis	Responses from students	Descriptive analysis	SPSS software
Interview Data Analysis	Recorded interview sessions	Thematic analysis	Manual analysis

There are three parts to the data analysis, Test Paper Analysis; Questionnaire Analysis and Interview Data Analysis, explained in the following points:

1. For the **Test Papers**, the method uses Composition Profile (Jacobs *et al.*, 1981) used for marking the pre-test and post-test papers. The marks were recorded in percentages using statistical analysis (Mean and paired sample t-test). The purpose was to evaluate the impact of the Blended Learning Approach on young learners' writing skills based on the statistical analysis.

2. For the **Questionnaire**, the descriptive analysis using SPSS software is used to tabulate the respondents answers based on frequency and percentages. The purpose is to look into students' experiences and preferences in the blended learning environment.

3. For the **Interviews,** Thematic analysis of identifying common themes (words and phrases) is applied to the transcribed interviews in English which includes original comments,

mispronunciations, and made-up words. The purpose is to gain in-depth insights into the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the Blended Learning Approach in writing instruction.

These three analyses collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of the research findings, incorporating quantitative, experiential, and qualitative dimensions. The triangulation of these diverse data sources enhances the validity and depth of the study.

4.0   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigated the impact of the Blended Learning Approach on the writing skills and motivation of young learners. Over a span of 4 weeks, the Blended Learning Approach was implemented on a sample of 30 upper elementary students from one school. Employing a mixed-methods design, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. To address the first research question, quantitative data in the form of test scores were analyzed using SPSS. The second research question was tackled through the quantitative data derived from the questionnaire (WEBLEI), also analyzed using SPSS. The insights gained from these quantitative analyses were complemented by qualitative data obtained from interviews conducted with five students. The collective findings provide robust evidence supporting the efficacy of the Blended Learning Approach in enhancing the writing skills of young learners. Moreover, students' perceptions of Blended Learning were explored, adding a qualitative dimension to the overall understanding of the approach's impact.

- **Impact of Blended Learning on Enhancing Sentence Writing Skills in Young Learners**

Table 2 shows the summary of the scores obtained for the pre- and post-tests conducted.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistic of the Pre-test and Post-test scores

Sum	955	2164	1223
Mean	31.83333	72.13333	40.76667
Min Score	10	44	30
Max Score	56	97	60

The analysis of the of Pre-test and Post-test Scores (Table 2) shows that the mean score for the pre-test stands at 31.83, contrasting with the post-test mean score of 72.13. This significant difference of 40.76 suggests a notable increase in test scores following the intervention. Furthermore, the pre-test recorded a range of scores from 10 to 56, while the post-test showcased a range from 44 to 97. To emphasize the improvement, the individual differences between pre-test and post-test scores were calculated. The data indicates a positive correlation between the Blended Learning intervention and the development of young learners' writing skills. The substantial increase in mean scores underscores the effectiveness of the Blended Learning Approach in fostering progress in writing abilities.

Table 3 The Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality for the Pre-test and Post-test
Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
pretest	.104	30	.200*	.966	30	.444
posttest	.174	30	.021	.951	30	.179

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

In the normality assessment using the Shapiro-Wilk test, both the pre-test (p = 0.444) and post-test (p = 0.179) revealed p-values exceeding the critical value of α= 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis (i) fails to be rejected, indicating that the data is normally distributed. Consequently, parametric tests can be appropriately conducted. To investigate the significant difference between the mean pre-test and post-test scores, a paired sample t-test was employed. The following hypothesis were tested:

a. Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in young learners' writing skills before and after the implementation of Blended Learning (BL) Approach.
b. Alternative hypothesis: There is a significant difference in young learners' writing skills before and after the implementation of Blended Learning (BL) Approach.

Table 4 provides descriptive statistics for both pre-test and post-test scores, encompassing a sample of 30 students (N).

Table 4 Paired Samples Statistics of Pre-test Score and Post-test Score
Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	pretest	31.8333	30	12.21385	2.22993
	posttest	72.1333	30	14.15611	2.58454

The pre-test exhibits a mean score of 31.83, with a standard deviation of 12.21. In contrast, the post-test yields a higher mean score of 72.13, accompanied by a standard deviation of 14.15. Notably, the post-test mean surpasses the pre-test mean, signifying an improvement in young learners' writing scores following the implementation of the Blended Learning intervention.

Table 5 presents the correlation between pre-test and post-test scores. The correlation coefficient (r = 0.876, p = 0.00) indicates a strong and positive relationship between pre-test and post-test scores.

Table 5 Paired Samples Correlations of Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Paired Samples Correlations

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 pretest & posttest	30	.876	.000

Table 6 reveals that the average post-test scores exhibit a noteworthy increase of 38.56 points compared to the pre-test scores (95% CI [37.75, 42.847]).

Table 6 Paired Samples t-test

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences							
				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	
Pair 1 pretest - posttest	-40.30000	6.82364	1.24582	-42.84799	-37.75201	-32.348	29	.000

The obtained significance value of 0.000, being less than the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), indicates a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. Consequently, the rejection of the null hypothesis (a) and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (b) underscore a substantial dissimilarity in students' writing skills before and after the implementation of the Blended Learning Approach. This lends strong support to the notion that Blended Learning has played a pivotal role in the development of young learners' writing skills.

The current findings align with Mastan *et al*.,'s (2017) study on intermediate proficiency learners, revealing a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores, particularly in the components of writing skills (organization, content, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics). Similarly, Tsiriotakis *et al*.,'s (2020) research concurs with the present study, demonstrating statistically significant improvements in young learners' writing assessments, encompassing text quality and length. These consistent results highlight the practical effectiveness of a blended learning approach, specifically in enhancing sentence-writing skills among grade 5 learners (Tsiriotakis *et al*., 2020). It can be concluded that the Blended Learning Approach positively impacts young learners' writing skills, particularly in the production of written texts.

- **Young ESL learners' Perspectives on Blended Learning in sentence writing**

Table 7 illustrates the effects of Blended Learning on students' writing, gauged through questionnaire responses. Each statement garnered a notably positive response from the participating students.

Table 7 Effects of BL on students' writing based on the activities

Statements	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
	1	2	3
1. I **liked** the online activities.	0	0	100% (N=30)
2. The online activities **helped me** with my writing.	23.3% (N=7)	0	76.7% (N=23)
3. The activities **improved my writing skills.**	13.3% (N=4)	0	86.7% (N=26)
4. The online and classroom activities **worked well together**.	10% (N=3)	0	90% (N=27)
5.I got the **technical support** I needed during the activities.	13.3% (N=4)	0	86.7% (N=26)
6.The **instructions** given were clear.	3.3% (N=1)	0	96.7% (N=29)
7.I can **access learning materials** at all times.	0	6.7% (N=2)	93.3% (N=28)

The Table reflects overwhelmingly positive feedback on the effects of Blended Learning (BL) on students' writing activities, aligning with the syllabus objectives. Most of the students agreed (more than 86%) with the seven statements on the use of BL approach. Engagement and attitudes of learners play a pivotal role in achieving learning objectives (De Naeghel *et al.*, 2012). Notably, the incorporation of technology in teaching and learning processes fosters active participation among learners. Positive attitudes were cultivated throughout the BL Approach implementation, offering learners a step-by-step learning process through individual and pair work. This approach aligns with De Smedt *et al.,*'s (2019) assertion that motivation, specifically positive feelings toward activities, encourages student writing. Clark (2013) similarly underscores that learners' positive sentiments, developed through familiarity with writing processes using technology, serve as a driving force for writing. Clear teaching instructions, as highlighted by Finlayson and McCrudden (2019), support learners in understanding and applying acquired skills, imbuing activities with meaning. Access to provided materials during the teaching and learning process signifies learners' motivation and recognition of the importance of English writing for future purposes (Yunus, 2014). Despite these positive outcomes, it is noteworthy that some students (76%) perceived writing as demanding and time-consuming, expressing a lack of interest (Teng, 2019).

Table 8 presents students' responses in percentage form, showcasing the positive benefits of the Blended Learning (BL) Approach on young learners' motivation to learn.

Table 8 Students' Perceptions on Blended Learning

Statements	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
	1	2	3
1.Using Blended Learning allows me to **explore my writing**.	3.3% (N=1)	0	96.7% (N=29)
2.I can **ask my teacher** what I don't understand.	10% (N=3)	0	90% (N=27)
3.My **friends** support me.	10% (N=3)	0	90% (N=27)
4.I **enjoy learning** in a Blended Learning environment.	0	0	100% (N= 30)
5.I can **learn more** in a Blended Learning Environment.	0	0	100% (N=30)
6.**I feel bored** during English Lesson.	100% (N=30)	0	0
7.My **teacher is well** prepared for the activities.	0	0	100% (N=30)
8.**The activities are planned well**.	3.3% (N=1)	0	96.7% (N=29)

Notably, the questionnaire results indicate a substantial presence of autonomous motivation, with over 90% of students expressing agreement that the BL approach has enabled them to improve their writing skills. This aligns with Chang & Fisher's (2009) assertion that autonomous motivation is linked to more positive language learning outcomes and enhanced long-term tenacity. BL has facilitated students in exploring and deepening their understanding of writing. This aligns with Miarso (2014) and Bluic *et al's*., (2010) perspective, highlighting how the BL process allows flexible time for self-directed learning in writing. The effectiveness of the teaching and learning process, as supported by adequate teaching media, learners' aptitude, and a conducive educational setting with reliable sources, enables learners to enhance their writing abilities through well-planned activities. The higher percentage of agreement on certain items underscores the influential impact of BL in writing, consistent with the excitement reported in De Smedt's study (2019). Learners feel motivated to apply the writing skills and knowledge acquired through the BL Approach, creating a sense of pressure to write and achieve high scores (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In summary, the questionnaire results consistently affirm the positive influence of the BL Approach on young learners' motivation to learn, emphasizing the sustained benefits of autonomous motivation in language learning.

A focus group interview session involving five students was conducted to complement the quantitative data obtained through the questionnaire. The interview questions focused on three main aspects related to blended learning and the students' perceptions. The insights gathered during the session were analyzed to further address the second research question. The analysis identified three prominent themes that emerged from common aspects in the students' comments. Table 9 outlines three primary themes along with specific codes under each theme.

Table 9 Themes and Codes of Focus Group Interview

	Theme	Code
Theme 1	Blended Learning Approach changes negative perceptions of young learners	• **Activities** • **Instructions**
Theme 2	Blended Learning Approach promotes motivation	• **Personal value** • **Technology**
Theme 3	Blended Learning Approach promotes interest	• **Self-Confidence** • **Flexibility**

The subsequent explanations for each theme include code definitions, findings supported by examples from students' responses, and parallels with similar findings from previous studies.

Theme 1: Blended Learning Changes Negative Perceptions of Writing for Young Learners

The first theme delves into the notable shifts in young learners' perceptions of writing facilitated by the Blended Learning (BL) Approach. These shifts are pivotal as they influence learners' motivation and overall achievements in the writing domain (Loan & Yen, 2017). All five students unanimously expressed their initial dislike for writing activities and the subsequent positive changes they experienced after the BL intervention. Student 1 stated, "All these times, I never liked to write," echoing sentiments shared by Student 4, who found writing perpetually boring. Student 2, focusing on English writing, remarked, "I never enjoy writing in English because it's difficult." These sentiments align with findings from Yunus and Mat (2014), underscoring the widespread challenge of cultivating enjoyment in writing among students. Moreover, the reasons for their initial aversion to writing were consistent, marked by perceptions of difficulty, complexity, boredom, and frustration. Student 1 noted, "It's hard," while Student 2 found it confusing. Student 4 articulated, "It was boring and difficult," and Student 5 described it as "frustrating." This aligns with existing research highlighting the common view of writing as a challenging and time-consuming skill to acquire (Zheng, 1999; De Smedt *et al.*, 2018; Teng, 2019).

Traditional instruction was deemed ineffective, particularly in initiating the writing process. Student 1 mentioned, "I didn't exactly know how to start," and Student 2 expressed confusion about the initial steps. This underscores the importance of clear instructions, a sentiment echoed in Zhang's (2018) findings, where students appreciated well-guided teacher instructions. The positive response to BL Approach emphasizes the significance of step-by-step instructions in aiding writing development. This aligns with research recognizing the difficulty of writing, especially for second language learners, and the role of clear guidance in enhancing language skills (Mastan *et al.*, 2017; Padmawati & Artini, 2019).

Theme 2: Blended Learning Approach Promotes Motivation

Additionally, intrinsic motivation, a crucial aspect of individual desires and considered fundamental, was revealed as a positive outcome of the BL implementation. Post-BL, students perceived writing as beneficial, with Student 2 stating, "It is useful to me," echoed by Student 4, affirming, "Writing is useful." This aligns with Yunus and Mat's (2014) findings, where a majority recognized the utility of writing. The importance of writing proficiency is underscored as a necessity for participation in the community and the global economy (Graham, 2007; Williams and Lowrance-Faulhaber, 2018; Teng, 2019). De Smedt *et al.*,

(2016) further assert that motivation, particularly writing for personal value, contributes to exceptional authorship.

The educational benefits of technology, particularly through BL, were evident in creating a relaxed, spontaneous, and comfortable learning environment (Blair & Serafini, 2016). The students' preference for BL using Google Classroom was emphasized in their responses. Student 1 highlighted the accessibility advantage, stating, "The benefit is that it can be accessed everywhere." This sentiment was echoed by Student 4, who expressed, "I can use the Internet anywhere." This motivation, substantiated by empirical evidence, serves as a positive catalyst for writing performance, aligning with De Smedt *et al's.,* (2020) findings. The step-by-step instructional approach in BL enhances comprehension, fostering positive attitudes towards writing and, consequently, enhancing the perceived personal value of writing activities. In conclusion, BL Approach demonstrates a positive impact on young learners' intrinsic motivation for writing.

Theme 3: Blended Learning Approach Promotes Interest
Blended learning has been recognized by Al-Zumor *et al.*, (2013) as an effective enhancer of learners' confidence, enabling the enlargement of writing skills. The findings of our study aligns with this perspective, as evident in the responses of Student 1 and Student 5, expressing, "I have confidence to write now" and "This makes me have a lot of confidence, and I am not scared to write." Further support is found in the work of Mwakyusa and Mwalyagile (2016), emphasizing that the correct use of blended learning methods can enhance students' interest and writing skills. Annamalai (2016) similarly highlighted the positive impact of engaging in blended learning activities on students' technological knowledge and learning behavior. In the context of the current study, it can be inferred that the BL Approach contributes to building learners' self-confidence, fostering improvement in their writing abilities. The findings also indicate that learners, empowered by BL, are capable of independent exploration of information. Student 1 emphasizes, "It allows me to write at my own pace," and Student 5 notes, "Teacher won't need to explain a lot because we learn on our own." This ability to seek knowledge or exercises related to the topic without extensive guidance promotes self-directed learning. In conclusion, the outcomes of the interviews affirm the beneficial impact of BL on learners' writing skills, emphasizing increased motivation and enthusiasm. The adoption of the BL approach emerges as a catalyst for students' self-confidence, driving improvements in their writing abilities.

5.0   CONCLUSION

This mixed-method study looked into the efficacy of employing the Blended Learning Approach for young learners in enhancing their sentence writing skills. The study featured 30 participants, selected purposefully, and utilized a combination of pre-test and post-test for quantitative analysis, complemented by semi-structured interviews and a close-ended questionnaire for qualitative insights. The analysis encompassed marginal differences in test scores, employing descriptive statistics to compare means and standard deviations, while interview data underwent thematic analysis. The results offer valuable insights into why utilizing BL to teach sentence writing among elementary school students proves advantageous. Policymakers and educators can gain a deeper understanding of teachers' perspectives on instilling writing skills in young learners, enabling language learners to focus on developing robust sentence-writing

capabilities through BL. The study's findings affirm the effectiveness of the Blended Learning Approach for young learners in sentence writing, with significant understanding garnered from learners' perceptions and motivation. However, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations stemming from the chosen research design, sample size, study setting, data collection methods, and the specific focus of the research. Generalizing the results to the entire population may be restricted by the selected learners, and the absence of a control group could impact result interpretation. In light of these limitations, further research is recommended, addressing the specified aspects to enhance the robustness of findings. Ultimately, the hope is that this study's findings regarding the effectiveness of the Blended Learning Approach will serve as a reference for language learners worldwide seeking to enhance their writing skills.

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