

The Exeter Partnerships:
Blogs in Language Learning
Enhancing Students' Writing Skills through Blogs

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Signature:Laila AL_Balushi.....

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved MUM whose affection, love, encouragement and prays make me able to such success and honour.

With love, to the memory of my father whom I miss every day; I love you and I wish you were here.

To my brother in law Dr. Nasser Al_fazari who has been a source of inspiration and contiuosly provide me his moral, spiritual and emotional support.

To my sister Thuhina who believed in my dream, supported me during this journey. Thank you all for helping to give me the life I love today.

Aknlowdgment

Firstly, I would like to present my sincere gratitude to my first supervisor, Dr. Judith Kleine-Staarman, for her continuous support, patience, motivation and constructive feedback.

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Abstract

Blogs in Language Learning

Enhancing Students' Writing Skills through Blogs

Unlike receptive skills, such as reading and listening, writing has received relatively little attention in second language learning. The reason for this lack of attention is that reading and listening are assumed to create competence in second language learning since they form the input on which learning is based. Moreover, a number of studies in several English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts have indicated that second language learners consider writing skills as the most difficult skills to master. A number of studies also promote the use of educational technologies in teaching the English language, and blogging, in particular, is considered to be one of the promising educational media that can be used as a genuine tool to teach EFL in a way that enables the learners to use English for authentic and day-to-day life situations. The use of blogging has been shown to enable the students to learn English for real-life situations and purposes which eventually will enhance the EFL learners' English language competence in general and their writing skills in particular. Therefore, the main aim of this study is to examine the extent to which this new technology can enhance EFL Omani writing.

In this study, multiple qualitative methods were used within an interpretivist approach and a case study methodology to gather the required data. Therefore, after choosing the study context and working with foundation students at the Institute of Health in Oman, the following methods were applied. First, an open-ended questionnaire was used to establish baseline perceptions and to select the six students for in-depth examination. Second, a student blog was created and implemented, in which each participant had to write three original essays plus an edited version of each one based on peers' comments on their work. Subsequently, field notes were applied within the participants' writing class, and finally, the participants and their teacher were interviewed. The study obtained the following findings. The use of blogging as a new medium in teaching writing skills enabled Omani students to have a new learning experience where several changes occurred: 1. A change in understanding of being a writer, 2. A change

in understanding of a text, 3. A changing pedagogy for the writing classroom and 4. A changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes. This study is characterised by its original design and approach, by its context within the Arab world and its findings are likely to influence teaching L2 writing skills while applying new educational technology. The study offers compelling evidence that blogging facilitates interaction with peers and teachers and that this interaction changes both the understanding and practice of writing.

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List of Abbreviations & Acronyms

Abbreviation\Acronym	Full Terminology
ESL	English as a second language
EFL	English as a foreign language
L1	First language
L2	Second language
SLA	Second language acquisition
ZPD	Zone of proximal development
CALL	Computer-assisted language learning
ICT	Information and communications technology
CMC	Computer-mediated communication
STS	Socio-technical system
OPF	Online peer feedback
ESD	Education for sustainable development
BERA	British Educational Research Association

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Since the 1990s, governments have sought to integrate technology into the teaching/learning process (Courtney, 2010). In many countries, governments have had high expectations regarding the extent to which the implementation of technology in education will increase learning effectiveness and enhance students' performance (Kucirkova et al., 2017). In recent decades, a plethora of studies have been conducted to determine whether the use of technology in education has made a difference in terms of students' achievements (Simonsoon & Schlosser, 2017). The findings of these studies have ranged from showing that technology can make a difference in learning and boost students' performance to indicating that it makes a limited or indeed no difference (Shuyan, 2012). Consequently, there is no definitive answer regarding whether the application of technology leads to a more effective learning process and enhanced student achievement (Cooper, 2013), making it paramount to consider the context in which technology is applied for teaching and learning.

The findings of research that examines the effectiveness of the implementation of technology in this context will largely depend on the individual context (Wiseman, 2014), as this effectiveness is influenced by the teachers' and students' responses and attitudes towards the use of technology as a learning aid. Furthermore, it depends on how the people in that context perceive the roles of the teacher and students, respectively, in the teaching/learning process. The application of a study's findings concerning the effectiveness of the use of technology in one learning environment to another can produce unexpected results (Khine, 2015) since every environment has certain unique and contextual factors. A considerable amount of research has been conducted that explores the use of blogs in English as a second language (ESL) classrooms around the world. Nevertheless, the current study is still relevant as it will explore the effectiveness of the use of blogs in the second language (L2) teaching and learning context in Oman, as well as the unique Omani characteristics that determine their relative effectiveness and success. The study takes into consideration the findings of other studies but also recognises that these findings were gathered in different contexts to that of Oman. These findings represent a

useful background to this study; however, further results are expected that are especially relevant to the Omani context due to its unique nature and the specific collaborative context adopted.

1.2 The background of the current study

Like other governments that are keen to enhance students' performance as they learn ESL, Oman has opened the door to the use of various educational technology tools based on a student-engagement approach in this field to make English lessons more effective (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2018). This study is the outcome of my experience as a teacher of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Oman and as a PhD student in the UK. It is a combination of my aspiration to teach ESL/EFL in a more effective way and my desire to help learners use English for communicative purposes, master the four linguistic skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), and gain value from the knowledge and experience I have accumulated during my period of study in the UK. Having been an ESL teacher in Oman, I am aware of the challenges that Omani students typically face as they learn English, particularly aspects of the language such as grammar, spelling and punctuation. I have also realised that writing is the most challenging area for Omani students since this skill involves mastering the other skills that make up language learning.

My postgraduate studies in the UK have made me aware that languages can be taught via the adoption of a range of educational tools. Moreover, I have discovered that the use of blogs written by people from various countries can be a helpful aid to teach ESL classes effectively (Dalir et al., 2013; Godwin-Jones, 2003). However, I accept that this does not mean that blogs will necessarily be as useful in Omani ESL classrooms as they are in other educational contexts since educational backgrounds, people's perceptions of technology, the teaching process, and the roles of teachers and students in this country are unique. Therefore, I have decided to conduct this study to explore whether the use of blogs in English classes in Oman can foster language learning, as well as to uncover the particular challenges that may prevent such learning from taking place, focusing on factors that are specifically relevant to the Omani context.

My aim is that this study will support Omani students in the course of the challenges they face in their development as speakers of ESL. My postgraduate studies in the UK have taught me that the application of any teaching method or tool should take into account the context and factors that contribute to the effectiveness or otherwise of that method or tool. Therefore, this study will examine and record the implementation of blogs in the Omani ESL context and investigate the context-related challenges that hinder the full potential effectiveness of blogs.

1.3 Statement of the problem of the current study

The Omani government has set targets for the Omanisation of the country, which means recruiting only Omani citizens for new vacancies in all sectors of the economy rather than employing those of foreign nationalities. The government has placed heavy emphasis on teaching English in schools and universities at all stages and is keen to equip the graduates of Omani schools and universities with English communication skills of language, with a specific emphasis on speaking and writing (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2018). Despite the government's policies, there are still some gaps in the competencies of school and university graduates, which are particularly manifested in their limited command of English for communicative purposes (Kirkpatrick, 2016). Several scholars have found that Omani students' English proficiency is still not at a satisfactory level (Al-Issa & Al-Balushi, 2011; Sivaraman et al., 2014). The government has identified writing as one of the most critical language skills, and it is also one of the main weaknesses of many Omani students, especially at the university level (Barnawi, 2017).

Based on this background, the current study will investigate the use of blogs in EFL classrooms in Oman and examine the extent to which this technology can enhance English learning among Omani students. Research has shown that the use of blogs in the classroom has several advantages, and studies have been conducted to explore their specific utility. Blogs are a social media platform that many Omani people use for communication, and therefore they are available to everyone who has access to an internet connection. The disadvantages of the use of blogs in this context will be examined with the ultimate aim of helping to guide teachers to bridge the gaps that can result from

this educational pathway. This study understands that no educational tool can be universally successful in the classroom because of the impact of the context and aspects such as students' and teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of tools. Therefore, this study does not claim that blogs are a simple solution to the challenges Omani students face as they learn English, as it is based on the belief that any technological tool can have advantages and disadvantages in the classroom depending on the context and the learners' and teachers' attitudes (Bin & Michael, 2018) as well as on the nature of the tool.

1.4 The rationale behind the current study

The Omani government endeavours to implement technology in ESL and EFL classrooms to generate better results and increased competency among the students. Learners' perspectives and attitudes are pivotal to the success of these technologies, as positive attitudes tend to lead to effective learning (Zaphiris & Ioannou, 2018). If blogs are to succeed as a tool in the Omani ESL context, there is a real and urgent need to gain an understanding of learners' perspectives and their responses and attitudes towards the use of this tool. The use of blogs in Oman cannot be expected to succeed simply because it has been effective in non-Omani contexts. The rationale behind the current study is as follows. First, it will define the extent to which students' larger audiences may influence their writing performance, as well as the role of students' first language (L1) in EFL writing classes. It will then examine the impact of the use of blogs on the students' attention to text and their attention to the act of writing. Subsequently, it will explore the implementation of educational technologies in the Omani ESL/EFL classroom to accelerate learning English and enhance learners' performance. Finally, it will identify the limitations that can result from this new teaching pedagogy.

1.5 Significance of the current study

This study is among the few that have examined the EFL context in Oman; however, previous studies have focused on assessing Omani students' competence in English (Al-Issa & Al-Bulushi, 2011; Barnawi, 2017; Sivaraman et al., 2014). Very few studies have investigated blogging as a pedagogical method for teaching writing in Omani EFL classrooms, and this study is unique in it is

reliance on qualitative data collection methods, which allows the researcher to gain in-depth insights into the study problem and topic. The significance of the study is also derived from the authentic teacher–student and student–student interactions that have been observed and recorded over a period of time. Furthermore, the study took place in the natural setting of EFL classrooms in Oman, in which the learners used English for authentic purposes and in a naturalistic way rather than following artificial and ready-made methods. The students interacted with blogs in a naturalistic style and wrote blog posts based on their own ideas.

This study is important since it provides a realistic description of how EFL students learn writing via blogging and of learners' responses and attitudes towards this use of blogging in an era when governments are competing to invest more money in the implementation of technology in learning. With this background, research is needed that explores the benefits of technology and whether technology fosters learning. It is important to note that the study emphasises the fact that the use of blogging in the Omani EFL classrooms is not a problem-free area and needs to be examined carefully in the light of Omani classroom culture, students' and teachers' attitudes, and how new pedagogical methods can fit into this classroom culture.

1.6 Research aim and objectives

The study aims to examine the extent to which this new technology can enhance EFL writing in Oman. Therefore, the research aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To define the relationship between students' audience and their blog writing in English;
2. To identify the impact of blogs on students' attention to text (product) and students' attention to the act of writing (process);
3. To examine the role of the first language and the target language to construct a text in English;
4. To explore the potential drawbacks of the use of blogs from the perspectives of Omani EFL students and their teacher; and
5. To ascertain the role of blogs in the classroom culture of this study.

1.7 Outline of the thesis

The thesis comprises seven chapters. Chapter One is the Introduction, which outlines the study background, problem, aim and objectives. This chapter introduces the study and its goals.

Chapter Two is the Literature Review, in which relevant studies and theories are reviewed and analysed to identify any gaps in the literature that the current study can fill. This review includes approaches to teaching the skill of writing, various ESL approaches to teaching this skill, the benefits of the use of blogs in ESL classrooms, and how writing is perceived in the L2 context.

Chapter Three examines the context of the study, and Chapter Four details the research methods employed to achieve the objectives and answer the research questions. A number of research paradigms, approaches and strategies are discussed, and those that are deemed to relate most to the objectives and questions are selected and justified. In addition, the data collection and analysis methods and sampling are outlined. Additionally, ethical considerations that are relevant to this study are discussed. Chapter Five presents the findings of the study together with their analysis and interpretation to address the research questions.

Chapter Six discusses the findings in light of the theoretical background of the study and the body of literature from which it is derived. Chapter Seven provides several conclusions and recommendations that can be derived from the study and considers its significance to the EFL context in general and Omani EFL classrooms in particular.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, theories about writing will be discussed to gain an understanding of what writing is and how it develops. The theoretical foundations will be outlined with the different theories, providing contrasting explanations of what writing is and how it is conceived. The implementation of technology to support writing and written outcomes will be discussed, and studies on the use of blogs and how they affect the development of L2 writing teaching will be described. This chapter will also review the types of transfer that occur in L2 writing. The aim of these discussions of writing from different angles using different media for instruction is to present a comprehensive overview of what influences L2 writing, as well as whether and how blogs can be effective in developing the L2 writing skills of Omani students. Understanding all the processes and issues involved in writing helps in gaining an understanding of whether blogs can be a useful tool to enhance the learners' achievement when they use blogs to write and interact with one another.

Writing in L2 classrooms has received little attention (De Oliveira & Silva, 2013), especially in the Arab world of L2 writing classrooms (Bailey & Damerow, 2014). Consequently, there is a lack of understanding regarding the nature of writing activity and what it involves. One result of this is that L2 writing has been viewed as simply composing decontextualised sentences (Nicolás Román, 2015) written by the students and assessed by the teacher, with the focus predominantly being on grammatical errors (Manchón, 2012). Teaching L2 writing has aimed to produce writing that is error-free without paying much attention to the context, the audience or the content (Kaplan, 2010). However, teaching L2 writing has changed significantly by using the affordances of technology in teaching L2 writing and being informed by the emergence of different theories of learning and language learning (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2013). The focus has shifted from the grammatical accuracy of the written work to the content and information it communicates, as well as the social context of the text (Hinkel, 2003; De Oliveira & Silva, 2013). L2 writing has started to be taught for authentic purposes, where the students are involved in writing tasks that are

addressed to an authentic audience. Context is viewed as an essential element in L2 writing. Teaching L2 writing has changed in various stages, and the stages of each change are characterised differently. This part of the literature review will discuss the different approaches to teaching L2 writing and how the focus of each approach has changed as a result of a variety of factors, which will now be explored. The features of each stage will be analysed, and how this is significant for this study will be discussed. L2 writing has also been influenced by second language acquisition (SLA) theories, though not all SLA theories address writing since their focus has been on teaching spoken language. The SLA theories that are more relevant to L2 writing are the sociocultural approach and the interactionist approach. The interactionist approach postulates that learning takes place through interaction. According to this approach, writing is a social process that is facilitated by instructional scaffolding. Features of the sociocultural approach are evident in the study of collaborative writing. The interactionist approach has been adopted to study oral language acquisition; it suggests that learning a spoken language can take place by communicating in that language. These theories will be comprehensively discussed later in this chapter.

2.2 Theoretical approaches to teaching L2 writing

The conventional historical narrative of L2 learning tends to focus on the pedagogical approaches to L2 writing. Four major approaches are identified: “controlled composition, current-traditional rhetoric, the process approach, and English for academic purposes” (Silva, 2003, p.28). Silva (1990, p. 36) describes the relationships between these approaches as a “merry-go-round of approaches” that “generates more heat than light and does not encourage consensus on important issues”. Raimes (1991) defines the history of L2 writing as the development of competing pedagogies with different foci: focus on the reader, focus on the text, or focus on the writer. According to Llach (2011), the different concepts of writing determine different pedagogical approaches. The various concepts of the nature of writing can be grouped into three dichotomies, with each focusing on one aspect of writing: writing is perceived as “a product or a process, a cognitive or a social activity, a content-oriented or a form-oriented activity” (Llach, 2011, p. 42).

2.2.1 The debate about teaching L2 writing as a product or process

In the early 1960s, the ideology underlying L2 writing studies was the product-oriented approach. This was influenced by the dominance of the audio-lingual approach to language instruction, where the focus is on prescriptive grammar, translation, and textual devices. As a reaction to this teacher-centred approach in L2 classrooms, L2 writing research started to adopt a process-oriented approach to L2 writing. In this approach, attention is paid not to what the learner produces in writing but to how they produce text and the processes that are involved in this pursuit (Zhao, 2015). Writing studies have concentrated on the characterisations of writing activity as a self-regulated, problem-solving, information-processing and decision-making process, where learners juggle competing elements related to discourse, lexis, and pragmatic and linguistic constraints (Zhao, 2015). Subsequently, the sociocultural approach has been influential in that it pays the most significant attention to the multifocal nature of writing and issues such as the complexities of individuality, politics and power relations.

The product-process distinction has led to heated debate in the literature on writing (Llach, 2011). The product-oriented approach to writing suggests that language structure and forms require special attention. From this perspective, knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and punctuation is vital for good writing. According to this approach, writing involves making decisions about syntax, grammar and morphological inflexion and combining them in a coherent form. 'Good' writing is grammatically error-free. Conversely, a lack of grammatical knowledge is a sign of 'bad' writing (Matsuda, 2014). The major goal of L2 writing is to practise grammar and lexis, and learners learn to write by practising with large quantities of writing. Accordingly, writing is not an end in itself but a means for learners to solidify their grammatical knowledge (Matsuda, 2014). Notably, the process-oriented approach suggests that writing is a process comprising the following stages: planning, generating ideas, writing drafts, re-reading, revising, restructuring, and editing. This approach is based on considering writing as a cognitive activity, whereby the purpose is to communicate and express meaning (Matsuda, 2014).

The product-oriented approach perceives writing in L2 as a solitary activity (Bukta, 2014) where after instruction, students are asked to write assignments

and the product is then assessed by the teacher on the basis of grammatical accuracy. The focus of this approach is on the outcome of writing rather than on the cognitive processes that lead to the product (Bukta, 2014). Al-Mahrooqi and Denman (2014) suggest that the product-oriented approach to L2 writing is when the final product is emphasised. Here, writing activity is a linear process, and form and grammatical accuracy are emphasised. It is also teacher-centred, using guided and controlled writing as the basis for teaching techniques. Furthermore, creativity and idea discovery are not encouraged, and there is only one audience: the teacher. The communicative approach is not used, and surface-level features are considered. However, the process-oriented approach to L2 writing takes into account the processes that are involved in account the processes that are involved in the activity of writing.

2.2.2 Writing as a product-oriented approach

The development of writing models has been affected by a number of factors that shape these models and help in gaining an insight into them. According to Hayes (2013), cognitive psychology and Herbert Simon in particular have directly influenced writing models by exploring the processes through which people comprehend written texts. A series of protocol studies have been conducted for this purpose. Use of the protocol analysis technique and the models of the cognitive process have been extended to explore writing. Understanding the foundations of the writing process can take place through psycholinguistic theories. In the last quarter of a century, researchers of writing have been achieving significant progress in improving understanding of writing and the cognitive and social processes that it involves (Hayes, 2006), and empirical findings have led to the formation of new theories about writing. Three different issues have shaped the development of writing theory. These are “research on the role of working memory in writing, studies of the efficacy of free writing, and proposals to use activity theory as a framework to understand the context of writing” (Hayes, 2006, p. 1).

Theories of working memory help in explaining the development and individual differences in writing (MacArthur & Graham, 2015). There has been agreement that working memory should be included as an essential component in writing modelling (Hayes, 2000). Dehn (2011) defines working memory as the

process of retaining information while processing the same information or different information. It is also described as an information-processing gateway between long-term memory and short-term memory. Two models explain the role of working memory in the modelling of writing. The first model developed by Hayes (1996) represents working memory as the source of all the processes that take place when writing. It is a source that is available for the writer in all the stages of writing. In contrast, Kellogg's model (1996, 1999) proposes that only particular writing processes draw on working memory but not all of them. Kellogg (1999) explains that translating and reading depend on verbal working memory but not spatial working memory. Moreover, the author argues that planning and editing use spatial working memory but not verbal working memory, whereas programming and executing motor movements use neither verbal nor spatial working memory.

However, what most researchers have agreed on is that working memory has a limited capacity, and this explains the difficulties faced when composing a text. Composing a text requires that a sufficient amount of information is either kept active in working memory or easily accessible while planning ideas, generating sentences, and reviewing ideas (Grigorenko et al, 2012). When composing, the author is involved in a number of stages: the concurrent planning of ideas, generating sentences, and reviewing ideas and text. This is a task that heavily taxes executive attention and other components of working memory. The products of writing processes – the product of planning, the product of sentence generation, and the product of reviewing – should be kept in working memory and maintained by allocating executive attention to them. The products of the writing processes can be classified into three types of representation: representation of the writer, of the text itself, and of the reader. Notably, other different representations are the author's ideas, comprehension of what the text says, and interpreting for an imagined reader. Therefore, executive attention should be available to juggle the basic courses of writing, planning, generating sentences and reviewing in addition to the three representations of content (Grigorenko, 2012). The essential executive component of working memory is most involved in text production since limited attention is divided between planning, generating text or sentences, and reviewing both ideas and text. Empirical studies have supported the claim that working memory resources are significant, especially

executive attention, in developing advanced writing skills. Advanced writers manage to deal with the limitations of working memory by adopting goal-directed strategies, where they break down the task of writing into portions (MacArthur & Graham, 2015).

Furthermore, there has been agreement that writing is a self-directed process. Skilled writers use different strategies to regulate the writing process, their behaviour, and the writing environment (MacArthur & Graham, 2015). These strategies include goal setting and planning, where the writer sets rhetorical targets to achieve them; seeking information, where the writer gathers information related to the topic; record keeping, which is about the note taking; organising, which is about putting the notes in order; transformation, which is about visualising the audience or reader to match the writing to the reader's needs; self-monitoring, where the writer ascertains whether the goals are met; reviewing records, which is about reviewing the text; self-evaluating, which is about assessing what has been written so far; revising, which is about modifying plans for writing; self-verbalising, which is about saying dialogue aloud while writing; and rehearsing, which is trying out a scene before writing it. This huge range of skills illustrates how cognitively demanding the act of writing can be. Whether the writer is inexperienced or an expert affects the capacity and use of short-term memory. When the writer is an expert, they are able to select ideas from their long-term-memory and establish them in an effective structure to satisfy a rhetorical purpose. The expert writer, therefore, needs less working memory capacity for the planning and translating processes since so much of the writing process, such as the forming of words and sentence structure and syntax (Becker, 2006), has become an automated response over time. Thus, the expert writer has an increased capacity to consider the rhetorical and meaning-making aspects of writing. The approach used in Oman for teaching L2 writing is the product-oriented approach, where the purpose of writing is to solidify the grammatical knowledge that has been presented in the classroom. The main focus for the learners in Omani L2 writing is to produce grammatically error-free written texts, for which the audience is the teacher. The learners are asked to write decontextualised sentences after they have been presented with new vocabulary. They are asked to write using new words so that the teacher can ensure they know the meaning of the words. The learners are also asked to write

when they have been presented with a set of new grammatical rules. They are asked to write some text or a group of sentences that exemplify the new grammatical rules. The learners write with the teacher in mind as the only audience. The only aspect that is considered in assessing the learners' writing in Omani classrooms is grammar and how far it writing adheres to grammatical rules.

In contrast to the product-oriented approach to L2 writing, Al-Mahrooqi and Denman (2014) characterise the process-oriented approach as follows: being concerned with the hows of writing; teaching students different strategies and idea discovery; taking into account the individuality of students – their needs, interests, styles, abilities; taking into account the fact that writing processes overlap and do not occur in a linear pattern; seeing errors as signs of the writing process; using an approach that is student-centred, communicative, and focusing on writing for different audiences; emphasising writing as an activity of meaning discovery; considering writing activity as a cognitive and intellectual activity and one of the most complicated human activities; and seeing writing as a goal-oriented activity, contextualising writing and connecting writing with generating new ideas. In the Omani L2 teaching classrooms, little or no attention is paid to the processes involved in writing a text or to the creating or discovering of ideas to be transferred into words. In many Arab countries, including Oman, the focus on writing is only to pass an examination and receive a grade from the teacher. This makes writing decontextualised and artificial and gives the students no sense of writing for an authentic purpose to an authentic audience (Ahmed & Abouabdelkader, 2016). Muthanna (2016) describes the features of teaching writing in the Arab world, such as Oman, as teaching punctuation marks and grammar and how to write a sentence correctly.

2.2.3 Sociocultural approaches to L2 writing

The emergence of sociocultural learning theory inspired L2 writing researchers to view writing as a social and cultural activity (Lei, 2008). Researchers started to conceptualise L2 writing as being influenced by the social and cultural circumstances of the L2 learners. Based on the idea of connecting the individual and society, Atkinson proposes a post-process approach for L2 writing activity (Lei, 2008). The post-process approach aims to explore the shortcomings of the

process-oriented approach of L2 writing and go further than the traditional view of L2 writing (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2013). The process-oriented approach to L2 writing views writing as generating and transferring ideas from the mind or memory of the individual writer to the written text (Grigorenko, 2012). The post-process approach to L2 writing has broadened this view by emphasising the sociocultural context in which the writer performs the writing activity and the ways in which textually mediated social interaction impacts the process of writing (Grigorenko, 2012). One of the process writing models is the cognitive model, which characterises writing as a problem-solving act (Grigorenko, 2012). Studies from the 1970s and 1980s emphasise the psychological dimension of L2 writing, where the focus was on planning, revising and editing (Grigorenko, 2012). The emergence of the sociocultural approach to writing is evidence of the shift from a purely cognitive approach to the writing act to another approach where there is greater consideration of the social and cultural context where composing a text takes place (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2012). According to Wigglesworth and Storch (2012), language learning, written or oral, is a social activity that takes place in a social context. Learners can learn by scaffolding each other's knowledge.

Sociocultural theory suggests that learning and competence in L2 take place in interaction and not as a result of interaction: learning and development is a socialisation process (Bitchener & Storch, 2016). The interaction can be between an expert and a novice, where the latter learns in communication with the former. They both need to co-construct the assistance between the two, and this assistance needs to be responsive to the needs of the learner. Development occurs when the learner performs according to their potential not their capacity (Bitchener & Storch, 2016; Vygotsky, 1978). The tenets of the sociocultural theory can be applied in the L2 writing classroom in different ways. For example, the implementation of peer review in the L2 writing classroom embodies the tenet of the theory which suggests that language learning and development is a social action that requires interaction (Gathercole, 2013).

Knowledge is not constructed solely by the individual L2 writer but by the social and contextual setting in which learning happens. The impact of the social environment is evident when the learners learn in interaction with each other (Gathercole, 2013). Moreover, the implementation of the concept of the zone of

proximal development (ZPD) is applied in the classroom through learners' peer feedback, where the expert assists the novice in using their potential to learn and develop their L2 writing (Gathercole, 2013). The other practices that mirror the sociocultural theory in the L2 writing classroom are the inductive approach to grammar, teacher or student scaffolding, peer-to-peer interaction for feedback and mentoring, and talk, which are all essential since 'knowledge construction is mediated by language' (Flowerdew, 2015, p. 27).

2.2.3.1 The role of classroom culture on students' L2 writing

Anthropologists argue that culture is a system of knowledgeable conduct and that it explores how people arrange and ascribe meaning to the world surrounding them (Young, 2014). Matsumoto (2009) states that cross-cultural research made a contribution to psychology in the area of critical thinking and scientific philosophy. According to Matsumoto (2009), culture is a meaning and information system that is shared by a community and passed down through generations, which enables people to survive, coordinate and transmit social behaviours and to seek pleasure, health, and a meaningful existence. The culture of the classroom consists of developing an environment in which students feel free and safe to participate. This is a place in which everything should be recognised and included. Students must be comfortable to share their feelings, and teachers should be ready to facilitate learning (Aydin, 2014). The culture of classrooms, instructors and cognitive behaviours has received significant attention since the introduction of L2 learning research as a component that influences the performance of the individual in L2 learning. In the last ten years, however, academics have focused on the impact of culture on language learning. The reason for this is that researchers are more conscious of the relevance of culture as a tool to build effective second language learning (Olusiji, 2016).

Together, teachers and students from various cultures constitute a multicultural classroom setting, where both teachers and students experience some contradiction in actions, regarding which they have distinct attitudes and views. If their thoughts and opinions on the matter do not match, misunderstandings and disputes occur, and even cultural clashes can emerge when one has expectations of a specific style of action and receives something different (Zhao, 2016). Language teachers have always recognised that acquiring

a second language means learning a new culture. This is one of the main reasons that languages may be learned to experience a new culture from within and enhance one's capacity for appreciating other human experiences. The successful language students learn culture and language combined, which makes it much harder to separate language and culture (Kim, 2020). The relationships between communicative parties can differ between writing and speaking. This indicates that the amount of interaction between students and the extent to which they exchange knowledge about their history and culture can affect the features of spoken or written language (Farhadi Shamsabadi, 2015). In Farhadi Shamsabadi's (2015) study, all the students were Omani but the teacher was not Omani. This creates a multicultural classroom. Therefore, this study is linked to the present study.

The classroom culture consists of interpersonal relationships and arrangements that are distinctive in their contribution to outstanding learning results. The relationship among students is assumed to be crucial in developing and enhancing learner skills and capacities to achieve constructive and successful L2 learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). A good student–student relationships has a long-term effect on students in the classroom since it immediately influences how and how much students learn and work together. Cooperation among students can improve learning and improve the intended learning results in L2 classes. Additionally, in all learning types, the relationship between a teacher and students must be developed. A facilitated instructor with moral values, knowledge, and a good teaching attitude is necessary for developing a positive teaching environment, which is crucial for L2 learning, as students may feel comfortable with the teacher and their L2 learning will improve. Success or failure in learning a foreign language depends on several key elements, including the social and cultural background of learners, their personality, their way of perceiving, and their surroundings, including teachers and their peers (Bhatti et al., 2020).

For a successful classroom culture, a teacher must have a strong character, moral values, a style of teaching, a positive attitude, and a good relationship with the students. The interaction between students and teachers will enhance L2 classes' efficiency and contribute to higher learning outcomes (Pham et al., 2020). Specific elements such as social and cultural context, arrangements,

learning techniques and environmental factors contribute implicitly to the ability or inability to develop a foreign language (Bhatti et al., 2020). Sociocultural theories address the development of human cognition through social activity when an individual interacts with another person, events, and objects. Human cognitive development, therefore, cannot be isolated from the social, cultural and historical settings in which it occurs. This social and cultural involvement is managed through culturally produced instruments such as language, symbols, signs and materials that create higher-level human forms of thinking (Özdemir & Aydın, 2015).

The classroom consists of different interpersonal relations, which are crucial to the creativity of learners. Appropriate teaching strategies used by teachers develop a good learning environment that offers considerable possibilities and enough opportunities to improve the performance and learning of students. Teachers have a long-term impact on their students when they sensitively determine their understanding and their way of interacting with each other and their surroundings (Gao et al., 2019; Han & Xu, 2020). Blogging provides a virtual cognitive development environment that is impacted by the community and culture of L2 learners (Driscoll, 2005). The process of establishing knowledge of societies and of exchanging ideas with collaborating members is regarded as one of the greatest stages in the field of online collaborative learning through computer-mediated communication (CMC) (Özdemir & Aydın, 2015). Language learning is the process through which cultural elements or communities' voices are adopted in large social contexts. Through blogging, the learners have access to practical use of language in a real language context whether they are in the classroom setting or in a virtual environment. Blogging provides the option of regular peer assessment and improves learning with cooperation, flexibility, inclusiveness, and more relevance to students at any time (Shao, 2011). In addition, it provides a virtual multicultural environment for learners where learners of multiple cultures are engaged and create an online community. Learners express their ideas through blogs and obtain feedback from their audiences. Furthermore, blogging provides actual opportunities for communication in a realistic environment where a real, active and engaging audience may read and write. It also makes it easier to collaborate on the World Wide Web in writing and reading. For L2 students who have limited

opportunities for exposure to the target language in an original situation, blogs can provide a real learning environment (Özdemir & Aydın, 2015). Blogs are used experimentally for language learning to build abilities in comprehension and reading, and while blogging must not substitute face-to-face interactions, it may offer a real-life setting in which learners think, reflect, and slow down language (Pinkman, 2005).

Fathi et al. (2019) emphasise the positive effects of blogs on increasing grammatical competence and their ease of use. Zhang's (2009) study demonstrated that adopting blogging in L2 situations enhances students' interest and motivation for reading and writing. Pham and Nguyen (2020) argue that blogs may be a dynamic platform to promote broad language practice and to motivate students to study and to build learning methods. Moreover, blogging can improve the analysis and critical thinking abilities of students (Zhang, 2009). Language teachers need to assist pupils to comprehend not only their language but also how culture affects language, communication, and interactions (Kidwell, 2019).

2.2.4 Genre-based approach to L2 writing

The genre-based approach to L2 writing emerged in the mid-1990s. What the genre-based approach added to the previous approaches to L2 writing is that writing is not only an internal cognitive act but also a "socio-culturally situated communication practice" that draws attention to the type and purpose of a given text (Carbaugh & Hastings, 1992, p. 36). Emphasising the notion of genre encouraged the "understanding of the relationship between the communicative purpose and the features of text at every discourse level" (Deng et al., 2014, p. 9). The rise of genre-based approaches to L2 writing occurred as a result of the dissatisfaction with the process-based approach, which views L2 writing as a solitary process performed inside the writer. The genre-based approach sees writing not only as a cognitive act but also as a purposeful social act. One of the advantages of the genre-based approach is that it is explicit and systematic. Most importantly, the genres chosen for instruction are based on the learners' needs (Long & Doughty, 2011).

Through the genre-based approach, writers become aware that different texts are shaped for different readers in different social contexts. In genre-based instruction, the aim is to enable L2 learners to read and analyse academic

discourse and write academic texts that adhere to the sociocultural norms of a particular academic genre (Hinkel, 2011). However, the genre-based approach has been criticised by some researchers. For example, some researchers consider the genre-based approach to L2 writing as subjective, culture-bound, defined vaguely, and irrelevant to the different types of EFL/ESL learners. They also state that genres can be conceived as stable entities, whereas they are perhaps better understood as sociocultural processes in flux (Hinkel, 2011). Polio and Williams (2009) identify some disadvantages of the genre-oriented approach. One drawback is that genres are thought to be embedded in their sociocultural context in a way that makes it difficult to separate them from the context and teach them in the classroom. Genre theorists respond to this criticism by stating that genres should remain anchored to the context for which they are created to be taught in a successful way. Another criticism of the genre-based approach is that genres can become too much like recipes. A study that surveyed teachers' attitudes towards teaching genres in the L2 classroom found that they feel that using the genre-based approach to teach L2 writing seems similar to the traditional ways of teaching formulaic modes of writing without considering the communicative purpose. Genre theorists admit that although the genre-based approach can limit the learners' choices, this limit is a necessary condition for learning. The writer is not the only determinant of the written texts; there are other factors that shape the text genre, such as sociocultural settings and the purposes of writing, for example, reports, emails or a personal letter (Oxford, 2013).

In a genre-based L2 writing classroom, the teacher asks the learners to analyse a text of a particular genre. The learners provide the input for writing a text of the same reading genre while the teacher models how to write this specific text genre. Thus, learners are enabled to write a text in a specific genre. The strategies used in this classroom are identifying the purpose of writing a particular genre of texts, emphasising the sociocultural setting or context of a text, and following a genre pattern. In this case, the process-based approach to L2 writing can be used by considering this task in terms of planning, writing and revising (Oxford, 2013). The concept of genre covers semantic, contextual and lexicogrammatical areas. Within the genre model, the social setting is semiotically constructed, semantics and pragmatics are inseparable, and language learning takes place through contextually based ways (Ryshina-Pankova, 2010).

As language is the vehicle through which ideas are constructed in writing (Kucer, 2014), it is essential to understand which approach to language should be adopted for writing pedagogy to be more effective. There are two main approaches to the study of language. The first approach is concerned with language as a form, which is called the formal approach. The second approach is concerned with language as a function and an instrument to create meaning (Zimman et al., 2014). Halliday's approach to language is concerned with language as a social phenomenon. His approach leans towards the functional rather than the formal aspect of language (Butler, 2003). According to Halliday (1970), there is a notion of metafunction, which is related to the multifunctional aspects of the language from which users choose when they want to constitute meaning. The users' options are embodied in the meaning potential and reflected in the grammatical options of language. Writing as a linguistic mastery requires functional linguistics that will contribute to the development of genre writing by young children. The functional approach to language, presented by Halliday, has provided a genre description to writing pedagogy. Teachers have been given constructions and descriptions of the main features of genres; this enables both teachers and learners to develop writing in different genres. This has taken place by teaching children to connect certain communicative goals with corresponding language structures (Rose, 2009). Therefore, language knowledge is essential for focusing on language as a means to an end in writing rather than as a set of forms to be learned. Teachers should shift the focus from language as a form to language as a function.

Moreover, there has been a transformation from sentence level to discourse level and the purpose of writing, including description, writing letters, writing complaints, and comparison (Renandya & Widodo, 2016). The above discussion indicates the need to approach L2 language as a function and not only as a form. Omani learners, and all L2 learners, should be encouraged to discover the connection between the purpose of the language they are using in writing and the discourse or context about which they are writing. They should also be encouraged to use language to create meaning and genres rather than focusing on formal grammatical units as decontextualised. Significantly, writing pedagogy has been influenced by a range of different theoretical perspectives. This study is best aligned with a sociocultural perspective, even though the focus is on the

writing process, by arguing that writing is considered as a social activity and will support learning since the best learning actively takes into account the social and communicative context.

2.2.5 Using the pedagogical approaches for L2 writing in the classroom

By reviewing the pedagogical approaches to L2 writing, it can be observed that the relationship between these approaches is complementary rather than in competition. Teachers in an EFL/ESL classroom need to teach L2 learners how to write grammatically accurate texts that adhere to the rules of English syntax, morphology and semantics; this can be done using the product-oriented approach. Teachers also need to teach learners to think creatively, to plan, to compose according to the plan, to revise, and to edit. This is the core of the process-oriented approach. Learners of ESL/EFL need to learn to write for a particular audience, context and sociocultural situation. It is also essential to be aware that different contexts require different language and discourse. The L2 writing classroom, therefore, requires elements of every approach. One approach is not sufficient to make L2 writing instruction effective. The focus should be distributed to take into account all the factors that contribute to successful L2 writing instruction. The author's view is that the L2 writing teaching puzzle will be completed by borrowing pieces from each approach. The critical issue that can be observed in the approaches reviewed is that the focus on the writers and their cognitive process has increased when moving from one approach to another. In the product-oriented approach to L2 writing, no attention is paid to the writer while all the attention is paid to the grammatical accuracy and adherence to the rules of punctuation and inflexions. In the process-oriented approach, the focus has shifted to the cognitive processes that are involved in writing a text; however, these processes are thought to be uniform, and the writing process is viewed as solitary. The sociocultural approach views writing as the interaction between the sociocultural setting and the writer.

The approach that I will design specifically for the Omani context will combine elements of every approach. However, the major focus will be on how the sociocultural setting and the writing process interact and promote the creation of ideas and knowledge discovery within the writer/learner.

2.2.6 Metacognitive thinking skills

Burke (2007) defines metacognition as thinking about thinking. Metacognition is what is beyond thinking in the sense that it is the individual's awareness of their thinking process. Beamon (2001) defines metacognition as a powerful phenomenon that enables learners to set targets, problem-solve, and evaluate their own thinking effectiveness. It is the means via which learners assess what they know and what they need to know and do in a learning situation. The term 'metacognition' was coined by the psychologist Flavell (1979), who emphasises its importance in L2 acquisition in that it plays a significant role in comprehension, memory, reading, writing, attention, and problem-solving. The study of metacognition is essential to this current study, as it aims to investigate how the use of blogging, as a learning medium of ESL, encourages the study participants to use their metacognitive skills and knowledge to produce authentic and meaningful messages that are addressed to an authentic audience. Drmrod (1990) lists the characteristics of metacognition as follows: it is the individual's awareness of their learning, memory, and how realistic their learning is; it is the individual's awareness of the effectiveness of a learning approach and the extent to which it is useful; it is a way of planning that can be successful for learning; it is an approach that enables an individual to evaluate their learning status; it is a valid set of strategies that support learning; and it is the individual's knowledge of using methods that are sufficient for recalling stored knowledge.

Carver and Scheier (1998) designed a model of what happens in a problem-solving activity. When a learner solves a problem, they observe the task requirements and their information about the task. The learner creates products in their working memory and checks whether they have the knowledge that can help in problem-solving. The learner forms an action-list of the types of knowledge available in the working memory and then applies the content of the action-list to the task. The products should be abstracted at a level appropriate enough to make stored knowledge applicable to the task. It is also essential that previous knowledge and experience are activated to identify applicable solutions (Gama, 2001).

Chen (2010) argues that the metacognitive theory comprises metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive strategy. One of the learning strategies is the metacognitive strategy, which is an executive skill of high order

that includes planning, monitoring, and finally, evaluating. After having mastered the metacognitive strategy, learners become more autonomous and independent. They will also be capable of processing the three components of metacognitive strategy: planning, monitoring, and evaluating. In brief, the metacognitive strategy is based on planning, organising and monitoring an individual's learning process. Using metacognitive strategies in writing instruction is student-centred instruction, which aims to foster the students' metacognitive strategy with its three components in L2 writing. According to the classification of O'Malley and Chamot (2001, as cited in Yang, 2009, p. 136), planning includes seven strategies: "planning, monitoring, evaluation, directed attention, selective attention, self-management, and functional planning". Planning is about resolving conflicting action statements that apply to the conditional clause in the system of language production. Monitoring includes only one strategy, self-monitoring, and it is about being aware of what an individual is doing. Evaluation is a conscious process with the function of inspecting learning outcomes. This study will focus on metacognitive awareness of the writing process by showing how writing as a social context supports metacognition and its construction.

Metacognition is an essential factor in self-regulated learning. Metacognitive strategies can be used and refined automatically as required in skilled performance. However, some students may not be able to develop metacognitive strategies spontaneously, and therefore teachers should provide explicit metacognitive knowledge through instruction in both metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive strategy. Teachers can raise students' awareness of learning by teaching them how to reflect on how they think, learn, and perform tasks. The most critical issue is that teachers focus on the idea that students are responsible for their learning outcomes and their everyday life (Hartman, 2001). Metacognition as a sub-process is vital to self-regulation. A number of processes are involved in self-regulation, such as control, monitoring, planning, organisation, self-monitoring, and self-organisation. Although metacognition is essential to self-regulated learning, it is insufficient to achieve successful self-regulated learning. Self-regulated learners are motivationally and behaviourally committed and have high self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-attainment. They are also goal-oriented and persistent (Tarricone, 2011).

According to Wei et al., (2014), studies have shown that in the L2 writing process, the critical skills for proficient writers are planning and organising. In L2 writing, skilled writers have the ability to plan and structure ideas, whereas less experienced writers have a limited capacity to do so. Planning and organising are teachable strategies. By teaching L2 learners these strategies, teachers can foster the learners' writing development. Some models have been designed to teach L2 learners the cognitive strategies of planning and organising, such as the computer-assisted language learning (CALL) approach and the self-regulated strategy development model. These include components of modelling, scaffolding, and self-evaluation by the students.

Magogwe (2013) conducted a study to explore the relationship between the learners' knowledge of metacognitive strategies and their writing performance. In this study, the learners were focused on linguistic aspects of writing rather than on how to communicate with the audience and adopt cognitive strategies, and therefore they are not deemed competent writers. The majority of the student participants believed that the primary purpose of writing is to produce an organised, structured and grammatically correct text. They did not focus on communicating with the audience or the strategies to plan, organise and evaluate. It seems that when the focus of the learners or the teaching approach is on grammar and spelling, metacognitive strategies are not used, as the learners do not write for an official purpose or an authentic audience. They only emphasise the written word regardless of the audience and the social context.

In summary, studies have concluded that metacognitive skills and strategies are essential for effective L2 writing. Writing is not only about writing a text that is grammatically correct but also about which strategies should be adopted to create a text that communicates with the audience and encodes an authentic message. Blogs are believed to develop metacognitive skills and strategies by creating a learning community online, where the learners share creation and experiences as well as attitudes. This study, therefore, seeks to explore the metacognitive strategies that the learners use when writing and how blogging can aid them when using metacognitive strategies and knowledge to communicate meaningful and authentic messages to an authentic audience. The role of blogs and technology in L2 writing will be discussed in more detail in the next section of this literature review.

2.3 Technology in education

In this part of the literature review, the ways in which technology has changed teachers' and learners' perspectives on and attitudes towards L2 acquisition in general and L2 writing in particular will be explored. Many people have claimed that technology has transformed L2 learning, reinforced learner-centred learning, and made learning more interesting (Thomas, 2009; Al-Mahrooqi & Troudi, 2014). However, Evans (2009) urges caution, as technology itself has not been developed with the aim of making changes; instead, it is how technology is used that matters here. In fact, the use of technology often reflects existing pedagogic practices; those who endorse a sociocultural perspective have seen benefits, as technology has supported collaboration among the learners, as well as interaction. However, those who value putting learner needs at the heart of their practice argue that technology cannot meet the needs of all types of learners. Therefore, the value of technology is always dependent on the way it is used. This study takes place in an educational context where technology is used increasingly. The aim of the study is to explore how technology can be used within a sociocultural view of writing pedagogy to increase metacognitive awareness of writing processes.

2.3.1 The changes in the definition of learning after technology implementation

The aim of using technology in education is to achieve more effective teaching and learning and attain more satisfactory outcomes and achievement. The objective of applying technology in education has also been to prepare learners for work and practical life by equipping them with skills and knowledge in using technology (Zhang et al., 2016). Whether technology has achieved the aim for which it has been implemented in education is a complex question, around which a plethora of studies have been conducted (Al-Mahrooqi & Troudi, 2014; Khirwadkar, 2005; Selwyn, 2016). Nevertheless, the answer is still unclear. Some studies conclude that technology has made a difference and augmented the learners' achievement and boosted their learning. Rushby and Surry (2016) claim that technology in the developed world has changed the state of the teaching and learning process from a teacher-led and classroom-based process to a lifelong learning process that is learner-focused. Conversely, other studies conclude that

applying technology to education can make no difference in the learners' achievement. Teo's (2011) study found that applying technology in the teaching/learning process did not enhance the students' achievement, which was been measured mainly by test scores.

Technology has changed how people perceive learning and teaching and the role of the teacher and learners. For example, Thomas (2013) found that pre-service teachers who were learning Chinese online changed their perception of learning a foreign language after they experienced online foreign language learning. Moreover, they became more positive about learning Chinese. According to Zou (2013), gaining an understanding of learning L2 has changed how learners and teachers perceive it after using technology in teaching L2. Vinagre (2016) conducted a study that aimed to foster the development of intercultural competence of a group of Spanish and English students. The students participated in an online collaborative project in a wiki. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. The study found that the students' knowledge of foreign language culture improved and that their intercultural communication was enhanced. Similarly, Carrió-Pastor (2016) argues that technology has led to a change in how learners perceive their role in the learning process. The learner's role is not that of a passive recipient who receives information about language and stores it to retrieve it in the examination. Instead, learners become active members in their learning and contribute to their knowledge and experience.

Moreover, the teacher's role is not as central and dominant as it was prior to the implementation of technology in teaching in the sense that the teacher is not the only source of knowledge for the students, as was the case in classrooms before technology was introduced. Access to multimedia and social media has enabled learners to participate in their learning process by using their background knowledge of language and the world to learn new knowledge. Teachers share authority with the students and technology, and their authority and control can become more limited (Wang & Winstead, 2016). Technology does not diminish the teacher's role but shifts the focus from teaching to learning (Umunadi & Olulobe, 2013). Technology has changed how education is perceived. Is it the outcome of dealing with students as empty containers to be filled by the instructor? Or is it based on the learners' involvement in the learning process,

where the learners contribute to their learning with their background knowledge and new perspectives have emerged on learning based on the merging of different learning theories? Some of the prominent theories are the sociocultural theory, as discussed in section 2.2.3. Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD, a community of learners, computer-supported collaborative learning and problem-based learning theory are components of the sociocultural theory. All these theories are based on the same assumption that learners are active participants in their learning and they construct knowledge in a meaningful context. Technology has been expected to conform to the new definitions of learning and the focus on the learners as the centre of the teaching/learning process. In other words, the aim of using technology has been to create a more active role for the learners and implement the sociocultural perspectives, whereby the primary focus is on the interaction among the learners for learning to take place (Meskill, 2013).

Moreover, in learning via technology, it has been found that individual differences affect learning in general and L2 learning in particular. These individual differences include cognitive styles, learning styles, learning strategies, and practical factors. There is evidence that these components affect how learners learn and shape their learning (Ransdell & Barbier, 2012). Gagne (1977) states that cognitive styles refer to the learners' preferred approach for organising and representing information. Within the field of cognitive styles, two dimensions can be distinguished: field dependence and field independence. Field-dependent learners are individualistic and learn and accept ideas through analysis. Field-independent learners work collaboratively, are directed externally, and take ideas as they are presented. CALL and technology in general can facilitate learning for all the cognitive types of learners by matching the learning styles to the types of learners. A learning style is the individual behaviour through which the learner approaches a learning experience. It is dynamic in the sense that it can be adapted according to the environment of learning and the subject being learned. It is personal and mental (Foroozesh-nia, 2019).

Nevertheless, it should be noted that in this discussion, the value of technology in education is always based on how it is adopted and applied. It is a means and not an end in the sense that it is adapted to facilitate learning and to cope with the learners' needs, which differ from one context to another. Moreover, the use of technology conforms with the context where it is used; this context

shapes how technology is used and why (Younie & Leask, 2013). Consequently, the current study's findings are expected to be shaped by the Omani context, which will determine the use and affordances of blogs when they are used in teaching and learning ESL.

2.3.2 Technology and SLA and L2 writing

The ultimate goal of writing a text in L2 is to produce an active and engaging text that is also grammatically correct with correct spellings and syntax and appropriate morphology. However, applying technology has shifted the focus from the prescriptive grammar and correct spelling, which is done automatically, to creating ideas and the cognitive and sociocultural processes that are involved in the writing process. In other words, the use of technology in ESL writing has shifted the focus in L2 writing from dealing with writing as a product, or use of a product-oriented approach, to a more cognitive and sociocultural approach. The latter reviews how the L2 writer writes about a specific genre and the processes they use to produce a written activity within a cultural and social context. This can perhaps be done without the aid of technology; nevertheless, the use of technology has made a difference (Safieddine, 2014). Furthermore, the writing was conceived as an individual solitary act; however, with technology, especially Web 2.0, learners have been able to write together. Collaborative writing tasks implemented by technology provide the learners with opportunities to engage in authentic communication and important text production (Storch, 2013).

Because of the growing emphasis on collaborative learning in L2 writing, blogs have become very popular in the last decade. Through blogs, learners can jointly write and edit written documents in a web-based environment. A learner can be both a writer and an editor. By exploring the learners' revision behaviour and the use of scaffolding and autonomous learning, research shows that blogs support the learners' language development, such as accuracy, spelling, and corrective feedback (Smith, 2015). In addition, blogs are considered as an interactive virtual tool, which ranges from a public journalistic resource to private and personal websites connected to social and interactive networks (Ishihara & Takamiya, 2014). Readers are provided with the space to write comments after every blog post, which makes blogging a multidirectional interaction (Ishihara & Takamiya, 2014). Blogs have changed the culture of teaching L2 writing in the

sense that they have changed the role of the teacher and the learners, as well as how learning is conceptualised (Meskill, 2013). When using blogs, learners become an integral part of a discourse community in a diverse and complex setting. Learners have become able not only to write in L2 but also to reflect upon and analyse the writing task. They have also become more able to negotiate and construct meaning collaboratively (Spiro, 2013). Felicia (2008) argues that blogging gives the learners the opportunity to use whatever literacy they want and the language with which they feel comfortable. Through blogging, value has been given to the written product of the learners, where they are able to use the form they want. A kind of dialogic interaction is created when the learners are encouraged to cite their friend's blogs in their academic writing as they cite any other scholar's text or book. According to Godwin-Jones (2008, p. 7), blogs have "precipitated changes in modes and uses of writing online". Blogs can help learners not only to practise L2 writing but also to negotiate ideas as individuals and as part of a group in a collaborative environment. Moreover, learners can persuade and give peer reviews and feedback (Long & Doughty, 2011).

It has been perceived that L2 writing has changed significantly from merely practising the skill of writing accurately to a combination of activities and cognitive processes. Blogs provide the potential for learners to create online content, and online collaboration contributes to facilitating the learners' integration into specific communities of practice. Thus, blogs can enhance autonomous learning (Hyland & Shaw, 2016). The critical point here is that the use of blogs and technology has added to L2 writing activity, and pedagogy is enhanced by a deeper engagement with the social and interactive nature of writing.

2.4 Affordance theory and the affordances of blogging

In this part of the literature review, affordance theory and the affordances of blogging as a tool for teaching ESL will be reviewed.

2.4.1 Affordance theory

The concept of affordance was developed by Gibson, a psychologist (1979). Affordance was the basic element that was used by Gibson (1979) for his theory of human perception. According to Gibson (1979, p. 127), affordance can be defined as "what the environment offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes,

either for good or ill”. Affordance theory is related to the value and meaning of something and what it can offer other objects that exist alongside it. Every object in nature has something to afford to other objects. For example, forests provide cool places to stay, a haven for a number of animals, oxygen for the atmosphere, and attractive views. Different components in nature have various nutritional and manipulative affordances for other objects. For any individual, “other animals afford care, interaction, communication, fighting, and playing. The most significant affordance is the one offered to humans by other humans. Humans interact, and they touch when they are touched; they strike when they are struck” (Al-Balushi, 2016 p. 20). This means that in the human world, behaviour affords behaviour. It is important to mention here that human behaviour is shaped by what the observer perceives or misperceives or interprets in relation to another person’s behaviour (Gibson, 1979). Perception is key in understanding human affordance since what humans consider as affordance takes place through their perception of whether another’s behaviour is affording or not.

To distinguish affordance theory from traditional enrichment theories, Gibson refers to the affordance theory as differentiation theory (Robinson, 2012). According to traditional enrichment theories, perception takes place within the brain, and therefore it is cognitive rather than environmental. Nevertheless, Gibson (1979, as cited in Robinson, 2012, p. 11) highlights the role of the environment in affordance theory and claims that “the environment is richly specified, and the work of perceptual learning consists of increasingly learning to interact with this real world of affordances”. Traditional enrichment theories have paid less attention to the environmental factors that play a role in perception, which they consider instead as cognitive issues. Conversely, Gibson considers the environment to be a rich source of perception and perceptual learning, which is achieved by interacting with the real environment. One of the characteristics of affordance theory is that perception is relational, neither subjective nor objective. In terms of being relational, affordance theory refers to the relations between the objects and not to the objects themselves. The second characteristic of affordance theory is that perception is reciprocal: it is based on the perception of the other person’s behaviour. The third characteristic is that action and perception co-specify each other, as they cannot be separated (Robinson, 2012).

Language learning is a process of meaning-making. According to affordance theory, the environment provides language learners with opportunities for language use, as Robinson (2012, p. 11) highlights that the “world where the language learner lives is full of arrays of potential affordances that can be turned into meaning”. Based on affordance theory, the environment can afford a variety of meaning-making resources that can activate the learners’ use and learning of the L2. The environment where the L2 learner is located is rich with affordances, and according to Van Lier (2006, p. 29), “affordance fuels perception and activity”. An affordance-based approach to language learning emphasises the interdependence of the learner and the environment, as well as social interaction: “social interaction makes it possible for linguistic affordances to be available for the child and the cultural contexts for language learning” (Van Lier, 2014, p. 36). According to Gibson, the environment of the language learner is viewed as a set of afforded potentials. Gibson’s perception theory has influenced and developed a linguistic theory of situations. The theory posits “that language offers certain affordances to its users. Language plays a significant role in communicating information about situational affordance” (De Angelis & Dewaele, 2011, p. 2). Norman (1988, p. 123) defines the perceived affordance as “what determines usability and... makes a strong connection between the perceived abilities of the human being and the affordances”.

2.4.2 Blog affordances

In the current study, affordance theory has been adopted to explain how technology in general and blogs in particular can afford opportunities for language learners. “Affordance theories are a rich source of useful concepts for describing how attributes of online technologies interact with the other elements of a learning context, including learners, teachers and the physical environment” (Day & Lloyd, 2007, p. 3). Conole and Dyke (2004) created a taxonomy of ICT affordances. This taxonomy was created based on Gibson’s (1979) concept of affordances and Beck (1992) explanation of risk. As Conole and Dyke (2004, p. 114) state, “we believe that a better understanding of the nature and properties of technologies will lead to a more systematic application of the use of ICT for learning and teaching”.

According to Conole and Dyke (2004, pp. 116–120), ICT includes the following affordances: “accessibility, a speed of change, diversity, communication and collaboration, reflection; risk, fragility and uncertainty, immediacy, monopolisation and surveillance”. The significance of Conole and Dyke’s (2004) study is twofold. First, it will aid other researchers to conduct further studies that examine Conole and Dyke’s (2004) taxonomy of ICT affordances to gain a better insight into the limitations and strengths of affordances. Second, their analysis will help teachers to apply the appropriate affordances that meet the needs of their students in a particular context. More recent interpretations of affordance theory, especially those that are related to computer interface design, show that it is human perception of the affordance of a particular object that elicits certain types of activity, not only physical existence or structures (Oviatt, 2013). Distributed cognition means that affordances are characterised by the interrelation between the physical and actual structure in the environment and the person’s internal representations, which leads to personal physical activity (Oviatt, 2013). Affordances can be positive or negative, beneficial or detrimental (Mather, 2013). A food source will have a positive affordance in the sense that it affords to eat; however, a precipice will have a negative affordance in the sense that it affords to a fall (Mather, 2013). Likewise, in learning, one context/element can have both negative and positive affordances. For example, based on several studies, the use of ICT in the education context may have a positive affordance in one study and a negative affordance in another study. In this respect, Mamun (2015, p. 151) found that the use of Facebook increased students’ mistakes while “processing information circulated by fellow students on Facebook”. Conole and Dyke (2004) argue that digital technologies have affordances such as fostering communication and encouraging collaboration and reflection. However, they highlight that the affordances of digital technologies depend on the individual, as every individual approaches the use of technologies with a different set of personal preferences and competencies, which determine whether affordance is achieved or not.

Haines (2015) conducted a study to explore how learners of L2 perceived the affordances of blogs in L2 learning. The data collection method used was interviews, whereby the researcher interviewed 16 teachers of EFL in Australia and New Zealand. The study found that teachers have different perceptions of

the affordances of blogs in teaching EFL or L2. For instance, one teacher believed that one of the affordances of blogs was to communicate with her students. When her students created the blogs, she thought that learning and teaching became possible. This teacher identified other blog affordances, for example, students can write for an authentic audience, they learn to use language for authentic purposes, and shy students are enabled to write and express their ideas.

Another teacher had a different perception of blog affordances in foreign language learning. She believed that through blogs, learners of a foreign language will have a rich input of the foreign language. Blogs also offer a window to the cultural perceptions and attitudes of the foreign country being studied. According to Philp et al. (2013) blogs have built-in affordances that invite learners to edit, comment and revise while they are writing. Writing online encourages learners to interact with authentic audiences, and this can develop collaborative peer writing, which also cultivates group engagement through the process of writing online. Another affordance of blogging is that blogs meet the learners' need for feedback and error correction of their writing in a constructive and simple way (Hedberg, 2010).

Agency is a crucial issue in affordance theory. Gibson (1979) highlights that an organism can survive as a result of its perception; its perception helps it to act when faced with a stimulus. An agent can have an affordance to do an action. "The perceptual capabilities of the agents help them to detect affordances through features such as colours and smells from the environment" (Nye & Silverman, 2012, p. 180). There are several affordances within any environment that the agent needs to be aware of through either direct perception or experience (Nye & Silverman, 2012). In the case of language learning, the agent is the learner. The environment has meaning potential. The agent has perceptual abilities, attitudes and readiness to detect the affordance in the environment. Affordance is the relationship that provides the match between what the environment offers and the learner (Van Lier, 2006). Farr and Murray (2016) emphasise this idea by arguing that a theory of affordance for CALL should not be related to technological aspects but should rather be focused upon educational and social affordances. In this case, affordances are defined as the relationship between the features of an educational intervention and the learner's

characteristics that enable certain types of learning to take place. There is also a relationship between learning and affordances, which is represented by the issue of when learners are active in an environment, they are able to detect properties of the environment that provide opportunities for action and then for learning (Farr & Murray, 2016).

Therefore, the current study aims to investigate the features of blogs and the learners' characteristics that enable certain types of learning to take place. The study will examine how blogs provide opportunities for action for the learners and then for learning. Omani learners will be active in an environment that encourages them to use blogs for ESL learning, and the study is designed to explore the relationship between learning and blog affordances.

2.4.3 Studies on using blogs in second/foreign language learning

In discussing the effectiveness of blogs in ESL learning and writing, a question about the qualities of an educational blog has been raised, namely what makes a blog an effective educational or pedagogical tool? Lohnes (2006) states that although blogs offer students the opportunity to express their voice and identity and support some types of communication, something is lost when the blog is used as part of a course. She believes that students' blogs do not represent an 'authentic blog'; however, she makes the concession that students' blogs are hybrid. Lohnes (2006, para. 1) highlights several factors that contribute to producing an effective academic blog: "blog posts should be original, well-crafted and well informed; there should be an authentic purpose for maintaining the posts; it should inform you about the author's identity and community, and, finally, blogs should provide a sense of intimacy and immediacy". It can be noted, however, that although blogs are most frequently used for personal purposes, they have considerable potential for educational purposes. This is due to factors such as their open and friendly format, post and commentary organisation, permanent links, interactive nature, and the fact that they can be created easily (Angelaina & Jimoyiannis, 2011).

Van Compernelle and Abraham (2009, p. 194) believe that blogging promotes "critical interpretive reading skills, develops writing abilities and fosters intercultural understanding among L2 learners in formal structured educational settings", as their study demonstrated. Kirkgöze (2014) argues that since

teachers can also add their announcements, news and feedback to students through the blogs, this makes using blogs an interactive method of supporting writing development. Blogs can promote literacy skills and academic writing and foster L2 learner autonomy (Zaphiris & Ioannou, 2014). They can also be based on reflective writing and the learners' ability to express their own ideas, aspects of writing that increase the learners' sense of autonomy and their perception of how language works to perform a communicative function (Kirkgöze, 2014). In other words, according to Kirkgöze (2014), blogs enable learners to gain awareness of themselves as autonomous learners and of associated language functions. However, another group of educators argue that the advantages and the effectiveness of blogs in teaching ESL/EFL are exaggerated, and that this effect is limited. This is supported by Bloch (2007) and Domalewska (2014).

Wan et al. (2012) highlight that although using network blogs in college English teaching has a number of positive points, it also has some constraints, such as the absence of the network and the absence of environments that provide excellent learning. Moreover, because of the failure to meet the students' individual needs and learning styles and the lack of teachers' blogs and recommended resources, there is less guidance and fewer language amendments, which negatively affects the learners' results, and there is a lack of sufficient educational blogs that support the students in learning English. Furthermore, Williams (2014) argues that on a number of occasions, the misuse of technology has damaged learning. Pedagogy should be put first, and the driving force of using technology in language learning should be pedagogy rather than technology. Despite the criticism of the use of blogs in L2 teaching by some educators and the contradictory results regarding the impact of blogs on education (Kim, 2008), it is believed that blogs enhance writing skills, particularly regarding collaborative writing and culture (Chang, 2012; Dalir et al., 2013; İnceçay and Genç, 2014).

Many studies have examined how blogging can affect L2 learning and development, as well as the areas in L2 learning where blogging can be more effective. Kim's (2008) study attempts to answer the question of why blogs have been preferred to CMC, which is an issue very few studies have attempted to address. The study was based on two points: there is no clear explanation or rationale of why CMC has been replaced by blogs in teaching L2, and there is no

substantial evidence of the effectiveness of blogs in teaching, as results are contradictory. For example, several studies (e.g. Zaphiris & Ioannou, 2022) found that blogs help students to express their thoughts. Students are also able to reflect on course materials. In addition, blogs increase the students' interactivity in terms of intellectual exchange. Blog posting and course materials are linked, which helps to provide an important link that ties together the students' study and lectures.

Conversely, however, another research study yielded contradictory results. A study conducted by Kim (2008) concluded that using blogs in teaching does not enhance interactivity among students. Kim (2008) developed the socio-technical system (STS). STS theory is based on the recognition that organisations are influenced by and influencing the environment where they are located. Any change in the organisations or the external environment will affect the other. With the STS as the background, Kim (2008) explored the interaction between blogs, blog users and the external environment. The investigation covers the issues of the interactivity, open system, and non-technical internet users. It was concluded that based on STS theory, blogs have not evolved by a single component, but by all components (work system design, bloggers, and the external environment) (Kim, 2008). This is due to the fact that blogs and their function are influenced by the work system design, bloggers and the external environment, which interact. Du and Wagner (2006) list the characteristics of blogs as personalised in the sense that they are designed for personal use and they adopt an informal and personal style; web-based, which means that they can easily be updated by using a web browser; community-supported, which means that they can be linked through the web, allowing for the linkage of ideas and exchange of information and knowledge; and automated, which means that bloggers are required to focus only on the content since they do not need to write HTML code. Yang (2009) conducted a study to examine how student teachers of EFL use blogs to critically reflect on their learning process and to gauge the effect of blogs on their professional growth. The sample was 43 student teachers in two teacher education programmes. Two instructors created a blog as a forum of discussion, which required the student teachers to engage and study their reflection processes. The study qualitatively consisted of the students' messages on the blog. Blogs were also used as tools of reflection. The results showed that

students discussed teaching theory-related issues and their implications through the blogs. All the participants were reflective and deemed technology useful for exchanging ideas and reflecting. The study concluded that blogs are tools that promote critical reflective thinking in EFL teachers.

As mentioned previously in this chapter, it is considered that blogs are useful in developing writing skills in teaching EFL. Lin (2015) conducted a study to investigate the effectiveness of the blogging approach in Taiwanese EFL writing classrooms. The study was experimental: there was a 16-week experiment that involved 18 university EFL students. The stages of the experiment were as follows. The participants created their blogs on Lang-8. They were encouraged to post seven entries on any issue about which they wished to blog. The study was both qualitative and quantitative. For the quantitative part of the study, two writing tests were used to assess the students' performance in writing. A questionnaire was also used to examine the students' attitudes. In the qualitative part, interviews were used to gain an in-depth understanding of the students' learning experience. The results showed that the implementation of learner-centred blogging in EFL writing instruction helps students to develop their writing skills and enhances their self-efficacy and motivation.

Soares (2008) highlights that blogs are best suited for reading and writing where users can write about what interests them. Since the students' written work can be accessed by the public, the student blogger gains the feeling of writing for an authentic audience, which gives them a stronger reason and purpose to write. Since blogs provide the opportunity to archive the written posts, they can serve as an online portfolio, which allows students to assess the progress they have made during the writing course. Students are also given the freedom to write about what interests them, which gives them the opportunity to develop a sense of ownership and to acquire knowledge of how to create a hypertext document. In addition, this provides them with a sense of responsibility, as they are solely accountable for the content of the document. These findings are consistent with Godwin-Jones' description of blogs. Godwin-Jones (2003, p. 12) describes blogs as the "collaborative area which has sparked the most intense interest in recent years". The use of blogs by L2 learners develops a sense of responsibility and ownership, which is incredibly motivating for students in developing a sense of achievement and positive self-esteem.

Bloch (2007) carried out an in-depth analysis of the blogging practice of one EFL student to investigate the link between using blogs and the development in his academic writing. Bloch (2007) concluded that the student made progress in academic writing, especially in his rhetorical strategies. Nevertheless, there was no substantial evidence that blogging supported him in aspects of writing such as grammatical control. While blogging may not be beneficial in every context, it is important to note that this caveat does not prevent ensuring that there are areas of writing instruction where blogging is useful. For example, blogging can act as an interactive tool for creating and exchanging knowledge among bloggers. Later, this knowledge can be transferred to classroom writing tasks. Blogging can also empower knowledge construction, as learners learn from each other and their mistakes. Moreover, when students find a gap in their knowledge when writing a blog, they attempt to bridge it by reading about the topic. Domalewska (2014) conducted a study to ascertain whether blogging promotes connectivity and collaboration among EFL students. The results showed that interaction between the students was limited, which indicates the limited benefits of blog use as a means of fostering collaboration in an EFL classroom. The participants in the study rarely commented on their classmates' blogs, as their comments were not conversational. These students were reluctant when using blogs and posted only a few entries, which were short and infrequent. The posts did not invite discussion. The author concluded that in this context, it is impossible to achieve collaboration between EFL learners.

In summary, various studies yield different findings. Some studies found that blogging is an interactive tool that promotes collaboration and interaction in the L2 classroom. Furthermore, it has been found that blogging creates a sense of responsibility and ownership, which motivates learners to write and blog. Blogging also supports the creation of an electronic portfolio, whereby the learner can track the development of their language learning. However, studies such as those conducted by Bloch (2007) and Domalewska (2014) found weak evidence to support the argument that blogging cultivates collaboration between EFL learners or that it is linked with the development of the academic writing of a student learning EFL. Evans (2009) highlights three factors that build the process of learning: technology, the learner, and the learning context. In any study,

consideration of these three factors will determine how effective a certain technique is in promoting learning.

2.5 The role of the audience on the students' writing skills

A blog provides a setting in which language is stimulated by the interaction between bloggers and readers. This interaction can affect the lexical and syntactic choices of bloggers when writing; however, it does not end here, as every event (published text) is also a story about the lives of the writers, showing their ideas and experiences that can be shaped or transformed by interacting with the public. It may, therefore, be considered to be under continuous development and alteration, not only the language of the blog but also the blogger themselves (Farhadi Shamsabadi, 2015). Du and Wagner (2006) indicate that blogs are helping blog users to improve their engagement. The interaction of social network systems like blogs is acknowledged as the key to achievement (Williams & Jacobs, 2004). Generally, engagement between blog users is achieved by the reading of other blogs, the acquisition of resources and comments in posts. Comments on blogs are considered crucial to blogging interactivity and writing (Akdağ & Özkan, 2017).

The group of people who visit and return to a blogger's site is the blog audience. The audience and context factors play a key part in the writing of blogs. For example, the contact between the audience and the writer is constant due to comments/co-texts and the ability to keep blogs alive and dynamic (Farhadi Shamsabadi, 2015). A blog audience impacts the writing performance of bloggers through feedback. The goal of blog authors, the blog's audience and the frequency of interactions, by their very nature, add certain features to the language, which is lexical and grammatically loose and casual (Doostdar, 2004). Moreover, along with speech, texts are placed as an external blogging product in a situational context of the authors and the cultures of the audience (Farhadi Shamsabadi, 2015). A distinction should be made here between the 'actual audience' (who read and comment on the blogs) and the 'sense of audience' (which perhaps influences the writers in their writing process). From a dialogic perspective, the fact that a blog is an open and readable platform creates a two-way and multi-level dialogue: a real dialogue if the reader actually responds, and a dialogue with an 'imagined reader' that influences what the writer writes and

how they write it. This is different from book writing (or most other forms of writing) in which there is only the 'imagined reader', and it is also different from writing as communication, as in those cases, the writer is expecting a response. In that respect, blogs seem like a hybrid form of writing (Alsamadani, 2018).

As Doostdar (2004) states, the outlines of external orientation may be seen in such structures as a distinct speech genre of blogging. In addition, Nilsson (2003) argues that the monologue and dialogue in blogs are invitations to talk in open terms; they are concurrently self-reflective diaries. Therefore, both written and verbal skills are displayed. The blog is seen as a monologue and a dialogue – obviously, from a dialogic perspective, a blog is dialogic in a sense that the writer is intersubjectively attuned to the imagined reader, but in a sense, the blog is also a monologue if only one point of view is put forward.

Blogs can, therefore, be monologic or dialogic; however, while commentaries and hyperlinks can be a sign of interactivity with the outside, the actual audience of blogs is very difficult to define. Readers can lurk, leave no comment, or create blogs for themselves with no readers. Even individuals who appear to be active bloggers might leave the site forever or seldom visit it in the future. All these problems make the communication of blogs unpredictable, especially the engagement between readers and writers. Since the readership is not fixed in blogs, this may impact the activities of blogs (Farhadi Shamsabadi, 2015).

Rooks (2008) used email as a CMC medium to examine the writing of L2 learners after providing comments; however, the audience was again limited to peers and instructors. Although some CMC studies employed real wide audiences through various cross-cultural projects outside the classroom, their focus is not only on L2 writing but also on communication skills and cross-cultural awareness (Chen & Brown, 2012). In this current study, blogs are also closed and only accessible by class members and their teacher.

The way a blog communicates differs from conventional (CMC) instruments (e.g. WhatsApp) since a blog uses a permalink to the continuous URL of a specific item in the blog (Özdemir & Aydın, 2015). Choi's (2008) study on L2 writing skills shows that L2 authors who develop an awareness of the public can improve their writing and develop trust in their writing skills since the audience is usually the teacher and peers of students, and in an L2 learning environment,

the teacher usually directs the students. As a result, the writing of students is often moulded by a limited number of audience members and objectives

Blogs foster active and reflective involvement in the creation and sharing of information by learners and provide room for deliberate writing. Blogging impact studies focus mainly on reading and writing abilities and demonstrate that blogging strengthens these skills. The more you write, the better you get. Most professional bloggers write regularly, continuously analysing and proofreading their work. Learner feedback contributes to becoming a better writer (Patnaik, 2018). Learning opportunities via blogs can enable students to share ideas and information, build their true academic identities, raise awareness and motivation for writing, and eventually boost their writing abilities and language skills (Ware et al., 2016).

Black (2008) studied the engagement of young English students in an online public forum that many young people and adults use to contribute their fictional stories about popular cartoons, books, games, comics or films. In Black's research, the three English learners' acquired abilities in writing and cooperation by producing texts on fan fiction sites and discussing feedback with worldwide audiences were evaluated. They also acquired a strong public and authorship awareness that reinforced their identities as popular literate writers. Black's study suggests that online settings might offer opportunities to practise writing in many genres and allow meaning processes and the formation of identity, overcoming geographic, linguistic and cultural borders.

Online writing is likely to be useful for L2 students since the online tools allow students to practise their English writing authentically and in motivational ways. Bloch (2007) discusses how a Somali immigrant student had been using blogs to enhance his ordinary English with a more academic style of written English in his study of the usage of blogs in the L2 university composition class. The student, who wrote on the class blog, expressed his ideas freely and critically, pondered on his reading and participated with other people in their argument, showing a degree of reflection and thought in his writing. Sun and Chang (2012) confirmed the results of Bloch, who suggested that blogging can enable L2 learners to reduce the gap between their home language and university English in composing and engaging with peers and professors as a type of informal writing. Sun and Chang's (2012) study evaluated the interaction and

cooperation of seven L2 graduate students in a blogging environment using a mixed-methods approach. They demonstrated how blogging served as a means for L2 writers to practise various types of university writing, to co-construct academic writing, to reflect on language abilities, and to create a learning community through a variety of online social support techniques.

Introducing the non-threatening blog environment into the course curricula might increase the motivation of Omani EFL learners to develop writing abilities and encourage them to write more. For example, blog capabilities such as anonymity can allow students, especially timid learners, to write about what they want to write about without being criticised or reprimanded. Omani instructors could use blog writing to engage student writers and encourage them to express their thoughts and experiences, read the writing of their peers, and reflect on their writing. This could lead to collaborative learning which can rarely be achieved in traditional pen and paper writing sessions (Farhadi Shamsabadi, 2015).

2.6 The role of feedback in motivation and improvement in writing skills

Zheng et al.'s (2018) study shows that new methods of using online sites in classrooms and beyond may enhance L2 motivation and writing involvement, raise awareness, and encourage new and conventional literacy abilities. These potential benefits do not come wholly or mainly from technical instruments themselves when used in classrooms, but rather from the instructors' competent integration of the tools into language education that is adapted to specific needs and situations.

Furthermore, technology advancement has led to a growing focus on developing learning spaces and integrating technology into English writing education. Computer peer comments can be made on several platforms, for example, emails, blogs, chat rooms or wikis. It was found that EFL learners enhanced their writing abilities considerably through their online peer feedback practice (Ho et al., 2020). Compared with the typical teacher–student feedback, student feedback has demonstrated greater results (Zhang & McEneaney, 2020). Many studies examined the attitudes of students when they provided online feedback. Aghaee and Hansson's (2013) research found that the anonymity of students enabled them to offer critical feedback freely without fear of embarrassment among learners who received online peer feedback (OPF).

When participating in an OPF task, students at all levels of competence showed positive attitudes, such as improved motivation (Chen et al., 2011), greater capacity to communicate and talk about ideas (Baran et al., 2013), and independent learning (Engstrom & Jewett, 2005).

Many studies have shown the importance of enhancing students' writing performance through peer comments in addition to the comments of their teachers (Bacon & Bounty, 2020; Ho et al., 2020; Zhang & McEneaney, 2020). Through feedback, language students may take advantage of input from their peers when faced with comparable writing processes and problems (van Leeuwen et al., 2009). Providing peer feedback allows students to exchange ideas and points of view that can improve their linguistic content and organise their writing (Ho & Savignon, 2007).

In the first stage of blogging, producing a feedback is difficult; therefore, Zahoor and Kousar's study (2018) recommended that blogging be adopted through blended teaching methods alongside the conventional teaching methods, as preferred by the study participants. Teachers should maintain a balance between regular class workload and blog posts so that students may benefit the most from this blended learning. According to Ahluwalia et al. (2011), teachers may make accurate decisions about the extent to which blogs integrate with the course material. A variety of blog-related topics may be included in the course design. Subsequently, students may be encouraged to comment on blogs. In this way, students will write comments continuously on blogs to improve their writing skills. Learners are encouraged to develop a positive, constructive relationship that makes them feel comfortable to communicate their issues with their classmates to eliminate the gap between them and their peer groups. Teachers may also develop thought-provoking and entertaining exercises depending on the level and interest of students. A solid relationship between students may offer a wide range of options and opportunities to support each other in classroom activities, blog posts and challenging L2 learning tasks, increasing their involvement and passion for L2 (Bhatti et al., 2020).

2.7 Language transfer in L2 writing

This part of the literature review is concerned with the transfer between L1 and L2 in L2 writing. The development of L2 writing studies will be discussed, and the

approaches that have been adopted to survey transfer will be outlined. In addition, the levels of transmission will be identified and described.

2.7.1 Movements of L2 writing studies

In the 1960s, the product-oriented approach was the main ideology underlying L2 writing studies. This approach is also known as current-traditional rhetoric, where the focus is on spelling, grammar and syntax (Zhao, 2015). Subsequently, L2 writing research progressed to reflect the process-oriented approach, where the focus is on the learner's cognitive activities and the strategies that learners use in producing a written text for a particular context (Zhao, 2015). Using this approach reflects the attitude and definition of the writing process, which was perceived as self-regulated information-processing and problem-solving, as well as decision-making. L2 writers are required to juggle different competing linguistic, pragmatic and ideational constraints in producing a text (Zhao, 2015). However, the product and process approaches have been criticised, as they did not consider writing as a social act. Subsequently, the focus shifted to the writers themselves and their purpose when they write. Therefore, the move towards socioculturalism started when the multifocal nature of writing was advocated in addition to the awareness of power relations and individual complexities. These conceptual movements within L2 writing studies are described by Matsuda (2005, p. 167) as "current conceptions of discourse shift attention from correctness to the resourcefulness of writers as social actors who bring personal and cultural histories to their writing and a particular understanding of the text they are asked to write".

The focus of L2 writing studies is not on the production of writing but on the cognitive and cultural processes involved when the L2 learner writes. The study of L1 and L2 transfer is a part of L2 studies that seeks explanations for the transfer that takes place between the languages that the learners know either in one direction, that is, L1 to L2, or bidirectional transfer, which is the case when the transfer takes place between the two languages. Understanding issues of transfer is pertinent to the current study as the learners' L1 is Arabic and they are learning L2, and therefore language transfer is expected to take place and influence their ESL learning.

2.7.2 Transfer in L2 writing and what it means

Transfer research is concerned with understanding how the languages that a person learns interact with each other in the learner's mind (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010). In this section, studies about the transfer and the consequences of this transfer, as well as the areas of language where the transfer occurs will be reviewed. SLA research can provide answers to issues related to errors in L2 writing. Two types of factors contribute to understanding SLA: social factors and cognitive factors. The social factors refer to how the L2 learners' attitudes towards the target language, culture, people and values affect SLA (Jarvis, 2012). These attitudes and perspectives of the L2 learners also impact their writing skills in L2. However, few studies have explored this issue, and therefore further research is needed to uncover how these social factors play a role in developing L2 writing skills (Carson, 2000). The cognitive factor that impacts L2 writing is represented by the transfer that occurs from L1, which is demonstrated in errors in L2 writing. Transmission not only concerns the morphosyntactic level but also the transfer of rhetorical forms that are culturally specific (Carson, 2000).

James (2007, as cited in Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2012, p. 112) defines the transfer in SLA research as the "influence that the learner's L1 skills and knowledge has on L2 acquisition and development". This definition has been deemed a one-direction definition, as it considers the L1 influence on L2 development and not vice versa. Therefore, another definition of the transfer in the L2 acquisition field considers what is learned in one task then transferred to another task. This definition has its roots in cognitive and educational psychology (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2012). Transfer is a key word in surveying L2 writing by learners who are learning ESL. The transfer of features of writing takes place across languages that the learner knows, which characterises L2 writing through stages of progression. The first stage of L2 writing development is characterised by the L1 transfer of writing features to the L2 writing activity. In this stage, the novice L2 writers borrow some elements of the L1 writing from their mental schemata to meet the needs of a writing context as they perceive it. The second stage is moving L2 transfer to L1 writing, and the final stage is transfer in both directions. This refers to the idea that the knowledge repertoire of L1 and L2 is dynamic and it expands and contributes to writing development (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2012). In a study conducted with Turkish speakers learning ESL,

participants were asked to write texts in English, and the texts were examined to identify the transfer that could have taken place. The researchers concluded that the participants had transferred rhetorical patterns in both directions, that is, English to Turkish and Turkish to English. The knowledge related to organisational patterns and argument structures, such as the use of examples, was transferred in both directions. Giving examples and evidence, talking about real-life experience, and providing quotes and sayings were all transferred from Turkish to English. However, when starting an essay by giving examples and argument strategies, these were transferred from English to Turkish (Uysal, 2008).

The bidirectional nature of transfer has been confirmed in a number of studies. For example, Kobayashi and Rinnert (2012) outline a number of salient factors that affect the transfer of rhetorical features across languages. These factors are L1 and L2 writing instruction and experience; disciplinary knowledge/training; learners' attitudes and perspectives; the social context represented by the topic, audience and genre; and the nature of the task. Background knowledge is gained through experience and instruction, and it helps the writer to formulate and implement the writing task. It is not sufficient for the learners to know about writing; they also need to practise this knowledge through actual writing and internalise it. The role of the learners' values, attitudes and perception is also essential in guiding them to choose which features to transfer or take up in accordance with the social context of the writing task. Kobayashi and Rinnert (2012) concluded that writing practices are dynamic, and this dynamic nature can be explained in terms of the social context of the writing activity and the individual attitudes and preferences of the writers. Leki et al. (2010) identified the following factors that influence transfer between L1 and L2 in writing practices: culture, L1 background, educational experience, background knowledge, the linguistic and organisational difference between L1 and L2, metalinguistic awareness, and L2 level of proficiency. It could be argued that blogging enables different kinds of transfer, such as knowledge transfer, literacy skills and writing styles, in the sense that learners acquire new knowledge from the blogs of others. Moreover, they borrow from their colleagues' writing styles and acquire different literacy skills, such as punctuation, sentence structure, and expressions (Reitbauer & Fromm, 2015).

The transfer takes different forms. It can take place at the word level, morphological and syntactic levels, conversational strategies level, and sociocultural and pragmatic levels. Each type will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

2.7.3 Word choice transfer

Word transfer implies that L2 writers select particular words from the L2 lexicon and create the appropriate context in the writing practice to use these selected words. Warren (1982, as cited in Llach, 2011) concluded that there are four types of lexical errors: transfer of semantic and syntactic features, conceptual confusion due to similarity in meaning, derivational errors that are explained in terms of wrong derivational processes, and phonetic confusion due to similarity of sound. These errors are the result of incorrect assumptions that the L2 words function in a similar way to that of the L1 words (Llach, 2011). The present study will determine how Omani learners who are learning ESL use the transfer of words by using words where the translations in Arabic may sound correct but are used in the incorrect context. An example of this is the phrase 'his thinking is filthy', which means 'his thinking is evil'. Therefore, it is expected to find such literal word transfers in Omani learners' writing.

2.7.4 Morphological and syntactic transfer

Another type of transfer between L1 and L2 in writing is morphological and syntactic transfer. Although the transfer of morphological features, especially bound and free morphemes, is considered to be a restricted phenomenon, it appears frequently when the L1 and L2 are morphologically and lexically related. Studies have concluded that overt transfer may not appear; however, learners tend to make interlingual identifications between the grammatical morphology of L1 and corresponding structures in L2 (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008). Transfer research provides evidence that transfer has morphosyntactic features present, from L1 to L2, in languages that have the same alphabetic writing systems and those that have different alphabet systems. Learners have a tendency to transfer the morphosyntactic features of their L1 to the production of L2 writing (Durgunoglu & Goldenberg, 2011). The present study will also investigate morphological and syntactic transfer. For instance, the uses of definite articles are different in Arabic from those in English. In Arabic, a particular article is added

to most names. This is transferred to English, where the Omani and Arab learners add them to every noun (Rouchdy, 2013).

2.7.5 Discursive transfer

Discursive transfer is related to the transfer of how thoughts are introduced, organised and contextualised within written discourse. It is also related to the transfer of conversational strategies, as well as to concepts and notions that are used in discursive discourse. It concerns expressing relationships and events that appear in both production and comprehension. Discursive transfer occurs in forward and reverse directions (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008). L2 writing acquisition is more than acquiring new graphic codes. It also involves obtaining new skills and even reorganising communicative competence. It is concerned with activation and control of writing processes, such as planning and reviewing, while producing a written text in L2 (Ransdell & Barbier, 2012). There is agreement that adult writers refer to the conceptual and discursive knowledge that they have already acquired in L1 (Ransdell & Barbier, 2012).

2.7.6 Pragmatic and sociolinguistic transfer

There is awareness that when a conversation takes place among people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, it is likely that misunderstandings will occur. Common glitches in interactional discourse are expected, especially when the language used is not the L1 of some of the participants. L2 pragmatics has informed many studies about the transfer between languages when people take part in communication in a given context. Researchers have attempted to explain this transfer by proposing the positive correlation hypothesis, which explains that transfer occurs with high-proficiency learners, who have sufficient L2 morphosyntactic resources to use their L1 skills and knowledge in L2 communication. However, this hypothesis has been challenged since there has been no strong evidence; therefore, further research is needed (Hinkel, 2011). However, some studies have concluded that L2 learners demonstrate resistance to adopting L2 pragmatic norms and seek to establish L2 identities that meet their individual needs (Ellwood & Nakane, 2009). Writing is a social process where the writer's identity, culture and attitudes, as well as beliefs, are expressed (Dagnino, 2015). This is what makes sociolinguistic and pragmatic transfer difficult in the first stages of L2 writing, as it is not easy for the writer to acquire a new identity

and culture (Ringbom, 2007). Transfer research has already answered some questions regarding how the integration between L1 and L2 affects L2 writing and how transfer occurs in different areas. One of the essential contributions of transfer research is that it explains errors in L2 writing in terms of social and cognitive factors. However, further research is needed to answer more questions about the mechanism and the circumstances under which transfer occurs and whether it is intended by the learners or not.

2.8 Summary

This chapter reviewed different aspects of writing and L2 writing. The theories related to writing activity have been discussed, and the process of writing has been explained in terms of psychology and cognition. In addition, the impact of technology on education in general and on writing in particular has been described. Furthermore, it has been stated that in many cases, using blogs has affected the development of L2 writing because of the requirements it meets in terms of learning how to write. Moreover, the forms of transfer that may occur in writing in L2 have been discussed to gain an understanding of the process of L2 writing and how using blogs may contribute to this transfer. The significance of this chapter is that it has provided an insight into writing in both L1 and L2 and highlighted the need to gain a deeper understanding of the stages through which L2 writing learners pass. Notably, the description of these stages provides a comprehensive picture that helps to understand writing in L2, and therefore how to encourage learners to write more effectively.

Chapter Three: Context and Background

3.1 Introduction

It is essential to identify and describe the context in which this study is conducted to understand the study findings and their implications and to explore the impact of the context on the participants and how they behave in the study. This chapter first describes the general context of the study, which takes place in Oman. Therefore, information about Oman and its geography, resources, society and culture is useful. Describing the educational system and the curriculum is required to understand the background of the teaching/learning process of EFL and how using blogs can lead to a transformation in this process. In addition, the methods of teaching writing in EFL are reviewed. This is essential to understand the students' responses to blogging and their writing styles. The chapter also discusses the styles used in writing in Arabic and how they affect students' style when they write in English.

3.2 Oman – background to the present situation

The Sultanate of Oman is located on the southeast coast of the Arabian Peninsula (see Figure 1). Although Arabic is Oman's official language, some Semitic languages, such as Balochi and Swahili, are spoken there that are distantly related to Arabic (Sultanate of Oman, n.d.). English is adopted as an L2 in the Sultanate, and most documents are written in both Arabic and English (Sultanate of Oman, n.d.). According to an estimate in 2022, Oman has a population of 5,325,272 (Worldometer, 2022), and 85.8% of the population are literate, of which 80.1% are males and 70.2% are females (Sultanate of Oman, n.d.).

Figure 1

Map of Oman (Source: World Maps, Asia)



3.2.1 Geography of Oman

The Sultanate covers a total area of 309,500 km². It is bordered by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the northwest, Saudi Arabia in the west, and Yemen in the southwest. It also has a detached area which is separated from the rest of the country by the UAE that is located on the southern shore of the Hormuz Strait. Oman has a coastline of 3,165 km that extends from the Hormuz Strait in the north to the border with Yemen in the southwest. This coastline overlooks three seas: The Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, and the Arabian Sea (AQUASTAT, 2008).

3.2.2 Oman's resources

Agricultural production played a significant role in the national economy before the discovery of oil. Nowadays, the national economy depends mainly on oil. In 2006, the gross domestic product (GDP) of Oman reached US\$35.7 billion. Agriculture contributed 2% of GDP. The economically active population was 977,000, of which 83% were males and 17% were females. Agricultural production is market-oriented in the sense that new farming technologies such as commercial fertilisers, water-saving irrigation systems and hybrid seeds are used (AQUASTAT, 2008). Oman has different sources of water, including

hundreds of springs that are located in the mountains and many vital aquifers. However, the most critical supply of water in Oman is internal groundwater (AQUASTAT, 2008). The country also has a relative abundance of oil and gas reserves (Gas Exporting Countries Forum [GECF], 2016). Oman has the largest oil reserves of any Middle Eastern country that is not a member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries in addition to many natural gas reserves (GECF, 2016). It faces the challenge that its economy is dependent exclusively on oil and oil products, and as oil is a non-renewable resource, it has a high degree of price volatility (Management Association, Information Resources, 2016). However, realising the effect of these challenges, the government has initiated a process of adjustment, the main aim of which is to create a solid foundation for the country's economy, which is led by the private sector (Management Association, Information Resources, 2016).

3.2.3 Omani culture and society

Oman has great diversity in the structure of its society, which is 75% Omani, mainly Arab, and the remainder are Baloch, Bengali, Pakistani, Indian and Filipino. Oman is known for its tolerance of cultural diversity. However, despite this harmony between cultures and religions in Oman, Islam is dominant in terms of culture and politics (Arab Forum, 2007). Oman is a very stable country socially, politically and economically, which enables it to play a significant role in establishing regional cooperation (Management Association, Information Resources, 2016). In addition to the country's rich culture, it has a safe environment and friendly people. Omani culture is deeply rooted in Islam. According to Hofstede (2011), there are four aspects of cultural differences. The first aspect is individualism versus collectivism. This explains the difference between a culture where the focus is on the individual's interests regardless of the group interests and a culture where the loyalty is to the group and its values without paying attention to the individual's interests. Like other Middle Eastern countries, Oman is a collectivism-based country where people endeavour to satisfy the group and implement its rules and values. The second aspect is power distance, which relates to the extent to which people accept authority from organisations and the level of power and authority exerted by these organisations. The power distance in Oman is high, and different organisations

have power over people and what they should do. People accept this authority. The third aspect of cultural differences is masculinity versus femininity, which is about how much society values masculine or feminine qualities. Masculine qualities are increasing wealth and luxury, assertiveness, ambition and competitiveness, whereas feminine attributes are solidarity, modest behaviour and servitude (Hermarij, 2013). Oman is a femininity-based country. The fourth aspect of cultural differences is uncertainty avoidance, which is the extent to which a society is tolerant of risk. Oman has low uncertainty avoidance (Management Association, Information Resources, 2016).

3.2.4 Oman in the international context

Oman enjoys stability in all aspects of life. It does not have internal or external conflicts. It has an open foreign policy and a strong alliance with Great Britain, which ensures that the country enjoys a stable status that enables it to improve the socioeconomic status of Omani people (Epstein, 2008). Oman has always shown significant commitment to the international conventions and agreements, especially those related to women and children. For example, the government has established a National Committee on the Rights of the Child to observe publicly the country's implementation of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child. Likewise, the Omani Women's Association is deemed as the flagship organisation that is devoted to promoting the welfare of women and children (Epstein, 2008).

3.3 The Omani educational curriculum

A new curriculum was introduced in the 1998/1999 academic year to cover grades 1–10. The new curriculum places great emphasis on languages, IT, mathematics and science, as well as life skills. Another crucial step by the government is the implementation of e-learning in all aspects of education. Children learn about IT when they start Basic Education. Computer rooms are provided for the students in the second and third cycles (Oxford Business Group, 2010). Before the 1970s, textbooks and curricula were bought from other Arab countries. These textbooks and curricula were content-laden and teacher-centred and focused on rote learning. High-stakes tests were the only method of assessment, which was conducted at the end of the year. These tests assessed

what the students memorised (Al-Balushi & Griffiths, 2013). By the late 1970s, the government had started to develop the curriculum with the help of curriculum experts from neighbouring countries. However, according to Al-Balushi and Griffiths (2013), the curriculum is still teacher-centred and content-driven, and the main focus of examinations is on testing memorisation. In fact, Al-Balushi and Griffiths (2013) state that because of the teacher-centred approach used in the textbooks and curriculum that the neighbouring countries supplied, Oman adopted the traditional way of teaching and curriculum design where the emphasis is merely on the teacher as a source of information while the students are only passive recipients.

3.3.1 The history and development of the education system

Over the last three and a half decades, the educational system in Oman has transformed from being virtually obscure to an active and respectable network of institutions for learning. The ascendance of Sultan Qaboos to the throne in 1970 marked a significant change in the educational system from being a handful of schools to a modern network that includes 1,200 learning institutions. For example, figures taken from the Ministry of National Economy and the UN Development Programme reveal that in 2003 and 2004, primary school enrolment was about 72% and secondary school enrolment was 69%. Adult education enrolment had improved and was 75% (Oxford Business Group, 2007). One third of the population in Oman were students. At the end of 2005, there were 1,120 schools, 142 of which were private schools. Regarding university education, the main university is Sultan Qaboos University, which had a student population of 13,000 in the 2004–2005 academic year. Today, there are private universities in Nizwa, Sohar and Dhofar in addition to 15 private specialised colleges. In addition, in the 2004–2005 academic year there were 12,820 students (male and female) studying abroad (Arab Forum, 2007).

Furthermore, there are training centres where girls and boys receive vocational education. The reforms that the government has initiated since 1970 in all aspects of life have exerted a positive impact on the education system in Oman. These reforms include reforms in health and the environment, and providing modern infrastructure. Steps towards achieving sustainable development have been taken since that time (United Nations Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2011). Oman was the first country in the Arab world to implement Education for Sustainable Development.

3.3.2 The current education system

In addition to the changes that have taken place in the educational structure in Oman, reforms in the curriculum have been implemented. These reforms include the introduction of English lessons in grade 1; a shift of emphasis from rote learning to a more learner-centred learning system that encourages analytical thinking, problem-solving and analysis; and greater emphasis on IT, science and mathematics (Oxford Business Group, 2007). In 1998, the primary education system underwent transformation through the implementation of the new Basic Education System, which is based on two cycles of Basic Education followed by Post-Basic Education. The first cycle includes grades 1–4 (ages 6–9 years), and the second cycle encompasses grades 5–9 (ages 10–15 years). Post-Basic Education covers grades 11 and 12 (Oxford Business Group, 2007). The government endeavours to recruit more Omani teachers in its educational system to reduce the number of foreign teachers in the Sultanate (foreign labour constitutes 80% of the private workforce) (Epstein, 2008).

The number of Omani students who enter tertiary education is growing; however, this is a recent development, as the first institutions were not established until the 1980s. Sultan Qaboos University, which was founded in 1986, is Oman's primary centre for research. There are also six colleges of applied sciences run by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Health has colleges to train nurses, pharmacists and paramedics. The Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs runs the Institute of Sharia Sciences. The Central Bank of Oman has established the Institute for Banking and Financial Studies. Most of these institutes have partnerships with international institutions (Oxford Business Group, 2010).

3.3.3 Stages in the education system

As mentioned above, reforms have been implemented in the Omani education system. These reforms have included updating the curriculum; shifting the emphasis from teacher-centred to learner-centred teaching and learning; upgrading resources, which is manifested in using IT in all aspects of information; incorporating higher thinking skills into the system of assessment;

upgrading the teachers' skills; and introducing a revised educational ladder that encourages students to stay in school longer (Al-Balushi, 2016).

3.3.3.1 Primary school

There has been a great transformation in the number of primary schools since Sultan Qaboos ascended to the throne in 1970. Before 1970, there were only three primary schools; however, this number has increased to 388 (Haddad & Esposito, 1998). Children in Oman start primary education at the age of 6 years, and it lasts until the age of 12 years. Although primary education is not compulsory, the attendance rate is increasing (Haddad & Esposito, 1998).

3.3.3.2 Basic Education

Nowadays, the education system in Oman consists of two main stages: stage 1 is Basic Education for grades 1–10, and stage 2 is Post-Basic Education for grades 11–12. In Basic Education, there are two cycles: cycle 1 for grades 1–4 and cycle 2 for grades 5–10. In cycle 1, male and female students study together and are taught by female teachers. In cycle 2 and Post-Basic Education, each gender studies separately and is taught by same-gender teachers (Al-Balushi, 2016). The Omani Ministry of Education defines the Basic Education System as:

A ten-year unified education that provides learners with basic and necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and values enabling them to continue with their education or training based on their interests, aptitudes and dispositions, and enabling them to face the challenges of their present circumstances and future development in the context of comprehensive social development. (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 23)

3.4 The background of the English language in Omani schools

English language teaching was introduced in Oman in 1970. The Omani Vision 2010 established the basic principles for the education system to include IT, life skills, and a greater emphasis on ESL (Oxford Business Group, 2010). Oman is one of the countries that value the English language and considers it as a medium for achieving many purposes (Al-Issa & Al-Bulushi, 2012). The Sultanate has allocated a huge budget and resources for teaching English in the Omani schools. In 1970, the English language was accepted as an official L2 and implemented

in the education system. After three decades, it was found that students who completed their education had inadequacies in their proficiency in the English language. The government decided to revolutionise the English language teaching through a reform plan called the Basic Education System, where the students start to study the English language in grade 1, whereas in the previous system, students were taught the English language from grade 4 (Al-Issa & Al-Bulushi, 2012).

3.4.1 Objectives of English education in Omani schools

The government is very keen to teach English in all stages of education in Oman. It is aware of the role of the English language in the global economy, tourism and research, and therefore it believes that Omani students should start learning the English language at an early stage (Al-Jardani, 2016). English language learning provides smooth interaction with the world and helps the student to adapt to the world and be confident and well-equipped. In addition, the English language facilitates the integration of technology into the students' study and other aspects of life (Al-Jardani, 2016), which leads to the modernisation of the country (Khdhir, 2015). The main aims of the English curriculum in Oman are to:

1. Reinforce young Omanis' loud and proud belief in Islamic principles and behaviour, as well as pride in their country, their Gulf heritage, and the Arab world;
2. Value the diversity of the world's peoples;
3. Understand and actively promote equity, justice, peace, and the protection of the environment in their community, Oman, and the world;
4. Care about their physical, emotional and spiritual health, as well as that of others;
5. Pursue healthy, purposeful lives and develop good work habits and basic life skills;
6. Acquire knowledge and skills in all areas of the curriculum, including skills in questioning, investigating, critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making;
7. Apply the skills learned to further studies, work, leisure, daily living and a lifetime; and

8. Use a variety of technologies, demonstrate an understanding of technological applications, apply appropriate techniques for solving problems related to their daily lives, and promote transliteracy (English Language Curriculum Section, 2010, p. 42).

3.4.2 English language in Omani schools: the current situation

English has been taught in the government schools of Oman as EFL/ESL. In fact, there is an argument about whether English is a foreign or second language in the Sultanate (Al-Jardani, 2016). English is taught from grade 1 alongside Arabic, which is the L1 of the Sultanate. The students have five–seven lessons every week, and the duration of each lesson is 40 minutes, which means that they have three–four hours of learning English per week (Al-Jardani, 2016). Some educators call for teaching English from the kindergarten stage, which is the only way to make English an L2. Other educators believe that English is a foreign language, as it is only used in educational institutions and not at home (Al-Jardani, 2016).

3.4.3 EFL teachers

In addition to the main teacher training course, the government has provided a number of programmes for in-service teachers. The first stage of these programmes is based on offering the teacher methodology courses that address the teachers' needs at every stage of education. The target of these programmes is to enable teachers to teach English effectively. They also help the teachers to widen their knowledge of the principles of how a foreign language is learned. In addition, the programmes enhance the teachers' proficiency in and knowledge of the English language. Moreover, the principles of research are taught to the teachers to enable them to conduct classroom research to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their approaches to teaching English. Furthermore, teachers are provided with several one-day workshops (Al-Jardani, 2016). There is a need for EFL teachers in Oman to use the communicative approach, where the focus is on the use of language in daily-life situations and a more learner-centred approach (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2014). However, the vast majority of teachers still base their English teaching on presenting grammatical rules and memorising vocabulary (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2014).

3.5 Higher education in Oman

The number of students studying in different higher education institutions in the country or abroad is 95,146. Male students represent 45.3% of the total number of higher education students and female students represent 54.7%. Of the total number of students, 87,615 are studying in Oman, of which 38,899 students are studying in public higher education institutions (44.4%) (Al-Balushi, 2016). Sultan Qaboos University was the first university in the country, and it was founded in 1986. It is also the only public university in Oman. There are eight colleges in the university: Economics and Political Science, Agriculture and Marine Sciences, Engineering, Law, Medicine and Health Science, Nursing, Science, and Art and Social Sciences (Al-Balushi, 2016). There are six private universities that are part of 60 private higher education institutions. In addition, 55.6% of the higher education students study in the country, while 44.4% of the students complete their higher education studies outside Oman (56.9% males and 43.1% females) (Al-Balushi, 2016). The tertiary sector in Oman can be categorised into two sectors: public and private. In the private sector, most programmes are delivered in English (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2014). There are also seven state Higher Colleges of Technology, six Colleges of Applied Science and a College of Education, the programmes of which are delivered in English (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2014). Until 1985, the Sultanate used textbooks from the UK for teaching English. Since then, it has started developing its own textbooks that are tailored to the Omani needs and culture (Oxford Business Group, 2010).

3.5.1 Omani higher education classroom writing practice in English

English is the language of all tertiary education in Oman. A number of native English-speaking teachers are employed in colleges and universities (Ismail, 2011). In-session English courses that focus on teaching students English language skills are run in the colleges. The students are required to write assignments. Omani students struggle with writing an original research paper, as they do not have the language skills to articulate themselves in a research paper (Ismail, 2011). Students are also asked to produce issue logs or 800-word assignments. Again, the students have difficulty since they lack language skills (Ismail, 2011).

3.6 Arab writing

Al-Mahrooqi (2014, p. 7) highlights that when writing in English, Arab students struggle to produce a cohesive text. They often face challenges such as “repetition, parallelism, sentence length, lack of variation and misuse of certain cohesive devices”. There is also use of rhetorical patterns that can be linked with the writer’s culture or contextual experience.

3.6.1 Omani writing habits in English

Challenges related to the writing itself were identified by the students at the College of Applied Sciences in Oman in a study conducted by Al-Badwawi (2011). These challenges are organising ideas in a paragraph, finding the points to be included in the essay, synthesising information from references, and finding the appropriate vocabulary. There are also language-related difficulties, such as spelling and grammar. Another problem is not having background knowledge of the topic about which the students have to write.

3.7 Educational culture in the Omani classrooms

In this current study, culture is one of the crucial elements that will be examined. Therefore, it is necessary to describe the general atmosphere of the educational culture in the Omani classrooms. In the Omani classrooms, students have to obey the teacher and never speak without the teacher’s permission. The relationship is formal, and there is a controlled discourse that should be considered at all times. Risse (2011, p. 8) states that in the Omani system, “[y]our students will be surprised and confused if a teacher talks to them as a friend as is acceptable in some cultures”. The teacher is deemed to be the only source of knowledge, and the students do not trust each other in terms of knowledge and information since they believe that the teacher is the only person who knows and the students do not know or know little. Risse (2011, p. 3) describes some elements in the Omani culture, which were reflected in the teaching English to speakers of other languages classrooms, stating that “the Omani culture encourages people to be reserved, to not speak up or show emotions in public, especially young women, and not to make negative comments in public”. Furthermore, “students will often feel ‘too shy’ to speak in class, will refuse to stand up to go to the board, will not want to engage in class discussions” (Risse, 2011, p. 3). Generally, students are

shy when it comes to speaking in public, discussing their ideas, or even asking their teacher for a further explanation.

3.8 Conclusion

Oman expends significant effort and allocates a huge budget for English language teaching to be successful. This is based on the belief that English language proficiency opens several doors for Omani students to build their careers and achieve their goals. However, there are still challenges in the context of English teaching and learning that are related to different factors, such as teacher training and the approaches used in education. Furthermore, there are inadequacies in writing in English due to the influence of the L1 (Arabic), the writing pedagogy in schools and colleges, and cultural issues.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The first chapter of this thesis discussed the background of the study and its aims and objectives. Chapter Two reviewed the theoretical background of the research and the gaps identified that the study seeks to fill. While Chapter Three presented an overview of the context of the study, Chapter Four details the research methods adopted to achieve the aim and objectives and answer the research questions. In this chapter, a research paradigm that is consistent with the aim and objectives will be identified; this will dictate how the data will be collected and analysed in a way that conforms to the research questions. The research strategy and approach will be defined in such a way that meets the needs of the research and its goals. Furthermore, the piloting and sampling will be discussed, and relevant ethical considerations will be presented and linked to the research paradigm and strategy. The general objective of this chapter is to clarify how to best achieve the research objectives and how to accurately answer the research questions.

4.2 Research Philosophy (Paradigm)

A research philosophy takes into account how knowledge is constructed, as well as the role of reality and the researcher in this construction (Saunders et al., 2012). Researchers seek to understand the assumptions that inform a given research paradigm for three main reasons: first, a research philosophy underpins beliefs about what type of data to employ and how to collect and analyse this data; second, a research philosophy allows the researcher to evaluate how appropriate a particular research design is for the aims and goals of the research study; and third, an informed understanding of research philosophies can help the researcher to be aware of new types of research designs that are appropriate to the study (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). Two research philosophies need to be considered: positivism and interpretivism. While there are other research philosophies, this discussion will focus on these two since they are the typical and contrasting paradigms that are used as philosophical frameworks for

research (Tajvidi & Karami, 2015), and this contrast illustrates the range of possibilities open to the researcher.

4.2.1 What is meant by ontology and epistemology?

Before discussing the research philosophies, it is essential to explain what is meant by the concepts of 'ontology' and 'epistemology' since the differences between positivism and interpretivism emanate from the ontological and epistemological assumptions they adopt. Ontology can be defined as the study of being (Freeman, 2015); it focuses on describing all kinds of identities in the world and how they are interrelated (Tomaž, 2012). Each philosophy adheres to a particular ontological assumption in terms of how research should be designed and conducted. The ontological assumption of positivists is that there is an objective external reality that is separate from what is observed and the observer (Kishore & Ramesh, 2007). Positivists aim to build knowledge of the truth, which they consider independent of the human mind, and to form the basis of human knowledge (Chambliss, 2013). In addition, they primarily seek to gather numerical data to measure the objective reality they assume to exist, and use statistical methods to analyse data (English, 2006). Positivists believe that meaning is objective and that it does not depend on the interplay between subject and object, but rather only on the object (Levers, 2013).

When a research study is described as 'positivist', it generally includes some or all of the following characteristics: descriptive statistics, independent variables, confounding variables, validity, reliability, and the use of a control group (Denicolo & Becker, 2012). Moreover, in positivist research, the researcher knows only one objective – singular shared reality – which is why positivism is said to maintain a realist ontological view (Kezar et al., 2006). Knowledge can be found in facts, and these facts are conceptualised as statements of truth. The positivist assumption is that there is a concept of singular reality that researchers can discover through inquiry, which means that positivists seek a truth that is context-free and true regardless of context. Positivists seek generalisable principles (Kezar et al., 2006). The study of reality is carried out through the measurement and explanation of objective facts made possible by the adoption of quantitative methods, and significant amounts of data are analysed through statistical procedures and techniques (Richards & Munsters, 2010).

To summarise, there are three principles underlying positivism. First, reality and the real world exist regardless of individuals' perspective, and therefore they should be measured by objective and scientific methods independent of any individual. Second, positivists aim to formulate a theory or hypothesis from the data they quantitatively collect and analyse. Third, the researcher's role should be passive, and their knowledge and experience should not affect the data collection or analysis process (Jankowicz, 2005).

In contrast, interpretivists have different ontological assumptions. They assume that reality and the observer are interrelated (Moreno Jr, 2001) and that reality itself is subjective and socially constructed (Creswell, 2009). Many researchers and scholars consider that interpretivism is in direct opposition to positivism (O'Dwyer, 2009) and that interpretivism was originally developed as a response to growing criticism of the positivist approach. Interpretivists assign a crucial role to the researcher (Trodd, 2016). Context is essential for an interpretivist, and different contexts are perceived to yield different results (Willis et al., 2007). According to interpretivism, human perception is essential in the construction of knowledge; this means that human beings construct their views of reality depending on their perceptions and the ideological position they adopt (Introna et al., 2016). Knowledge is experienced on an individual basis rather than externally acquired (Ransome, 2013). Interpretivists pay great attention to gaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, and this can lead to designs that include multiple methods to explore the complexity of the research findings (Manuel et al., 2012). In this sense, this approach does not seek to reduce reality, but rather to explore its contradictions.

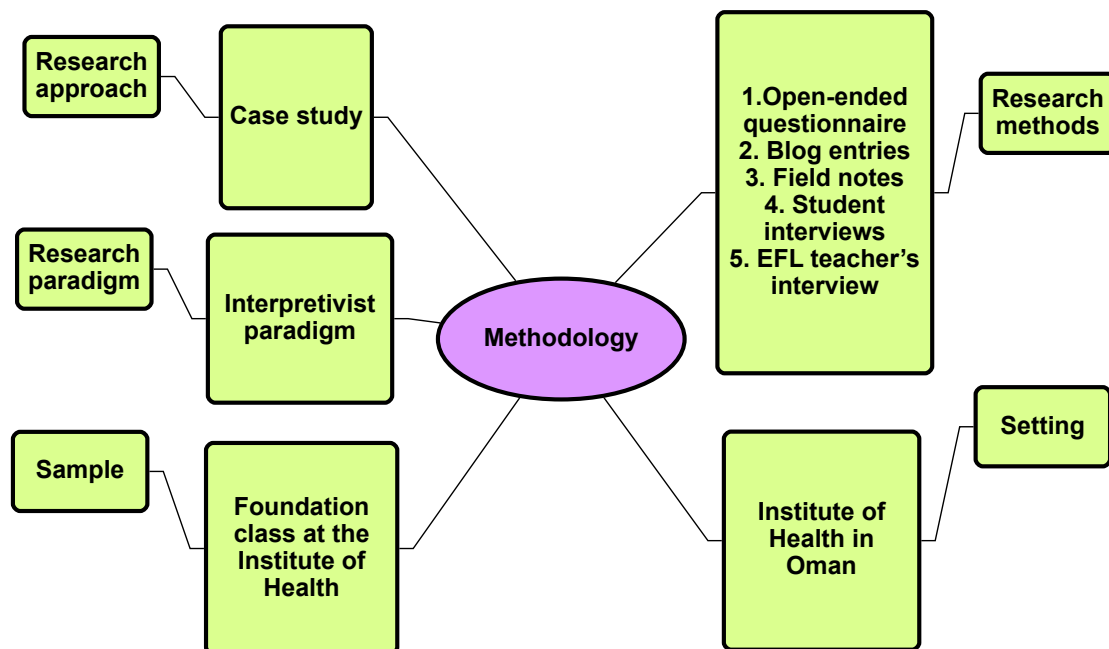
Epistemology is concerned with the nature of the relationship between the known and the knower (Sandywell, 2016). Positivists' epistemological assumption is that valid knowledge of the world can be produced by adhering to scientific methods (Grebe, 2010). Positivists believe that reality is objective and can be found beyond human consciousness, and that a real picture of reality can be approached through scientific observation and by developing an accurate measurement tool (Bess & Dee, 2012). Conversely, interpretivists epistemologically assume that knowledge about the world is produced through an interactive process of communication, reflection, and experience reframing. Knowledge is sought through interactions with others and thus is viewed as

socially constructed or as a social process (Bess & Dee, 2012). In this way, the social world is frequently perceived as being about the process rather than the product. This notion will be discussed in detail in the following section.

4.3 Methodology and Design

A research methodology must be chosen to enable researchers to achieve their aims and objectives (McLeod, 2011) since it details how and why to conduct research and solve the problem at hand (Sreejesh et al., 2013). I am interested in people’s perceptions and the process of change, and therefore I considered that the interpretivist methodology would be the most appropriate for the current study. The choice of philosophy also shapes the method of data collection. The current study can be classified as a case study that examines one case in depth – an exploration of the benefits of the use of blogs in a particular EFL Omani context and the complexity of how teachers and learners experience this approach. Figure 2 clarifies the nature of the study and its research methodology.

Figure 2
The Research Methodology



4.3.1 The interpretivist approach

The epistemology of this study is based on the interpretivist approach. This section illustrates how the interpretivist approach has informed the research design of this study. According to interpretivism, knowledge is socially constructed. Schwandt (2007, p. 106) defines interpretivism as “an approach that assumes that the meaning of human action is inherent in that action, and the task of the enquirer is to unearth the meaning”. In the context of educational research, this sentiment implies that individuals are unique and that the experiences of one person cannot be generalised to represent those of others. It also implies that events and experiences have multi-explanations and interpretations, and therefore contexts need to be explored not only from the researcher’s perspective but also from those of the participants (Cohen et al., 2011). The current study will examine the phenomenon of implementing blogs as a tool to enhance Omani EFL students’ writing skills, from the perspectives of both teacher and students, to obtain in-depth descriptions and explanations of the topic. The researcher’s perspective and explanations of the topic are essential in such interpretivist research; however, those of the participants are equally essential to provide other explanations of the topic under investigation. The aim of this study is to gain an understanding of the various meanings revealed in the data by exploring, contrasting, and locating the points of view of teachers and students in a given context. The fact that there are different points of view about a single phenomenon enriches the research, and it has been designed and conducted to explore this depth.

Moreover, the interpretivist positioning of the research is justified by the fact that the context of the study plays a crucial role in understanding and explaining the data (Lessem & Schieffer, 2016). The study does not seek to generalise the findings since, as mentioned above, every event or context is unique and yields different conclusions (Webb & Roe, 2008). The Omani context is unique, as are the participants, findings and results. Although qualitative studies do not seek to generalise the findings since they are carried out in a single context (Webb & Roe, 2008), the current research hopes to present a rich understanding of the issue in question, as well as to inform the broader debate to provide an understanding of how more extensive practices are experienced in

particular settings; through this understanding, it is hoped that the study will yield findings that are valid for the wider debate.

This research focuses on the complexity of implementing blogging as a tool in an Omani EFL context to enhance students' ability to write in English, their L2, and the challenges generated by the use of this tool, taking into account the cultural, social and educational factors of the Omani context. This will help to construct meanings from the data based on the participants' thoughts, experiences and knowledge.

4.3.2 Research approach: Case study

The research approach of this study is a case study. Simon (2009) defines a case study as an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the uniqueness and complexity of a project or situation in its real-life context, and a case study can generate a general understanding of a specific situation to yield knowledge. Yin (2009) classifies case studies into three types: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory.

Since this study seeks to gather as much in-depth information about the use of blogs in the Omani EFL context as possible, the exploratory approach has been chosen for this case study. The advantages of adopting the case study approach for the current study are as follows: it can observe the research problem in its real-world context; it can capture the meanings that people attach to their experiences, as far as the research problem is concerned; it can provide an understanding of similar situations and cases; and it can offer complementary evidence to that obtained in other studies and experiments (Lincoln & Guba, 2005). The objectives and research questions of the present study necessitate the use of the case study approach given that it seeks to explore the effectiveness of the use of blogs in the L2 context. This required an in-depth survey of the perspectives of the participants and their experience in using blogs to improve their English writing skills.

4.4 Research questions

The main research question is as follows:

What role do blogs play in the development of students' writing skills in non-English-speaking countries?

The major concerns of the current research are represented by the following specific questions:

1. What is the relationship between students' audience and their blog writing in English?
2. How does the use of blogs impact on students' attention to text (product) and students' attention to the act of writing (process)?
3. How do Omani students combine their first language and the target language to construct a text in English?
4. What are the potential drawbacks of the use of blogs from the perspectives of Omani EFL students and their teacher?
5. What is the role of blogs in the classroom culture of this study?

4.5 Data Collection Methods

Research questions determine the methods employed to collect and analyse data (Cassar & Bezzina, 2015). This study aims to provide a detailed description of the role of blogging in an Omani EFL context. Its purpose is not to prove or refute a theory or hypothesis or even to offer a generalisation; instead, it is to generate theories and discuss the implications of data collection and analysis. Consequently, this study will adopt an interpretivist paradigm based on a qualitative approach and follow an inductive strategy for analysis. The data collection method most consistent with an interpretivist stance is the qualitative method (Riazi, 2016).

Four qualitative research methods will be employed to explore the research problem holistically and in depth: an open-ended questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, field notes, and blog entries. Table 1 outlines the content and targets of each of the research methods used in this study.

Table 1

The Content and Targets of the Research Methods Used in this Study

Research Method	Targets
Questionnaire	To select focal participants for in-depth examination: 1. Questions about the students' English language qualifications and proficiency in English

	<p>2. Questions about the significance of technology in the students' lives and education, which devices are used more commonly, and the frequency of internet access</p>
Semi-structured interviews	<p>Asking the focal participants about the following points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The impact of the product–process shift on the students' learning atmosphere 2. A change in understanding of the comments' role 3. The changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes 4. A change in understanding of being a writer; the role of the audience 5. Language transfer 6. Blogging drawbacks <p>Asking the students' EFL teacher about the following points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes 2. Blogging drawbacks
Blogs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Blogs were used as a pedagogical method to determine how they affect language learning. They were also used as a method of data collection.
Field notes	<p>Field notes were used to record:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The role of teachers in developing blogs to improve students' writing ability in one EFL classroom 2. The general class atmosphere before and after blogging has been used

	3. The role of blogging in the students–teacher relationship and the student–student relationships
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4.5.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire can be defined as a set of questions about one specific topic, the answers to which can help researchers to achieve research objectives and answer research questions; it is a way of translating research objectives into questions addressed to the study’s respondents (Neelankavil, 2015). Most questionnaires contain three types of questions: those that allow the researcher to categorise respondents into sub-groups; those that survey the frequency of particular events; and rating scales (McQuarrie, 2015). Questionnaires can consist of both closed and open-ended questions and thereby yield both qualitative and quantitative data (Howard, 2010). It is not uncommon in social and educational research to use questionnaires to collect qualitative data; they can be used either alone or along with another research method, such as interviews or focus groups. In qualitative research, questionnaires tend to contain more open-ended questions, and thus respondents are given more discretion and choice in terms of what answers to give, which gives participants the opportunity to explore their experiences and opinions in more detail (Carey, 2017).

4.5.1.1 The questionnaire used in the current study

The main aim of the questionnaire used in this study is to select the focal participants of the study for in-depth examination; further information is presented in the sampling and selection sections. The questionnaire is divided into three sections. The first section includes questions about the respondents’ demographic characteristics, such as their name, gender, age, and academic specialisation (see Appendix B). The second section relates to their English language qualifications and their proficiency in the four English skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The third section explores the students’ confidence in using technology; the questions in this section are open-ended and are concerned with the significance of technology in the students’ lives and education, which devices are most commonly used, and the frequency with which the students access the internet. This section also includes questions about

blogs, such as the frequency with which the students are exposed to them, how they use them, and their importance in everyday life and education. This section is designed to evaluate the students' confidence, acceptance and integration of the world of technology, which is essential to assess the use of technology. A pilot questionnaire helped to determine the phrases that should be used, the order of questions, and how each question would affect subsequent answers. More information about the piloting process and subsequent modifications is presented in the section of this chapter on piloting.

4.5.2 Interviews

Interviews offer more flexibility than questionnaires. For example, if an interviewee hears a question they do not understand, they can ask the interviewer for an additional explanation. Additionally, the interviewer can ask follow-up questions to gain a better understanding of the responses (Thomas, 2003). There are two types of interviews: structured and unstructured. Table 2 shows the differences between the two types summarised from Byers (2006, p. 15).

Table 2

Characteristics of the Two Interview Types

Structured Interviews	Unstructured Interviews
1. Based on standardised questions about the topic	1. Based on a general sense of the topic
2. Structured questions asked in a formal way	2. Loosely structured questions asked in a spontaneous manner
3. Focus on experience and motivation	3. Focus on knowledge, skills and abilities
4. The same questions are addressed to all the respondents	4. Enables the interviewees to take part in a broader discussion

4.5.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer develops an interview protocol that details the questions that will be addressed to all the interviewees. This protocol helps the interviewer to guide the interviews in a systematic and organised way. The questions are semi-structured to enable the interviewer to change their order and omit or change the wording of questions, if deemed necessary, depending on the interview context (Lodico et al., 2010). Semi-structured interviews are intended to generate a sense of equality between the interviewer and interviewee. The interviewer knows about the topic under investigation but will allow the interviewees to go down a different path and explore alternative feelings and thoughts. However, the interviewer is always able to bring the interview back to the main subject. Interviews are intended to resemble a dialogue between interviewee and interviewer and to strike a balance between flexibility and control (Offredy & Vickers, 2010). Offredy and Vickers (2010) that semi-structured interviews offer three advantages: first, the researcher is able to use participants' words, feelings and experiences to understand and explain the topic under investigation; second, the interviewer can deploy follow-up questions to understand issues that the interviewee has raised and thereby gain a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of different research areas; and third, interviews can draw the researcher's attention to areas that they previously deemed unimportant.

4.5.2.2 This study's semi-structured interviews

There were two interview schedules: one for the focal students, and one for the teacher (see Appendix E). The first interview was held with the focal students; the questions were focused on their experiences with blogging and the challenges they faced. The interview questions also sought to obtain the students' perspectives on blogging and its impact on the shift from a product approach to a process approach. The questions in this part were concerned with how writing for an audience could help to enhance the students' writing skills. Other questions related to the students' preferred language in commenting and the role of blogging in changing the students' attitudes towards the purpose of commenting. The students' semi-structured interviews were also focused on the students and explores how blogging in an L2 classroom gave rise to both the

relationship between the students and the relationship between the students and their teacher.

The second interview was held with the students' EFL teacher to collect data about her experiences in using blogs as a pedagogical tool to teach EFL students, as well as the challenges she and her students have faced. The teacher was asked how this approach differs from traditional teaching in the Omani EFL context, an issue that was also discussed in the Literature Review chapter. In addition, the teacher was asked how blogging can influence teacher–student and student–student relationships, as well as about the educational strategy she employs to integrate blogging into her classes.

4.5.3 Field notes

Sanjek (1990) states that field notes can be used by researchers to jot down any thoughts they have as they observe the study participants. Field notes are a significant help to researchers who wish to record what is occurring in the research context. However, this should not be done randomly; the researcher should decide carefully about what to observe and note. According to Chiseri-Strater and Sunstein, field notes should always include certain elements:

date, time, place of observation, specific facts, numbers, details, [sensory impression such as smell, sight, specific words and phrases] questions about people or behaviours at the site for future investigation, personal responses to the act of recording field notes and how others watch you as you watch them. (Chiseri-Strater & Sunstein, 1997, p. 112)

It is recommended that researchers write their field notes while they are conducting an observation to ensure that no important details are forgotten. There are many possible methods, examples or formats for field notes depending on the character or needs of the individual researcher. A field notes form was designed for this project (see Appendix F) to yield findings about the role of teachers in the use of blogs in an EFL classroom and about the general class atmosphere before and after the use of blogs.

4.5.4 Blogs

WordPress was chosen as the platform for the blogs in this study because it is characterised by the following affordances. First, unlike other website builders, such as Joomla, Drupal, Wix, Weebly, and Blogger, WordPress does not require special technical knowledge to be downloaded and installed. WordPress has a comprehensive content management system in which web pages may be developed without much understanding of CSS, HTML, JavaScript, and so on (Rampton, 2012). This allows beginners to set up their websites using only a domain name and a web hosting account. Therefore, it can be installed free of charge by using the WordPress hosting provider, or it can be uploaded directly from wordpress.org. Then, by using the admin dashboard that has all the required features, the users can start customising the layout, headings, themes, and background of their website and can start creating their posts. Furthermore, WordPress comes conveniently with numerous simple and easy-to-use apps, including photo and video upload, to enhance the experience of first-time blogging. Therefore, WordPress is suitable for the first and exploratory objectives of blogging with an attractive user interface and easy user administration (İşman et al., 2015).

Second, writing is particularly important when students produce and examine their products, allowing them to comprehend and assist in their resolution of issues or to create tasks more independently by offering helpful and adequate resources online. WordPress may also be used to establish a social constructivist and virtual learning community focusing more on social factors (DeVries, 2000). This is a social learning platform that allows students to express views and exchange ideas on challenges beyond their abilities and to cooperate with other classmates (Berger & Trexler, 2010). WordPress offers a wide array of functional capabilities to assist these online learning activities and to establish both groups and class forums to manage online dialogue conversations within and outside classrooms (Scott, 2012).

In addition, WordPress contains various plugins that are useful for blogging. It not only includes the elements that can be used to create a basic site but also has a plugin directory, which includes small codes that can be used within any site to perform other services, such as Yoast SEO, Everest Forms, wpDiscuz, NextGEN Gallery, and Easy Social Share Buttons (WordPress Blog,

2021). Additionally, WordPress has a built-in blog feature that allows bloggers who want to post a blog on their website to post it directly without the need to create a separate one. This feature can be used not only for the blogging website, but also by other companies' websites to post any kind of updates and announcements (Thomas, 2018).

Finally, blog-based writing in L2 educational environments is a helpful instructional writing tool for instructors that provide feedback to students, promote input from peers, and influence their teaching. Teachers can start a blog and encourage students to contribute posts regularly and leave comments. Through constant blog writing, instructors may enable students to acquire fluency and confidence in writing. They can also provide students with feedback and help them to comprehend their strengths and shortcomings in writing, which are important to their future education. In particular, a class blog may be a platform for fostering a feeling of community within the classroom, as well as for collaborative discussion, an exchange of ideas, peer assessment, and self-reflection. This type of blog can encourage pupils to write fluently and develop their distinct style (Murray & Hourigan, 2008). Thus, students can read blogs, write comments, and communicate regularly with one another. Therefore, WordPress was the most suitable platform for this project.

Patrut et al. (2013) classify educational blogs into three types: filters, which are blogs that are concerned with national and international events; personal journals, which are blogs that detail the blogger's feelings and activities; and notebooks, which are blogs that take the form of longer essays with personal or external content. Another comprehensive classification of blogs divides them into online personal journals, support groups or friends, and filters and meta-filters with collaborative content, also known as educational or community blogs (Patrut et al., 2013). Three types of pedagogical blogs can be identified: tutor blogs, which are run by the class teacher; student blogs, which are run by each student individually; and class blogs, which are run by the teacher and students in a collaborative way. A tutor blog provides information about the course syllabus, assignments and student assessment. A tutor blog can be compared to a personal library that contains information about a group's activities, books and references, and their individual needs (Nami, 2015). Students can use a tutor blog to communicate with the teacher without the time and space limitations of

the classroom. Teachers can also use these blogs as a resource directory to share a variety of content through hyperlinks and give students access to the blog even after completing the course. In student blogs, students can keep a record of their thoughts, ideas, feelings and words. This type of blog is useful for writing practice since students are encouraged to express their opinions and points of view on their blogs, and they can comment on peers' writing. Student blogs facilitate student tracking by the teacher since all student contributions are archived as an e-portfolio that can be accessed later by the teacher (Nami, 2015). In class blogs, both teachers and students have the opportunity to share their ideas, build a community, engage in project-based learning, and discuss issues collaboratively (Nami, 2015).

4.5.4.1 The current study's blogs

This study focuses on a group of students, all of whom share blog posts and ask others to respond to and comment on them, and their teacher. The aim was to give all the students a platform to discuss and participate in class matters (Krakower et al., 2015). The blogs were used as an educative experience and for data collection.

For the current study, a website was created on which the students could create blogs and thereby enhance their writing skills. The primary purpose of blog entries was to support the previous information gathered via other data collection methods, namely the questionnaire, field notes and semi-structured interviews, to gain an in-depth insight into the role of blogging in enhancing students' writing skills. Websites are the world's most widely used platform for online activities, and for this reason, I found it suitable for students to have access to a site where they can write blog posts and enhance their writing skills. This was achieved through the use of a particular blogging site available to all the participants.

4.5.4.2 How the website works

The students follow a number of steps to access the website. First, they go to the website from the URL. Second, they register as a user by providing their email address, and then go to their email inbox and click on the activation link. Once approved by the admin, the students can access the website. All blogs are visible on the list in the class blog tab, so the students can access their fellow students'

blogs. In this way, they can create new posts or comment on their fellow students' blogs.

4.5.4.3 Website development

A. Initial development

A website was developed using WordPress and PHP. Initially, the website was developed using the Omani College of Applied Sciences logo and information such as contact information and the Dean's message. Some photos are attached that depict the initial view of the website. The logo of the College and the contact number along with the college's email address are visible at the top.

Figure 3

The Front Page of the First Blog



Figure 4

The College News Section of the First Blog



B. The existing design

The current website was developed in co-operation with one of the Health Institutes in Oman. Due to administrative issues concerning the Applied Science College, where it was intended that the project would be carried out and data would be gathered, the College declined the application to carry out the project. Therefore, since the domain of the blog was bought and registered under the name of the College, the name of the blog was kept the same.

The current website was stable and fulfilled all the required functionality. It included the following: A. Home – 1. class blog (that contained the blogs of the students); 2. feedback section (that was designed to provide support for the students who might face a problem in using the appropriate comments); 3. tutorials (which contained short clips that helped to remind students who may face difficulty in using the different features of the blog); and 4. about-us tabs. The project preface described and provided an overview of the main objectives of the project and the steps of the data collection phase. The logo of the blog was changed to the logos of the Nursing Institute and the University of Exeter.

Figure 5

The Front Page of the Current blog

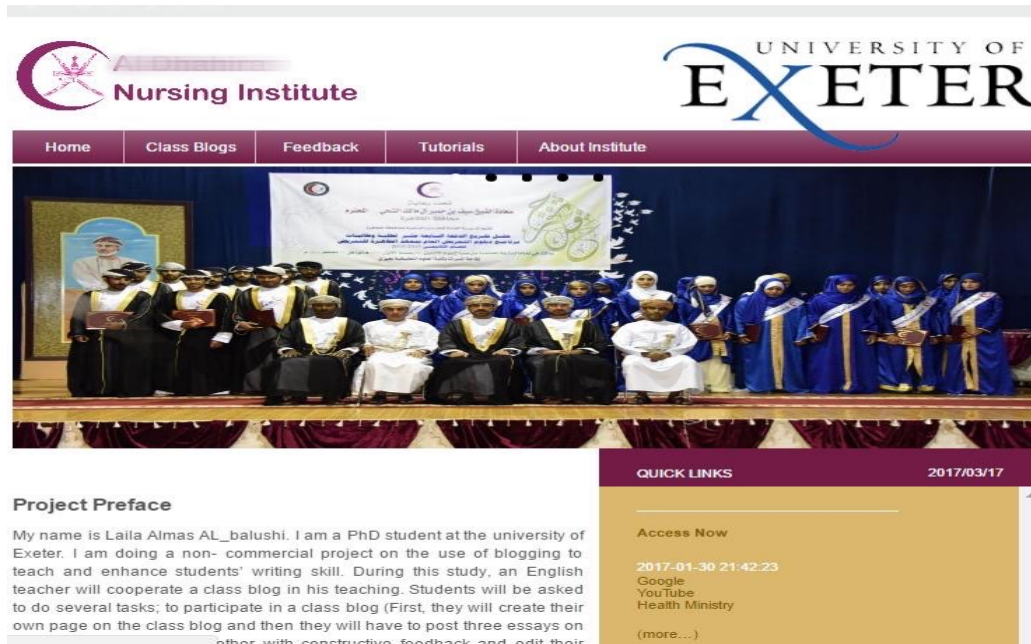


Figure 6

The Students' Class Blogs on the Current Website



Figure 7

The Feedback Sheet on the Current Website



Al-Dhahira Nursing Institute

UNIVERSITY OF
EXETER

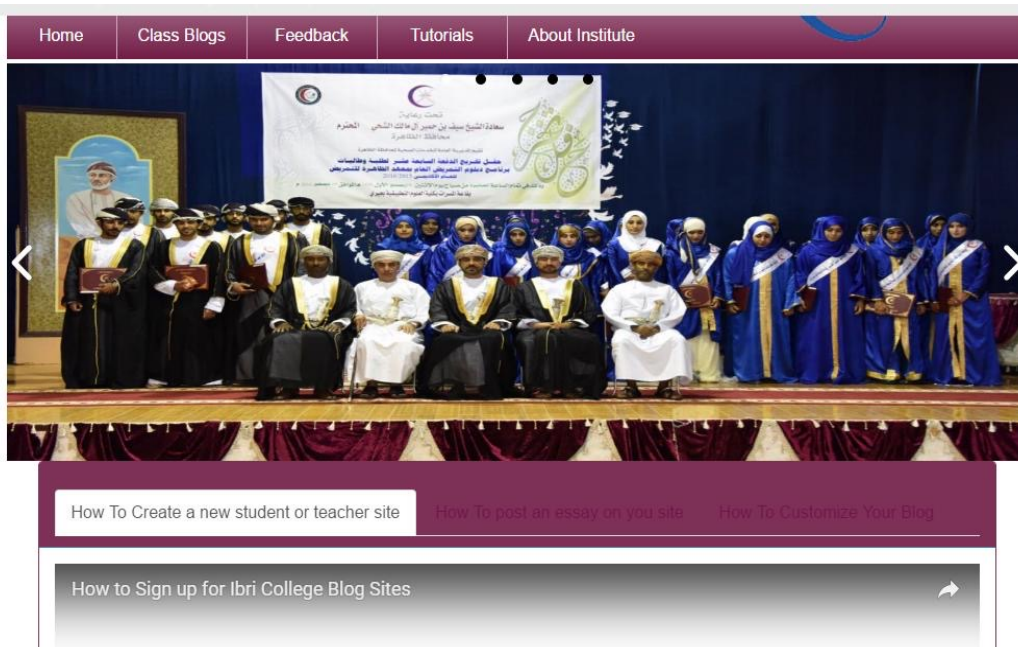
Home Class Blogs Feedback Tutorials About Institute

Dear student, as part of your work, you will have to comment on your colleague's posts. The following is examples of the kind of the feedback which you can use and which can help you

1. Write down any thoughts, questions, or ideas you had while reading. Write down the way you felt while reading the essay. This essay made me realize _____ This essay reminded me of _____. I hope that the writer could explain the following _____ further by supporting his \ her argument with the following example _____.
2. My favourite part was _____ This essay made me wonder about _____. I hope that the writer could modify the previous point.

Figure 8

The Title of One of the Tutorials on the Current Website



Home Class Blogs Feedback Tutorials About Institute

How To Create a new student or teacher site How To post an essay on you site How To Customize Your Blog

How to Sign up for Ibr College Blog Sites

4.6 Selection of institution

This study was conducted in one of the Institutes of Health in Oman. The Institute of Health is one of the institutions where the students study several modules over three years to graduate as nurses. The foundation year is the introductory year of all the colleges after secondary school in the Omani educational system. Students study the English language as a main module during this year, which consists of the four English skills. This study could have been conducted at any Omani college or institution; however, choosing the students and their teacher at the Institute of Health was due to the following reasons. First, as can be seen in Table 3, during the three years, students at the Institute of Health were taught the English language using a specific curriculum where the four skills were taught using the same syllabus, namely English I, English II, English III and English IV, and a separate one is used to teach other learning skills, such as delivering a presentation in English, maintaining a learning portfolio, using an English–English dictionary for language learning, and participating in seminars to develop independent thinking skills (Study Skills and Elective). Each semester, for writing skills, they had ten units; each unit included two reading texts as an introduction for the required writing. At the end of each unit, they had to present a written essay covering the most important themes discussed. Students had to work on their essays and produce an error-free essay. They also had to obtain feedback from their teachers, and due to the large number of students and the time required to go through each student's work, the teacher chose most of the students' common mistakes and presented them using a projector (Al-Hajri, 2014). Therefore, the educational culture in which writing skills at the Institute of Health was taught was considered an appropriate context to examine the role of blogs in enhancing students' writing skills.

Second, choosing the students and their teacher at the Institute of Health was due to the participants' availability and willingness, and the permission of the college administration. I had asked other institutions if I could conduct my research with them, but they had refused. The administration of this particular college was willing to give me a chance. They were generous enough to give me a lab and a one-hour session in their schedule. As mentioned in section 4.5.4.3,

this was the reason for the shift from one of the Applied Sciences Colleges in Oman to one of the Institutes of Health.

Table 3

Modules of the General Nursing Programme (Source: Al Dhahira Nursing Institute, 2016\2017)

Year One	Year Two	Year Three
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction to Health 2. English I 3. Introduction to Information Technology 4. Study skills 5. Maths and Basic Statistics 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adult Health 1 2. Adult Health 1 (Practice) 3. Pharmacology 4. Nutrition 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obe & Gynae Nsg 2. CHN 1 3. Introduction to Research
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fundamentals of Nursing (Theory) 2. Fundamentals of Nursing (Practicum) 3. Microbiology and Parasitology 4. English II 5. Anatomy and physiology I 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adult Health II 2. Adult Health II (Practicum) 3. English III 4. Elective 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Paediatric Nsg 2. CHN2 3. English IV
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anatomy and physiology II 2. Biochemistry 3. Elective 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mental Health 2. Mental Health (Practice) 3. Elective 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction to Leadership and Management in Nursing 2. Comprehensive Clinical Practicum

4.7 Participants' selection

The participants in the study were foundation students in their first year at the Institute of Health in Oman and their English teacher. The selection of the students was done in two steps. First, I went to the Department of English at the Institute of Health. One foundation class consisting of 16 female students, along with their EFL teacher, was selected using convenience sampling. Dörnyei states:

Convenience sampling is a kind of non-probability or non-random sampling in which members of the target population are selected for the study if they meet certain practical criteria, such as geographical proximity, availability at a certain time, easy accessibility, or the willingness to volunteer. (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 15)

The foundation class in question was selected for the case study by the English Department at the Institute of Health. This case study included the whole culture of the teaching/learning classroom, the 16 female students in the class, their types of interaction and relationships, their writing curriculum, and the teacher's methods and strategies in teaching writing skills. The foundation class was appropriate for the research since it pertains to the age group in which students are most active in social media, have some experience with this type of activity, and have diverse experiences with blogs in terms of thematic criteria.

Blogging was based on the idea of social interaction, and this required a number of students to work together in sharing their work. Including all 16 students in the class would have provided a huge amount of data. Therefore, the second step was to select focal students from the 16 students in the class, which was done via the research questionnaire.

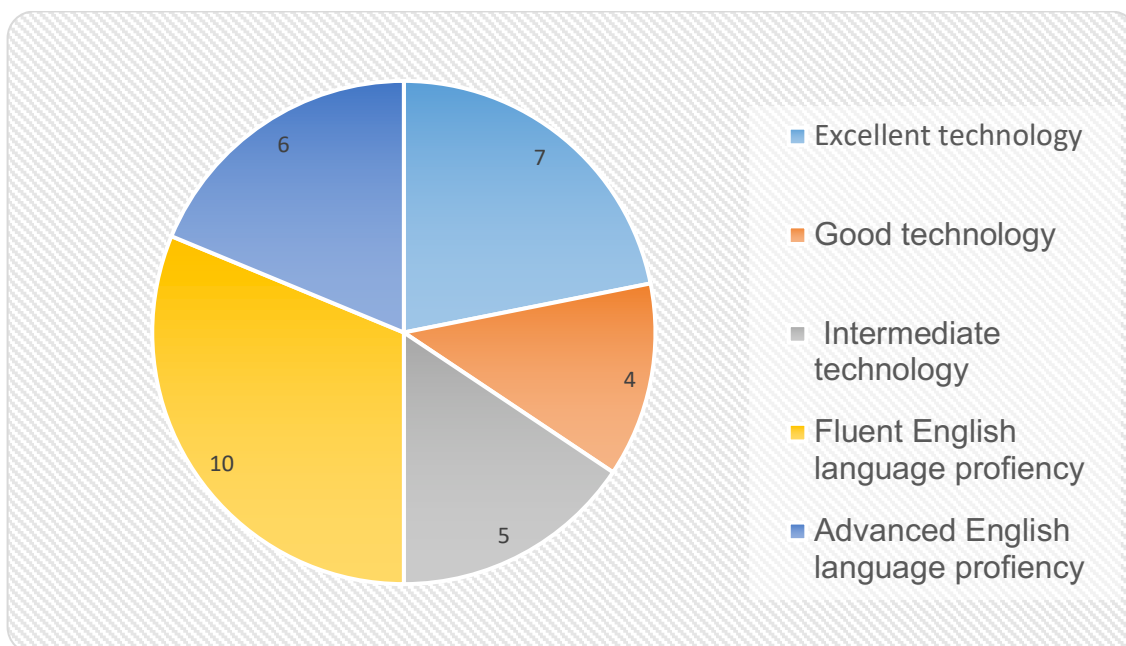
This approach was adopted since that I believed that choosing these focal students would help to achieve the following. First, I believed that using a focus group would help to collect data within the targeted time. The study was about using technology to learn a second language, improve the classroom culture, improve the language for comment making, and make comments helpful in learning English and, in a broad aspect, enhancing students' writing skills by applying blogging. Considering that the study had complicated topics, as well as

opinions and attitudes related to a multifaceted behaviour and motivation, I opted to use a focus group instead of the 16 students. The reason for this is that there was little knowledge from previous studies concerning these complex aspects in learning of L2 writing in Oman (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Second, to gain a new insight into the world of teaching via technology in general and blogging specifically, students with high proficiency in English language and confidence in dealing with technology who were eager to continue learning and participate in the study were required.

Therefore, to select those students, I conducted purposive sampling. Silverman (2001) highlights that several methods can be considered by the researcher to select an appropriate sample, for instance, random sampling and stratified sampling; however, if the research questions pertain to specific themes and issues, purposive sampling can be used. The selection of the participants was done via a questionnaire (see Appendix B), which was used to establish students' proficiency in English language and confidence in dealing with technology. The results of the questionnaire, as shown in Figure 9, showed that of the whole foundation class, seven students considered themselves as excellent in dealing with technology, four students as good in dealing with technology, and five students as at an intermediate level in dealing with technology. In terms of English language proficiency, the questionnaire revealed that among the students, ten students considered themselves as fluent English speakers and six students as advanced English language speakers. I chose 6 of the 16 students since they were the only students who considered themselves to be excellent in dealing with technology and have fluent English language proficiency.

Figure 9

Range of Confidence in Dealing with Technology and English Language Proficiency in the Foundation Class



The case was the whole foundation class and their EFL teacher. The researcher's idea was to let all 16 students work within the blog by performing the following: writing an initial blog post, commenting on each other's blog posts, and editing their original posts based on the comments of their teacher and peers, as well as the types of interaction that was happening within the blog. However, only the focal students were interviewed by the researcher, and their data was analysed at the end of the study. I believed that selecting six students who represented two–three students each in the whole class has been helpful, as it has prepared the basis for research on a larger scale. Since I had used purposive sampling, which is considered one of the best sampling methods for focus groups (Smith & Morrow, 2003), the student representation of 6 students in a class of 16 was considered appropriate.

The idea of a weblog was based on a social interaction process in which a group of students work together in writing their posts and give each other appropriate feedback. This required students who were highly skilled in dealing with technology and had fluent English language proficiency. Therefore, choosing the students with the highest proficiency and greatest confidence in using technology helped to achieve this aim. It helped to accomplish the objective of

the study, which was to ascertain the efficiency of blogs in learning L2 writing. The reason for this is that the study focused on blog usage and creating a well-written blog, which could only be written by students who have a high level of expertise in writing them. In order to explore the full potential of blogs, I decided to select students who had greater proficiency in both language and technology to avoid more general issues with linguistic knowledge or ability to navigate technology interfering with the results.

4.7.1 Students

All the students were working towards a bachelor's degree in General Nursing at the Institute of Health in Oman. The foundation class of this study comprised 16 female students who spoke ESL and were aged 18 or 19 years. The students had a similar cultural and social background and had obtained a high school degree in government schools in Oman, where they had similar learning and teaching experiences. To obtain this degree in Oman, students have to complete a three-year course, with each year comprising three semesters. The first year of this course is a foundation year, which is considered a bridge from secondary school and preparation for the subsequent two years (see Table 3 for the Modules of the General Nursing programme).

4.7.2 Teacher

One non-Omani, Indian EFL teacher was selected to participate in this study. The EFL teacher speaks ESL. She does not speak Arabic but speaks one of the Indian languages. This teacher has a master's degree in English Language Curricula and Teaching Methods, has 20 years of experience as an EFL teacher, and has taught several grades, from elementary to preparatory and high school. She obtained a first degree in India, where she started to teach ESL, before moving to Oman in 1997. In addition to teaching classes, she is the Head of the English Department. Furthermore, this teacher confirmed that she did not have any experience in using blogging as a learning tool in her classes.

4.8 The Pilot Study

Pilot studies are small-scale studies done as preparation for a final study (Polit et al., 2001). As Baker (1994, p. 182) states, pilot studies can be done by a researcher who is "trying out a particular research instrument". There are several

advantages to the application of pilot studies: they provide the researcher with advanced information about the appropriateness of the research instruments, highlight issues that could be usefully changed or replaced, and reveal difficulties that may arise during the research process. They also allow the researcher to think deeply about different solutions that can be used to overcome these difficulties. There were three foundation classes at the Institute of Health; while the main study was conducted with one of the foundation classes, the pilot study was conducted with a similar but different foundation class and a different EFL teacher.

4.8.1 The pilot questionnaire

The pilot students were asked to complete the pilot questionnaire (see Appendix A) and check it for clarity, difficulty and ambiguity in the questionnaire statements, as well as its length. I also aimed to determine whether the questionnaire would yield the information that is required. Students were given a copy of the questionnaire to complete in a free hour that they had on Tuesday of each week from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. The following changes were made based on the students' feedback:

1. 'Surname' was changed to 'Family name'.
2. 'Have you ever written a blog or contributed to one?' was changed to 'Have you ever written a blog post or participated in writing one?'.

According to my initial plan, the questionnaire should have been distributed as a first step at the start of the data collection process; however, based on the pilot study, I decided to implement it as a second step when the students had completed their registration on the blog website. Two questions were added to the first section, which asked for general information: the students' blog username and the blog title (see Appendix B). This helped me and the teacher to continue to monitor the students' comments and contact them easily and privately if anything needed to be edited or changed.

4.8.2 Piloting of the workshops

I piloted the blogging workshops with the pilot students to gain an understanding of the content and timing of the workshops. With the approval of the teacher, the pilot students attended a workshop about how to use the blog website, which followed on from the students' previous writing lecture (What does it take to be

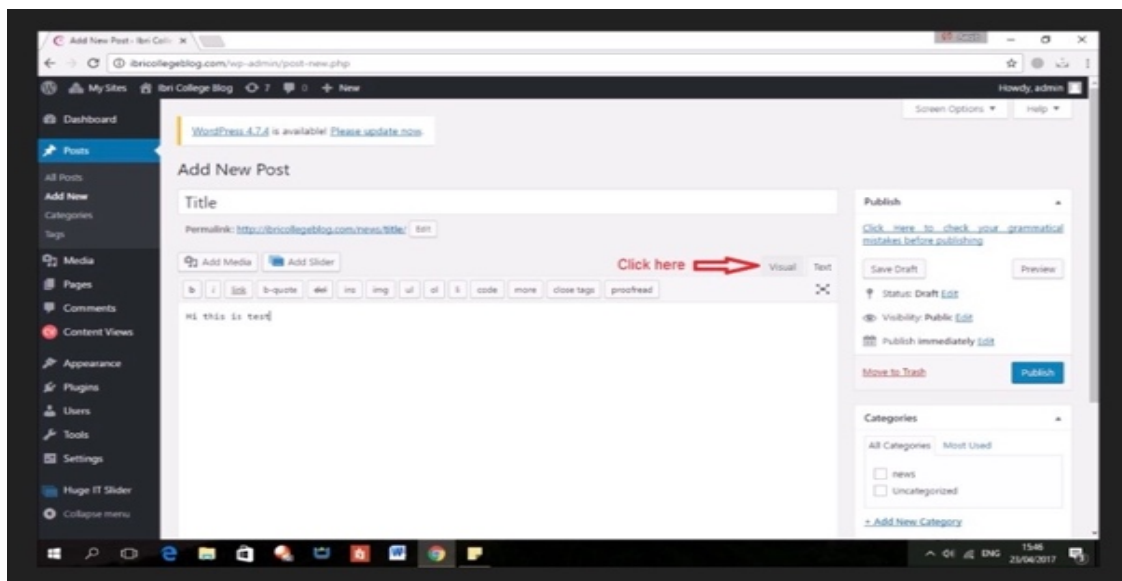
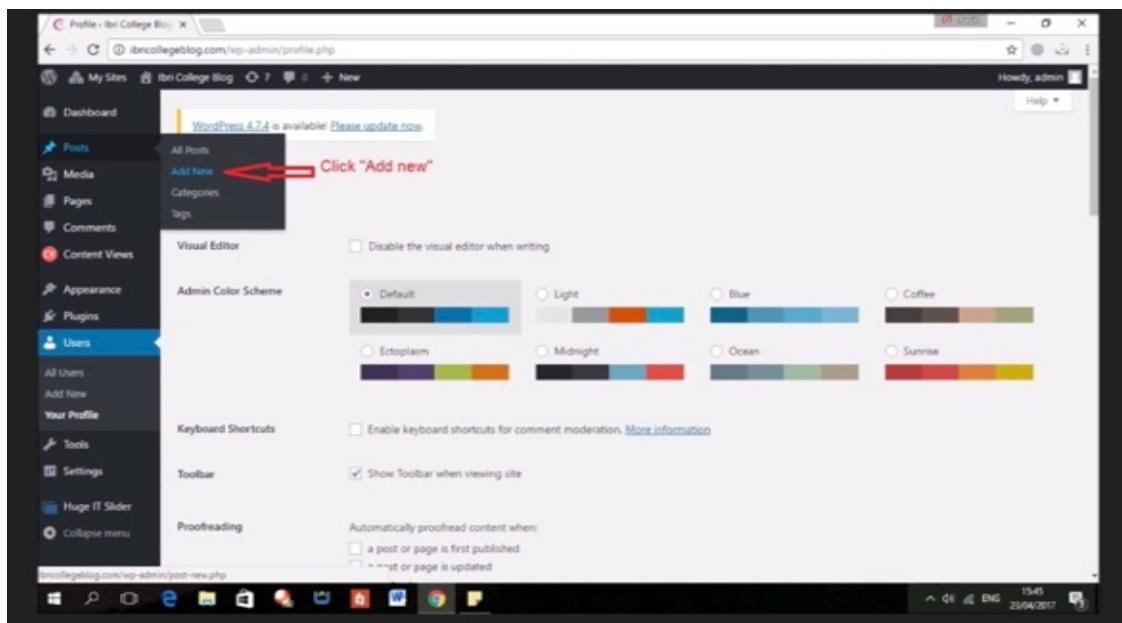
successful?). This workshop was given by me with the help of the IT teacher at the institution. The workshop was held over two days, with each session lasting between one and two hours; it was offered from a computer owned by the institution. On the first day, the pilot students were asked to register using their email and a username, and then to choose a name for the blog, after which they opened their email accounts and clicked the verification link. Subsequently, the pilot students were given a tour of the various sections and were shown the options to post a blog and the link they should use to check grammar and spelling. On the second day, the pilot students were given a two-hour workshop in which they published a blog post, wrote comments about each other's work, and finally, modified their post based on their peers' and the teacher's feedback. Once this was completed, the pilot students were sent a questionnaire to provide feedback on the whole process. This questionnaire covered the following points: the structure and colour of the website, the benefit of the tutorials, the posting and commenting options, the registration process, the grammar and spelling checker, and whether they need any other options to help them write blogs (see Appendix C).

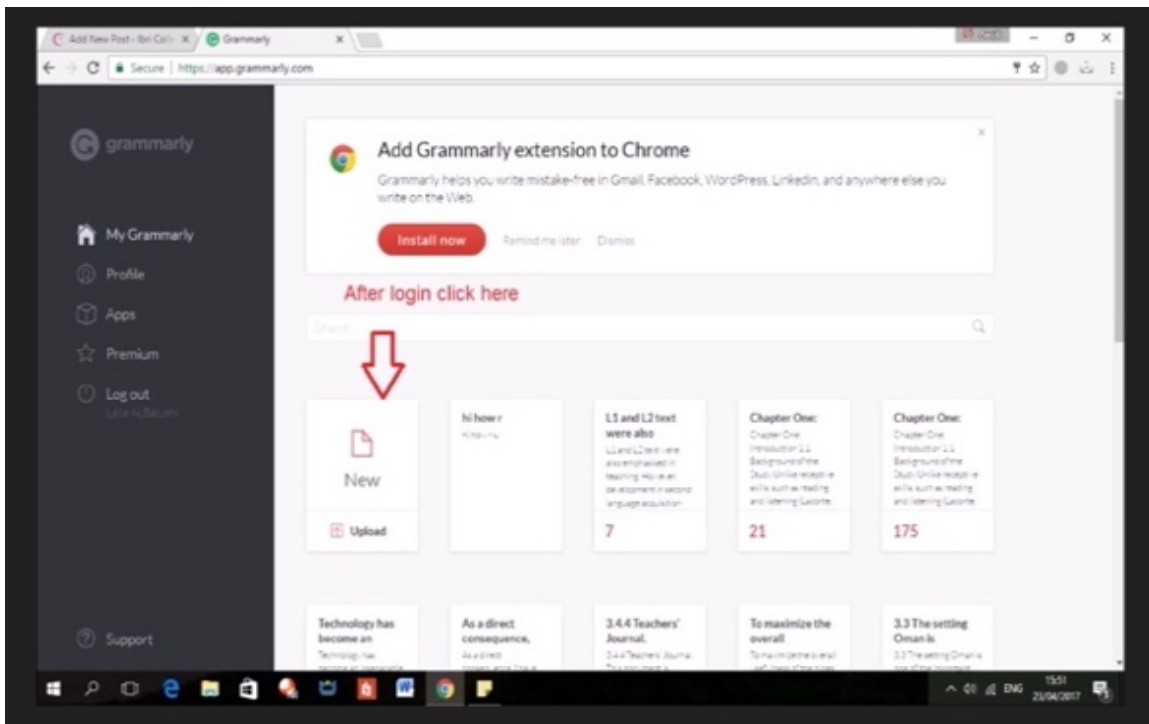
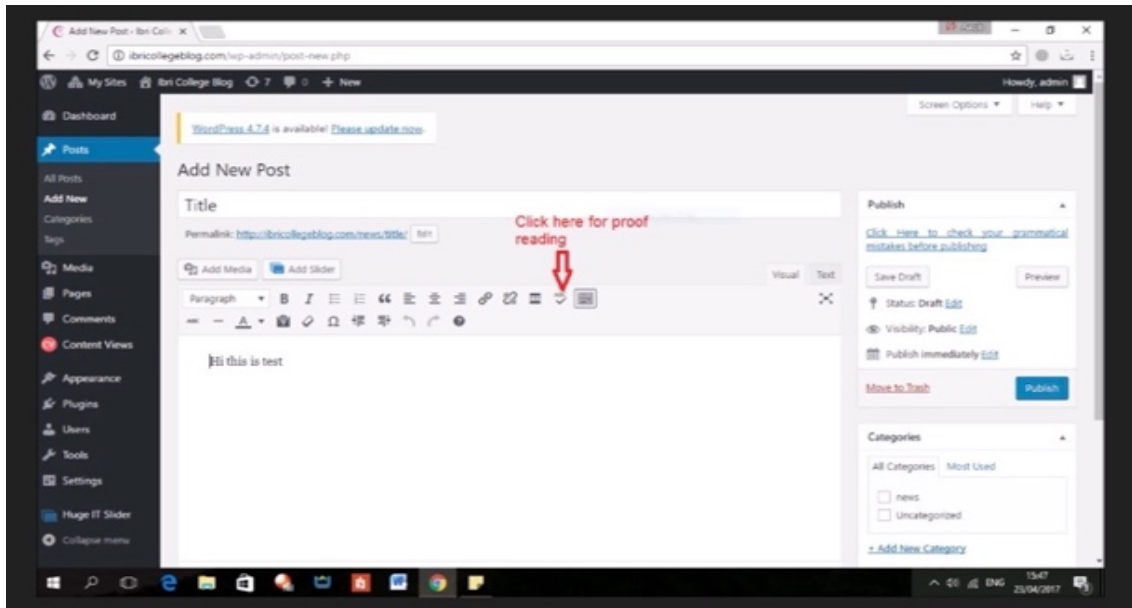
Based on this questionnaire, the following modifications were made:

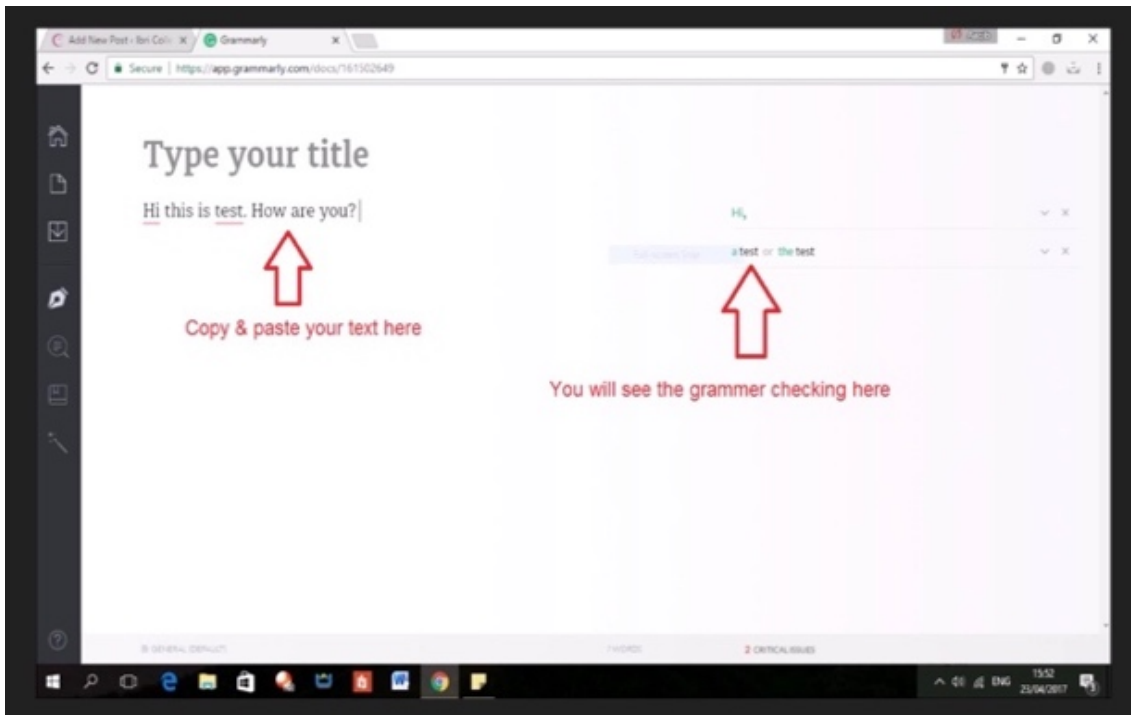
1. Tutorials were designed and posted on the blog website. They were created as YouTube tutorials that provided an explanation of how to use some of the blog options. These tutorials will be updated and added to, based on the students' needs and the difficulties that they may face. Figure 10 presents an example of these tutorials on the use of the grammar link.

Figure 10

The Use of the Grammar Link Tutorial







1. Due to some of the students' lack of experience with technology and to give them specific knowledge in the use of blogging and its services, students were given a four-hour workshop in which they were introduced to and trained in using the blog website.
2. Some of the students found it difficult to post comments since they could not decide on the most appropriate sentences. Consequently, a feedback sheet from Aydan (2014) was adapted and modified by me. The modified version that contained suggested uncompleted sentences for the students' use was posted on the website (see Appendix I).
3. It was decided that while surfing the blog website, the students should use the Firefox or Google Chrome browser rather than Internet Explorer. These browsers have a strong reputation, whereas Internet Explorer is considered an outdated browser. Furthermore, Firefox and Google Chrome are compatible with CSS.
4. It was noticed that WordPress continued to issue updates that affected the entire blog, especially students' registration and posts, and in some cases, students had to re-register. Therefore, it was decided to stop these updates, which was done by the website programmer

4.8.3 Piloting of the semi-structured interviews

As mentioned in the data collection methods, two interview schedules were designed, one for the students and the other for the teacher (see Appendix D). After piloting the study's blog, the pilot students and the pilot EFL teacher were interviewed. The results indicated that they did not yield sufficient in-depth information, and the answers were mixed up; therefore, new interview schedules were designed (see Appendix E) that were divided into the following themes. First, the students' interview was categorised into the product–process shift, blogging in the classroom culture of the EFL writing classes, understanding of comments, the role of the sense of the audience, language transfer, and blogging benefits and drawbacks. Second, the teacher's interview was divided into blogging in the classroom culture of the EFL writing classes, and benefits and drawbacks. Each theme contained several questions based on the overall research questions.

4.9 Data Collection Procedure

After the piloting, some of the research methods were modified, and the data collection procedure were carried out at the Institute of Health during the third semester, which lasted for three months. Since the research study examined students' blog use, the project was implemented in the Institute's computer lab, a new lab which contains 45 computers that offer internet access.

4.9.1 Students' training on how to use the blogs

Students were given two introductory sessions of two hours on different days on how the blog website and its services worked. On the first day, I showed the students the steps of how to register and log in so that the students could register using their email address and create a username and a password. Then, they chose a suitable name for their blog. The students were asked to choose fictitious names that would help to preserve their anonymity and achieve the aims of the study. On the second day, once the blog website's admin had verified the students' registration, they were given another workshop on how to use the blogs. I showed them how to log in to their blogs, how to publish blog posts, how to change the colour and font and add media, and how to comment; if they were unsure about what to comment, they were instructed to use any sentence

included in the feedback sheet. The students were also trained in using the appropriate link to check the spelling, grammar and vocabulary of their blog post, and asked to complete an open-ended questionnaire to help in the selection of the six students who would be the focal students in this study. This is discussed in detail in the section on the sampling and selection process (see section 4.7).

4.9.2 Blog data collection

The project was completed in the computer lab of the Institute of Health in Oman during a free hour the students have every Tuesday. The data collection lasted for three months, during which the students were tasked with writing three posts. The first was on the topic of how to make a good first impression, the second concerned an advertisement, and the last one was about making donations. The following steps were completed for each blog post.

For each post, the teacher spent quality time introducing the unit title, going through the most important tasks and exercises, and highlighting appropriate vocabulary. This was done to prepare the students to write the required post. This could last for up to two weeks depending on the density of the unit and how the students were responding and improving. Then, students were tasked with writing their first post, which was done during the students' free time in the computer lab. Based on the training they had been given, they were asked to choose a font colour, add a suitable picture, and check the grammar and vocabulary using the attached link. After the first blog was published, students were asked to comment on each other's work, and their teacher was asked to comment on their work. The students could either write their own sentences or use the options given in the feedback sheet to help and motivate those who could not think of appropriate sentences. Each student was asked to leave as many comments as they wished and to use motivational phrases even if they wanted to highlight a negative issue. Furthermore, if any student was unsatisfied with a comment, they could ask for an additional explanation. Based on the comments of their fellow students and teacher, the final step was to modify the first draft and produce a second version of the original one. The students were advised to edit their drafts based on the most critical comments.

To improve the quality of the blog posts, after each second draft, the students were given a questionnaire to complete that was identical to the one

used in the piloting stage (see Appendix C). The students received the questionnaire by email, completed it at home, and then submitted it. It was used to evaluate the blog website, record any negative opinions that were to be deleted, and mention anything to be added or modified. The questionnaire was distributed three times; each time, modifications were made based on the students' feedback with two main objectives: to provide the students with as much help as possible as they dealt with an unfamiliar online learning tool; and to help them publish blogs that can be used as an example if any learning institution is considering using blogs as a teaching method.

The following modifications were made. After the first blog post was completed, the website programmer added YouTube tutorials that showed the students how to post a blog, how to follow the link to the spell checker, and how to publish and approve comments. After the second blog posts, students suggested that the YouTube tutorials could be accompanied by written sentences since the previous tutorials were only short videos without such sentences. Another tutorial was added that taught students how to customise their blogs. To motivate the students to post comments in which they wrote appropriate remarks, they were advised to leave at least three comments. After the final blog post had been edited, and to encourage some of the students to customise their blogs, a contest was held, with the winner selected by the blog's admin and notified via an email. This contest was held at the end as a refresher and to complement the heavy schedule the students had followed in the previous months.

4.9.3 Field notes

Initially, I did not intend to use field notes as part of the student methods; however, after the pilot study had been conducted, it was decided that these field notes needed to be designed and applied. Therefore, three field notes were written by me at the Institute of Health while the students were studying their writing module. There was a month between each one, and I followed a field notes template that contained the following items: date, time, place of observation, duration, number of observers, planned agenda, students' place, lesson flow, overview, raw notes, and analytical comments. Field notes were written for each class, and at the end of the class, I summarised the most important points to highlight the most important ideas. The field notes were used to observe the general class

atmosphere in terms of relationships before and after blogging had been used as a learning tool, as well as how the teacher was integrating blogging into lessons.

4.9.4 Student interviews

The student interviews were held over three days with the six participants selected via the open-ended questionnaire. The students were interviewed after they had completed the three blog posts and the contest that was run at the end of the study. For each day, two students were selected in advance, and each one was interviewed separately for an hour. The interviews were conducted in Arabic (see Appendix W) in the computer lab during the students' break, and they followed the interview schedule (see Appendix E). If further clarifications were required, I sought to employ supplementary questions to determine what the students wanted to say. They were told to feel free to ask for simplification of any difficult questions if necessary. All the students stated that not only was this the first time they had been involved in research using an online learning tool, but also it was the first time they had been interviewed. At the end of each interview, I expressed my appreciation for the students' responses and asked them not to share any questions with the other students until all the interviews had been conducted; all the students agreed to this request. The interviews were recorded and then translated into English for transcription.

4.9.5 Interview with the teacher

The teacher was interviewed once in her office in the campus at the end of the project during her free time. The interview lasted for about an hour and was conducted in English. The teacher was told to feel free to ask for any necessary clarification. The interview covered the issues of the role of blogging in the classroom culture and the blogging drawbacks. The interview was recorded and then transcribed (see Appendix E).

4.10 Data Analysis

Following the data collection, the data was analysed to answer the research questions. I used a general inductive approach to reflect the frequently outlined patterns in the qualitative research. This helped to condense substantial wide-ranging raw text data into a summary, make links between the study's intention

and the summary acquired from the primary text data, and develop a conclusive finding from the transparent processes in the raw data. Although there are several analytical approaches to analyse qualitative data (e.g. Alholjailan, 2012; Braun & Clarke, 2006), Radnor's (2002) inductive analytical approach was used to analyse the research data of this study. This was due to its flexibility in the explorative study. It assisted in the unclear ideas on patterns for which I was looking, for example, a pattern of a culture shift, in the classroom by using blogs in learning L2 writing. This analysis was thematic and would help to identify themes in the data by familiarising the researcher with data, assigning codes to the data to describe the content, searching for a pattern in the content, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and finally, producing a report. The data comprised the students' posts (six posts for each student), students' and EFL teacher's comments, three field notes, six students' interviews, and one EFL teacher's interview.

This section will explain how the data was interpreted using methods developed for the study of qualitative/interpretative data. According to Little (1999), data analysis is known to be a collaborative method in which the researcher continues reverting back and forth through the transcripts of the research to achieve a deeper interpretation of the subject matter. Since the data obtained from all four research protocols was of a qualitative nature, Radnor's (2002) inductive analytical process was used to analyse the research data. The following steps of Radnor's (2002) process were applied during the analysis: 1. topic selection – responses of all four qualitative data procedures were identified, as they do address the research questions and the conceptual framework of the current study; 2. reading for content – data was divided into chunks by coding and marking to add units of significance/meaning to the data. Codes were attributed to functional connotations and headings representing the terms defined about the conceptual context of the study; 3. construction of categories – responses of each research method that related to each other were fitted into categories. These categories were then tested for distinctiveness from other categories in a meaningful way. Then, the large categories were classified into sub-categories; 4. completing coded sheets – coded responses from all the participants were gathered to identify where themes were exchanged (see Encoding Structures in Appendices J, L, M, N, O, Q, S and V); 5. generating

coded transcripts – transcripts were outlined and highlighted using the produced codes (see Appendices Q, S and V). Codes were simplified and assimilated into a variety of themes by combining related categories into one key theme so that fragments could be managed. Check-coding was achieved by coding twice on two separate occasions; 6. analysis of the interpretation of the data – the data was analysed manually. Conclusions would be based on what Holliday (2002) calls a mixture of evidence, statements and arguments to provide the participants with substantial explanations and informative opinions on the role of blogs in language learning and, specifically, their role in enhancing students' writing skills. Radnor's (2002) inductive method was used to analyse the following research data: blog comments, students' interviews, EFL teacher's interview, and field notes. However, to analyse the students' posts, a writing rubric was applied in a deductive analysis manner, as will be outlined in the following section.

4.10.1 Analysis of students' posts

In my data analysis, I used a deductive qualitative approach, as it would help in explaining the causal relationships between concepts and variables and possibly help in generalising the research findings to a certain extent.

Blog posts were one of the most important types of data that I collected from the participants. During the three months of the data collection, I asked the participants to write a post on the theme of three different units and an edited post. Therefore, each student had six posts at the end of the project (three original posts and three edited posts based on the given comments). The primary aim of this was to gain an overview of the students' writing strengths. I assessed/coded three edited posts for each of the six focal students by using a rubric (see Appendix K) to identify the writing areas. Since the main grading focus of the EFL teacher at the Institute of Health was grammar, vocabulary and writing style (Al-Hajri, 2014), I designed a writing rubric. This rubric was created by applying the six essential steps (Roell, 2019). The rubric tackled various critical criteria, as well as the language of the students' written work. These criteria were created since Roell (2019, para. 6) stated, "you'll need to brainstorm a list of knowledge and skills you would like to assess for the project".

Each edited post was analysed sentence by sentence to allocate it to the appropriate criteria. **Content, voice, language, communication achievement**

and **organisation** were the aspects of writing assessed on the rubric. I assessed these aspects on a 3-point scale, with 1 being the lowest and 3 being the highest. For example, one student's sentence in their 'How to make a first impression' post was: '**First of all, you should welcome the new neighbor [sic] by greeting them**', so '**welcome the new neighbor [sic]**' was coded as content. I continued to code the sentences grouped under **content** in the students' posts and then gave them a mark out of 3. Therefore, if the student's content was relevant, understood, and fully informed the target reader, the student was given a total mark of 3, and if not, the student would be given a mark of 2 or 1. Once this analysis phase was completed, I implemented the second phase. I assessed the first edited post and the third edited post for each student to compare the two and determine possible growth or improvement. I did this by comparing the first and third marks on each of the assessed/coded areas of the students' edited posts. This helped me to identify areas that had shown improvement in each student's writing, as well as areas that required improvement or growth. For example, MNS98 scored 2 for the content area on her first edited post and 3 on her third edited post, which showed that her writing in this area had improved. Each student's edited posts were coded/assessed according to the appropriate code of the rubric. The marks are summarised in Table 4, and the results are reported in Chapter Five. For an example of the analysis of the students' work, (see Appendix J.)

4.10.2 Analysis of blog comments

During the application of the project, I asked students and their EFL teacher to comment on the other students' original posts. I then grouped and analysed these comments as outlined below.

First, to analyse the impact of the use of blogs on the students' attention to text (product) and their attention to the act of writing (process) while reading the students' comments, the student comments were ordered and read through. I noted various codes, and then I classified these grounded codes into two categories: comments that were based on a **product approach**, and those that were based on a **process approach**. Therefore, if the students' comments were coded under '**spelling, grammar, vocabulary, writing style**', they were considered as a product approach. For example, one of the students' comments

was **'I think you should write (on the other hand) instead of (in other hand)'**. I coded this comment as **'spelling'**, which was then considered a comment based on a **product approach**. If the comments were coded under **'adding more examples, expanding an idea, acknowledging the main message of the post, providing general suggestions, and asking for more clarification'**, I considered them as a **process approach**. For example, one of the students' comments was **'I think you want to add more details and examples to support your ideas'**. I coded this comment as **'adding more examples'**, so it was considered as a comment based on a **product approach**. Each student's comments were coded according to the appropriate codes. The results are summarised in Table 9 and presented in Chapter Five. For an example of the analysis, see (Appendix N.)

Second, to ascertain whether the use of the feedback sheet could help the students in scaffolding their comments and to develop independence in commenting, I completed the following steps. Students' comments were checked line by line to identify whether they were written based on the feedback sheet or the student's original sentence. I did this by comparing the students' comments with the attached feedback sheet, which included incomplete sentences that could be completed by the students (see Appendix I). This step helped to distinguish the students' original comments from those on the feedback sheet. Therefore, if the students' comments were written by them entirely, they were coded as **'original comment'**, and if they were based on the feedback sheet, I coded them as **'example from the feedback sheet'**. For example, one of the student's first comments was **'I like the essay because it gives me [sic] some tips to make a good impression on my teachers'**. This comment was coded as **'example from the feedback sheet'** since she used one of the incomplete sentences. Her third comment was **'I got the message of your essay, but I think you want to add more details and examples to support your ideas, good luck'**. She wrote this comment without the help of the feedback sheet, so I coded it as **'original comment'**. I asked students to comment on the second post using their preferred language. I could not analyse some of the students' second comments since they were written using their L1. I coded each of the students' comments according to the appropriate code. The results are summarised in

Table 8 and presented in Chapter Five. For an example of the analysis, see (Appendix O.)

Next, to examine the students' general comments' type, I organised them to check their specific content and group each type under one code. For example, I coded **'I enjoyed reading your article, I liked all the tips proposed especially the one about not speaking loudly I totally agree with you in that'** as **'encouragement'**. Each time a new type of comment was made, I formed a new code. I coded these comments under the following codes: **'offering advice'**, **'encouragement'**, **'appreciation'**, and **'requesting clarification'**. Each student's comment was coded according to the appropriate codes. The results are summarised in Table 6 and presented in Chapter Five. (For an example of the analysis, see (Appendix L.)

Subsequently, to analyse the influence of the comments on the revision of the students' posts and how the comments supported improvements (or other changes) in different blog drafts, I implemented the following steps. The students' three edited posts were analysed to identify the changes that were made based on the comments received on each post (see Appendix M for an example of the analysis). Before the analysis, I grouped the student's original post, the feedback that they received, and their edited draft to mark the changes that were made. I then developed the codes **'student's first draft'**, **'comments received'**, and **changes**, which were coded according to the following sub-codes: **'adding example'**, **'expanding an idea'**, **'correcting a few grammatical mistakes'**, **'rewriting the introductory sentence'**, and **'using some of the website features'**.

For example, I analysed one student's posts by marking the following. First, I checked the **student's original post**. Second, I marked the **comment** the student received from the teacher, which was: **'Could you please talk about one of your personal experiences that have influenced your recent opinion regarding the use of advertisements'**. The student's response to this was to modify their work and add the following: **'As it happened to me after I finished high school, my father gave me his phone, and it was working perfectly, but I wanted a new one, and sure I saw it on the TV ad'**. I marked this sentence as **'adding example'**, representing a **change** in the student's work influenced by

comments. I coded each student post according to the appropriate code. The results of this are summarised in Table 7 and presented in Chapter Five.

Finally, I examined the students' comments and their EFL teacher's comments to ascertain whether their comments could reflect a change in the class culture concerning the changes in their relationship. The analysis of the teacher's comments showed that she used the same guiding writing style throughout the whole project in constructing her comments. The only finding was the teacher's use of emojis within her comments, which could be considered a sign of reducing the level of formality. Therefore, the general guiding commenting style that the teacher used was coded as '**a formal comment**', and the use of emojis only was coded as '**a less formal comment**'. For example, one of the teacher's comments was '**I like your way of writing and constructing your ideas; you are writing in an easily and yet interesting style. P.S: I hope that your new version will contain the use of other options at the posting section, will be waiting to read it, good luck**'. This comment was coded as '**a formal comment**'. Another comment was '**It is really interesting that you have mentioned the kind of actions which should be avoided in order to leave a good first impression, well done 😊**'. This comment was coded as '**a less formal comment**'. If I had had the comments that were given by the teacher prior to the implementation of blogging in teaching writing skills, I could have compared these comments with those that were given after the blogging implementation. In this way, I would have been able to determine whether comments could reflect a change in the classroom culture concerning the changes in their relationship.

Additionally, I could not identify any changes in the terminology used by the students that could reflect a change in the relationship. Students continued using the same writing style throughout the whole commenting journey. This aspect of the analysis is discussed in more detail in section 5.5.5.1 in Chapter Five. For an example of the analysis, (see Appendix T.)

4.10.3 Interviews with students and EFL teacher

Interviews with the students and teacher were used to gather information regarding the role of the audience, the impact of the product to process shift on the students' learning atmosphere, blogging drawbacks, students' language transfer, and the role of blogs in the classroom culture of this study. Following

this pattern (Radnor, 2002), I analysed the data from interviews with the students and the teacher in the same way. I transcribed the student interviews' answers and translated them into English since they were conducted in the students' L1, Arabic (see Appendix W). The analysis of the interview with the teacher started from question three, as the first two questions were considered warm-up questions.

For each interview, I coded all the answers; several grounded codes emerged, which then I clustered into categories and sub-categories. Subsequently, these were clustered into main themes. I read the transcripts of the interviews and coded all the participants' responses according to the appropriate code. The following main themes emerged from the student interviews: '**A changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes**', '**A change in understanding of a text**', '**A change in understanding of being a writer**', '**A change in pedagogy for the writing classroom**', and '**Blogging drawbacks**'. (For an example of the student interviews' analysis, see Appendices R and S.) The following main themes emerged from the teacher's interview: '**A changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes**' and '**Blogging drawbacks**'. (For the analysis of the teacher's interview, see Appendices U and V, which contain a list of the emergent codes applied for each research protocol. The results of the interviews with the students and teacher are presented in Chapter Five while answering the research questions; I discuss them by using Figures 11,12, 15, 16, 18 and 19.

4.10.4 Field notes

As stated in section 4.10, I applied Radnor's (2002) analysis process to analyse the field notes. The field notes were employed to obtain information relating to the role of the blogging application in the classroom culture of the study. Three field notes were written following a planned schedule. The main aim of each field note was to focus on obtaining information relating to the general classroom atmosphere and setting before and during the blogging application and an overview of the teacher's teaching steps before and during the application of blogging. Other topics included in the field notes were observations about the participant's attitude and direct quotes that attracted the researcher's attention. I

immediately highlighted in red quotes from participants that attracted my attention so that they could be found easily during the data analysis.

The information gathered was then noted, organised and read. The following grounded codes emerged: **'student–teacher relationship prior to blogging'**, **'student–student relationships prior to blogging'**, **'changing teacher's role'**, **'changing student–teacher relationship'**, **'changing student–student relationships'**, and **'integrating blogging into L2 writing'**. I clustered these codes into the following main theme: **'A changing classroom culture of the L2 writing classes'**. I then coded the information gathered under the correct codes as they were collected; for example, the sentence **'the class was active, interesting ideas were discussed. It was not a teacher-centred class; on the contrary, students' role was obvious in sharing ideas, suggesting new topics to be discussed and offering a hand to other peers'** was coded under **'Changing teacher's role changing student–teacher relationship'**. The results are presented in Tables 11 and 12 and discussed in Chapter Five by using Figure 17 while answering question five. For an example of the analysis, (see Appendices P and Q.)

4.11 Ethical Issues

Creswell (2009) states that ethics are principles that inform researchers and need to be followed. The British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011, p. 5) confirms that all research should be conducted “within an ethic of respect for the person, knowledge, democratic values, the quality of educational research, academic freedom”. In this study, the emphasis was placed on people. BERA (2011) highlighted various responsibilities that should be taken care of by the researcher while conducting a research study, for instance, the researcher's responsibilities to other researchers, students, and professional foundations. Furthermore, “ethics education can enable scientists to place their position into a logical framework from which they can look for consistent approaches to related problems” (Elliott & Stern, 1997, p. 8). Several issues were considered to ensure that this study was implemented in an ethical atmosphere and that its main objective was to provide privacy and confidence to the participants.

First, after obtaining the certificate of ethical approval from the Graduate School of Education at the University of Exeter (see Appendix X), the Directorate

of Health in the A'Dhahira region of Oman was contacted. The Directorate asked the chosen health institute for permission to conduct the study. After obtaining verbal permission, a copy of the certificate of ethical approval that explained the whole idea of the study was sent to the Institute of Health. Second, a mini-conference was arranged to discuss a number of issues with the chosen foundation class and their teacher. These issues were the purpose of the study, the research plan, and the role of the participants. A presentation was given to clarify the research activity in which the potential participants would be involved. I also emphasised that I would “minimise the impact of [my] research on the normal working and workloads of participants” (BERA, 2011, p. 10), as this study employed a new educational tool that may require the students and teacher to take additional time to understand and implement it. Additionally, all the research was conducted on a voluntary basis, and therefore consent forms were sent to all the participants.

Two consent forms were designed: one for students and the other for the teacher (see Appendices G and H). In this stage, based on Diener and Crandall's (1978, p. 51) work, it was decided that a consent form should include “competence, voluntarism, full information, and comprehension”. Cohen et al., (2011, p. 51) state that “if these four elements are present, researchers can be assured that subjects' rights will have been given appropriate consideration”. A consent form was given to the participants which confirmed that their participation was voluntary, informed them of the main aims of the project, and stated that they had the right to withdraw at any time (see Appendices G and H). Moreover, since the study was conducted by using a class blog, I had the responsibility to assure the participants that their privacy would be respected.

The participants were made aware that their data would be protected based on the BERA (2011, p. 6) guidelines, which state that “participants must be informed that their participation and interactions are being monitored and analysed for research”. To protect the participants' data in the class blog, only the participants in the study were allowed to log in. This was ensured by asking each of the participants to register using their email address and a username. Their email addresses were noted in advance to ensure that only registered participants could access the blog website. Additionally, I confirmed that the data would be kept in a secure place and examined confidentially to answer the

research questions. The participants were assured that the researcher's supervisor would be the second party with permission to access the data, and that after obtaining the required results, their data would be deleted. Finally, every stage of the study was discussed beforehand, ensuring that no parts of the study interfered with the personal and human rights of the participants

4.12 Trustworthiness

The main factors of quantitative research are its validity and reliability, whereas for qualitative research, the principal factor is trustworthiness, which provides similar rigour to qualitative research. Trustworthiness is defined by Bryman (2016, p. 700) as a "set of criteria advocated by some writers for assessing the quality of qualitative research". Trustworthiness cannot be achieved via a single approach; rather, it requires a combination of strategies that researchers use to determine the credibility and accuracy of their findings (Drummond & Murphy-Reyes, 2017). In this study, trustworthiness was used as the main criterion for determining the credibility and accuracy of the data. Creswell (2008) recommends that qualitative researchers include at least two measures of trustworthiness in their studies. The most popular and cost-effective methods of trustworthiness are the adoption of research methods, in which researchers adopt a specific research design or approach that functions as a guide to the data collection and analysis and triangulation, which means that researchers employ multiple types of data sources to yield further evidence to understand the research problem. In this study, the methods used to measure trustworthiness were the triangulation of the data collection methods and the validation of the translations between English and Arabic. To establish whether qualitative research is trustworthy, four criteria need to be in place: credibility, dependability, authenticity, and transferability.

4.12.1 Credibility

To meet the criterion of credibility, research must be shown to be truthful and authentic and the results believable. There are some strategies for doing so, such as using well-established research methods and offering detailed explanations of these methods, which means that the study can be replicated (Schmidt & Brown,

2011). Given's (2008) definition of credibility focuses on the methodological procedures used by the researcher to establish harmony between what the participants said and the researcher's interpretation of the data. Researchers should ensure that the paradigm used in data interpretation is consistent with the realities that the participants understood and experienced.

In the current study, a number of strategies were employed to establish credibility and show that the study was authentic and truthful. For example, the accuracy of the interpretive data transcription, translation and recording was maximised through researcher/colleague triangulation. Two experts who had obtained a PhD degree from UK universities reviewed the English–Arabic translation of the interview schedule and the Arabic–English translation of the participants' interview data. In addition, the participants' feedback was checked via Skype so that the participants could validate the accuracy of their transcripts. This strategy gave the participants an opportunity to define and improve places where disagreement occurred, and the researcher could validate the findings by formulating a credible understanding of the process from the participants' points of view (Lincoln & Guba, 2005). Another strategy to enhance credibility was the triangulation of the categorisation and coding of the textual data in the data analysis stage. The colleagues mentioned above revised the data categorisation and coding, and one expert colleague was also asked to code the responses of one of the participants for a data segment. This coding was correlated with my coding to measure agreement, and a reliability coefficient was calculated.

4.12.2 Dependability

The second criterion that needs to be in place to establish the trustworthiness of data and a research project is dependability. According to Spires (2015), dependability is an alternative criterion that is similar to reliability in quantitative research. It guarantees consistency in research methods and data across research settings and contexts. Dependability increases trustworthiness since it entails research that is systematically conducted until the end (Spires, 2015). Guion et al. (2011) state that the triangulation of different types of data can generate data diversity and quantity; for example, triangulation can be used in the collection of interview data, targeting similar issues by asking common questions, and allowing for a variety of perspectives about the same topics (Guion

et al., 2011). Jack and Raturi (2006) justify the use of triangulation by asserting that the weaknesses inherent in one research methodology can be counterbalanced with the strengths of others. In the current study, dependability was enhanced through the triangulation of the data collection methods to gain a more detailed understanding of the participants' perspectives on the research problem.

4.12.3 Authenticity

The third criterion that establishes trustworthiness in qualitative research is authenticity. Given (2008) states that authenticity is confirmed when the inferences that the researcher makes match the data, and when the underlying data supports the researcher's assertions. Two strategies were employed in the current study to maximise authenticity: the study adopted a straightforward explanation and description of the data collection and analysis methods; and Given's (2008) audit trail was adopted to ensure that the research process and data interpretation were consistent with each other and with the theoretical framework of the study. This was done by asking an independent reviewer to perform the auditing.

4.12.4 Transferability

The fourth criterion for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research is transferability. This concept is similar to that of generalisability in quantitative research in that it refers to the extent to which the study results can be transferred to other settings (Lichtman, 2012). According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003), a representational study's generalisation can be assessed using two criteria. The first criterion is the accuracy of the data collection and analysis methods; in the present study, accuracy was enhanced through the use of triangulation and adherence to the research methods described earlier in this paper. Triangulation was applied via multiple methods to be able to describe the findings in as much detail as possible. The second criterion is sample representativeness. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) focus not on the statistical significance of the sample but on the study context and how far the sample is inclusive in relation to the research context. The sample in the current study is representative since all the student participants are Omani students learning ESL and studying at the Institute of

Health. They are all from the same age group, share the same culture, follow the same methods of learning English, and have the same L1, Arabic.

4.13 Summary

Several elements were discussed in this chapter, starting with the research paradigm and the research methodology and design. Subsequently, the data collection methods were discussed, outlining how these methods were designed, why, and how they were modified. The remainder of the chapter focused on the data collection procedures, data analysis, ethical issues and the trustworthiness that were applied to guarantee and assess the quality of this study.

Chapter Five: Findings

5.1 Introduction

This study utilises a case study methodology to explore students' learning as they use blogs to support writing in L2. The case study involved the analysis and integration of different data sets. To illustrate how this process was undertaken, one participant (Faith) will be discussed in detail to inform the reader of the background from which themes were derived. The remainder of the chapter will be organised around the key themes generated from the blogging data, interview data and field notes, and it will explore the contribution of all the participants' data to these themes. Faith was randomly selected, and she was the first participant to be interviewed. Faith's blogging process is presented for illustrative reasons to demonstrate the analysis and interpretation process, as well as the blogging procedure. All the other participants' data was analysed in a similar way.

5.2 Faith

5.2.1 Faith's first post – 'How to make a first impression'

Faith's first post was about how to make a first impression. In her first draft, Faith gave some tips about how to make a good, positive impression on a new neighbour. She provided supporting examples. The data shows that Faith understood the topic and she clarified her views about it: 'There are several ways to build good first impression on a new neighbor [sic]. First of all, you should welcome the new neighbor [sic] by greeting them warmly'. One main feature can be noticed in Faith's peers' feedback; in their comments on Faith's post, her peers focused on her language forms rather than her ideas and the message she tried to deliver. The focus of the comments was only on the language forms, namely grammar, spelling or writing style, and not on the effect the post had on the potential audience, which was the message of the text.

5.2.2 Faith's edited version of 'How to make a first impression'

In her edited version of the first post, Faith did not take into account all the additions recommended by her peers or teacher. Comparison of the first draft and the edited version shows that the following changes were made: she added a picture that shows two people shaking hands in two houses and changed the

font of her post. Although Faith did not take into account all the recommended changes, the purpose of this stage of the analysis is to determine how social interaction is informing revision practices. The fact that this cycle is repeated for other tasks will show how behaviour might change over time as students become more accustomed to working in an environment with social interaction.

5.2.3 Faith's edited version of 'How to make a first impression'

In her edited version of the first post, Faith did not take into account all the additions recommended by her peers or teacher. Comparing the first draft and the edited version shows that the following changes were made; She added a picture that shows two people shaking hands in two houses and changed the font of her post. Although Faith did not take into account all the recommended changes, the purpose of this stage of the analysis is to determine how social interaction is informing revision practices. The fact that this cycle is repeated for other tasks will show how behaviour might change over time as students become more accustomed to working within an environment with social interaction.

5.2.4 Faith's second post – 'Advertisements'

Faith's second post was on advertisements and their effects on marketing and the economy. The draft of Faith's post on advertisements shows that her ability to structure her ideas and support them was enhanced. She was also able to make her voice heard, and she used the first person 'I'. She used examples to support her argument, and the presence of the audience was felt when she directed a question to the audience as a brainstorming technique 'For me, I believe that advertisement is useful for us because it gives information about the product, it's one way to hiring people and it is paying money for the services that website provide'. The comments made by Faith's peers show that they all had a good impression of the post and that she could explain and argue her ideas and use words and expressions that articulate her ideas. Unlike the traditional way of giving feedback where the focus is mainly on the negative side of writing and on the forms of language rather than the content, the teacher expressed her admiration for the post: 'Well done; I like your way of writing and how you stick to your opinion'. This pattern of teacher feedback is not common in the ESL classroom. The literature suggests that a common teacher identity is an authoritarian figure who is the only source of knowledge (Chan & Chan, 2005). In

the new blogging experience, the role of the teacher became that of a facilitator who enables students to use their existing knowledge to acquire new knowledge (McKay, 2013).

This was also seen among the students, as Ashg commented: 'I really enjoyed your talking about advertisement industry. Could you explain the second reason and support it with a suitable example especially when talking about the idea that advertisement can provide different job opportunities'. Soma, another student, used positive expressions to give Faith feedback: 'Very beautiful, you have done a great job by connecting the idea of advertisement with the reasons'. The pattern of interaction that is emerging over time is based more on personal support than on critical attention to the text. This type of commenting could be considered as both an advantage and a disadvantage in terms of developing skills for giving feedback.

5.2.5 Faith's edited version of 'Advertisements'

Faith made two modifications in the new version of 'Advertisements'. She took into consideration Soma's comments about adding examples of the advertisements she was discussing. This means that Faith was keen to improve her writing to satisfy the audience and produce the best post. The second modification of 'Advertisements' demonstrated a change in the way she wrote about her views and in the way she could express herself more clearly, a change that is focused on reader awareness. This was obvious in the following example: 'For example, the scenes which appear on the TV, makes you happy and sometimes you may laugh. As a result, they provide viewers with a much-needed variety to break the boredom' (edited version).

5.2.6 Faith's third post – 'Donation'

Faith's third post was 'Can a small amount of money make a big change in poor people's lives?'. Faith's first draft of the post showed good ability to articulate her ideas and develop them, and she used good examples. Faith received positive feedback from her peers, who appreciated her ability to present an argument about the topic and support it with examples. Panda's reaction to Faith's post was: 'I love the way that you used in giving reasons and examples'. There is interaction between the audience and the text, which is something not experienced in the writing sessions of the traditional writing classroom (Norris et

al., 2017). There is also evidence of increased involvement of the students in the feedback about a text compared to previous cycles. The feedback itself is about the content, the ideas, the messages communicated, and the impact of the text on the audience. Thus, there is a wider range of possible responses, suggesting that readers are engaging more critically in reflecting on the text. Therefore, there is evidence to suggest that change affects both those giving feedback and those responding to it. The teacher gave Faith some instructions for the final version of the post: 'Could you please do the following; 1. Try to expand and modify the third point because it wasn't that clear; 2. Could you add examples to support your work'. The teacher's feedback offers ideas for how to improve, so Faith can draw on different types of feedback in her revision. Another type of interaction was created through blogging, which is the interaction between the participants as the audience and the blog, and this was evident in the more personal way the participants responded to the blog and the information it provided. The new blogging experience created in the participants a sense of audience that, over time, created increased trust in the value of feedback and a climate more conducive to taking others' comments seriously. Thus, blogging enabled the students to participate in the feedback on the other students' posts and changed the role of the teacher as an authoritarian figure to that of a facilitator. Blogging also developed the students' sense of audience, and they tried hard to satisfy this audience. On the other hand, the peer feedback was perhaps more about encouragement than critical attention, while the teacher feedback seemed to balance praise and critical attention more effectively.

5.2.7 Faith's edited version of the third post

Faith made a number of modifications that her teacher and peers asked her to make, especially in terms of expanding an idea – 'Could you please do the following; 1. Try to expand and modify the last point because it wasn't that clear; 2. Could you add examples to support your work' – and adding an example: 'I hope that the writer could modify the previous point by writing some examples'. These comments reflected that the students had started to shift from a product approach, where the focus was on the written text, to a process approach, where the focus was on phases that the students were going through while crafting their posts. Faith responded to these comment by modifying the third post from

'Finally, since such people know the difficulties of life, they will try to help the people how to have the same type of financial problems. For instance, they help to improve the society by helping others with money and begging a role model for others' to 'Finally, since such people know life difficulties, they will try to help other people who are having the same type of financial problems. For instance, helping to improve the society by helping others with money and being a role model for others. This can be done by extending love and help; those people who were in need in the past, it's their turn to help others and offer not only the psychological support but also the financial one'. For an example of Faith's analysis work, see (Appendix M).

5.3 Contrasting Faith's ideas with those of the other participants

Having discussed the process through which the case study was created and having used Faith as an example of potential emerging themes within the data, this section contrasts Faith's emerging ideas with those of the other five students.

5.3.1 Students' writing strengths and improvements

Table 4 shows the writing strengths and improvements that the participants demonstrated in the three texts. As mentioned in Chapter Four, section 4.10.1, to analyse the students' blog posts, I assessed each post using each of the five aspects of writing based on a writing rubric (see Appendix K). Each post was given a score in each category. In this way, I was able to compare how the different aspects of writing changed (using the first and the third post only) and to identify the strengths of each student post. In my analysis, I found that 'language', 'communication achievement' and 'organisation' were the aspects in which there was notable improvement in the students' writing. 'Notable' means that all the students demonstrated growth in these areas, so they stood out as overall areas of improvement.

Table 4*Participants Achievements*

	CONTENT			VOICE			LANGUGAE			COMMUNICATION ACHIEVENMENT			ORGANISATION		
PARTICIPNATS	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2 nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd
1. MNS98	2	3	3	1	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2. SOMA	2	3	2	1	2	3	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	3	3
3. FAITH	2	3	2	1	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	3
4. SWEETY	2	3	3	1	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
5. PANDA	2	2	2	1	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	3
6. GHOST21	2	2	3	1	2	3	2	1	3	1	2	3	2	2	3

Each student's blogs developed in various ways through the different versions; for instance, Ghost21's versions showed the most improvement on each of the writing criteria. Table 5 provides more details and examples of Ghost21's blog improvements between different versions.

Table 5

Example of Ghost21's Blog Improvements Between Different Versions

Writing criteria	Mark for the 1st edited post	Example	Mark for the 3rd edited post	Example
Content	2	<p>Classmate is one of the important people whom you should make a good impression on.</p> <p>Smiling instantly can have a good influence on others. Another thing is to keep listening and paying attention when they talk.</p> <p>Also, you should leave polite comments when they tell a</p>	3	<p>A small amount of money can make a big difference in the life.</p> <p>For that, my friends and I decided to do an act of charity by donating 10\$ only in Al-Dahera Nursing Institute.</p> <p>The main idea of our project was that everyone will pay \$10 every week to</p>

		<p>story.</p> <p>In the end, you should get the good first impression with your classmates or any new person for you by following that advice.</p>		<p>improve the main library of the Institute.</p> <p>The first thing we did is that we provided almost all the tools which each student in the institute may need to.</p> <p>For example, we provided to the Library with many different types of paper notebooks.</p>
Voice	1	There are a lot of new people you may work or live with for a period of time. One of the most important things to do is to leave a good first impression on them	3	...we provided to the Library with many different types of notebooks.
Language	1	Period of time smiling instantly following that advice.	3	...provided useful and fun medical book resources ...idea was admired, a great difference.
Communication achievement	1	In the end, you should get the good first impression with your classmates or any new person	3	As a result, students started to use the library more to read their reading

		for you by following that advice.		assignments and even to have chat with their tutors regards their study. Most of the students have become more dependent on the library tools to fulfil their work. Also as a perfect result, we have noted that all the students have finished their duties assignments such as projects or research faster and on time.
Organisation	2	However and, In the end Also	3	The main idea For example In addition As a result For instance Actually Dramatically

Ghost21 received two marks for the content of her first edited post 'How to make a first impression', and for her third edited post 'A small amount of money can make a great difference', she received three marks. One mark means that there was little relevance within the content of the first edited post and the target reader was given minimal information, while three marks means that all the content of the post was relevant to the main topic and the target reader was fully informed. In Ghost21's first edited post, she used three sentences to support her main idea 'How to make a first impression'. More information and relevant ideas needed to be provided to expand and modify the main idea of her post. The content of her third edited post had improved; it discussed the main topic, which was 'the positive influence of donation', and the ideas were relevant and deep, which helped to deliver the main message of the post to the reader.

For her first edited post, Ghost21 received one mark on the second criterion, which was 'voice', and for her third edited post, she received three marks. One mark means that in her first edited post, the reader could not feel her personality and could not understand her point of view. She was writing instructive sentences without using supporting examples from her own life, which could help to strengthen her ideas and support them. However, three marks means that in the third edited post, the voice of Ghost21 was clear and the reader could get the feeling that she was directing the whole post to the reader, which helped the main message of the post to be delivered. For example, she used the pronoun 'We', trying to involve the reader and get them to feel how important, fun and helpful it was to keep donating to support other aspects of your own, namely the reader's, community. Furthermore, she supported the main topic 'the positive influence of donation' by using good examples from her own experience, which helped to elevate the level of her writing.

Ghost21 received one mark on the third criterion 'language' for her first edited post and three marks for her third edited post. Based on the students' writing rubric (see Appendix K), language includes the grammar and vocabulary of the written post. One mark means Ghost21 used everyday vocabulary that was generally appropriate with occasional inappropriate use of less common lexis. She also used a range of some simple grammatical forms with a good degree of control. While errors are noticeable, meaning can still be determined. For example, in her first edited post, she used the following simple vocabulary and

grammatical structure, as shown in Table 5, 'period of time', 'most simple', 'paying attention', and 'In the end, you should get the good first impression'. Three marks means that Ghost21 used a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, appropriately. It also means that she used a range of simple grammatical forms with control and flexibility. Occasional errors may be evident, but they do not impede communication. For example, she used the following: '...my friends and I decided to do an act of charity, the main idea for [sic] our project is [sic] everyone will pay \$10 every week to improve the main [sic] library of the Institute'.

Ghost21 received one mark on the fourth criterion 'communication achievement' for her first edited post and three marks for her third edited post. One mark means that she generally used the conventions of the communicative task in an appropriate way to communicate straightforward ideas, while three marks means that she used the conventions of the communicative task in an effective way to gain the attention of the target reader and to deliver straightforward and complex ideas appropriately.

Finally, Ghost21 received two marks on the fifth writing criterion 'organisation' for her first edited post and three marks for her third edited post. Two marks means that her first edited post was well-organised by using a variety of cohesive devices, while three marks means that her third edited post was cohesive and well-organised, and she used a variety of cohesive devices and organisation patterns.

5.3.2 An overview of the students' writing strengths and improvements

Regarding the strengths that the participants demonstrated in the three texts, the participants showed different strengths in the writing criteria. For example, the strengths in Faith's first post were in content, language, communication achievement, and organisation, while MNS98's strengths were in communication and organisation, where she scored three. Like Faith, Sweetie scored three in all the writing criteria for her second post, whereas Soma scored three in only organisation and content. For the third post, Panda was similar to Faith in scoring three for language, communication achievement, and organisation, whereas for voice, they scored two. For an example of the analysis of the students' writing strengths and areas of improvement, see (Appendix J).

5.3.3 Students' general comments type

Table 6 below shows how the participants viewed the comments they had received. For instance, Soma viewed other students' comments on her first topic as 'encouragement' and 'appreciation', those on her second topic as a mixture of 'encouragement' and 'requesting clarification', and those on her third topic as 'requesting clarification'. The majority of the participants' comments were similar for Faith and viewed as 'encouragement' and 'appreciation', which means there is a change in the way the students understood comments and criticism. Sweety was the only participant who was similar to Faith in the way they viewed the comments on their second and the third posts. The way the participants started to view the comments will be discussed later in this chapter.

When this study was being conducted, comments from the students and the teacher played an important role in different approaches – in terms of the role of the feedback sheet; in terms of the students' shift from process to product; in terms a change in classroom culture; and in terms of the nature of the students' general comments – and in this sense, they were used as a basis for the modifications of the students' drafts. The latter important role will be discussed in section 5.3.3 in this chapter.

Table 6

Nature of the Students' General Comments type

Participant	Nature of the 1st comments	Nature of the 2nd comments	Nature of the 3rd comments
MNS98	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement • Appreciation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement • Appreciation • Requesting clarification – 'rewrite the conclusion' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciation • Offering advice • Requesting clarification – 'formulate the conclusion'

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering advice 	
Soma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement • Requesting clarification – ‘asking for specific examples to be modified, an example to be added’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requesting clarification – ‘asking for specific examples to be added’
Faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement • Requesting clarification – ‘last example about football to be rewritten’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requesting clarification – ‘adding examples’
Panda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement • Offering advice – ‘highlighting some of the students’ grammatical mistakes’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement • Offering advice – ‘highlighting some of the students’ mistakes’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciation
Sweety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciation • Encouragement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement • Requesting clarification – ‘asking for an example to be added’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement • Requesting clarification • Offering advice – ‘Talk about the

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering advice 	Omani association for the donation'
Ghost21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement • Offering advice – – 'rewrite parts of the post' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciation • Encouragement • Offering advice – 'adding pictures, divide the post to 3 sections, using certain introductory sentences' • Requesting clarification – 'adding example' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciation • Offering advice – 'add more details about Anna's example' • Requesting clarification – 'What does this sentence mean?' • Encouragement

5.3.4 Nature of the students' second draft changes

As mentioned in Chapter Four, section 4.10.2, to determine how the comments supported improvements (or other changes) in different blog drafts, each student's edited posts were analysed to identify the changes that were made based on the comments received on each post. The following codes emerged and were applied during the analysis process: 'Student's original post, comments received and changes', which was coded to the sub-codes 'adding example', 'expanding an idea', 'correcting a few grammatical mistakes', 'rewriting the introductory sentence', and ;using some of the website features'.

Table 7 below presents the changes the students made in response to the other students' comments For example, Faith used some of the website features, namely colouring the font and adding a photo to the first topic to improve her post.

This modification was based on her EFL teacher’s comment: ‘I enjoyed how you expressed your ideas and supported them with strong examples, well done. P.S: Hope your edited version will contain some of the choices at the posting option section, good luck’. In the second post, most of her peers’ comments asked her to add examples to support the main idea of her post. For example, Soma suggested: ‘Adding an example will support the main idea of your topic, thank you’. Consequently, Faith added an example about a car advertisement to support her ideas: ‘A good example for this is the car advertisements which provide the clients with plenty of information about the new features of the new car, its maximum prices, where and how they can buy it’. For the third topic, Ashg posted the following comment: ‘My favourite part was the introduction. This post made me wonder about the importance of donating to charity organisation. I hope that the writer could modify the previous point by writing some examples’. Faith expanded and modified the third point to clarify her ideas and added an example: ‘For instance, they help to improve the society by helping others with money and being a role model for others. This can be done by extending love and help; those people who were in need in the past, it’s their turn to help others and offer not only the psychological support but also the financial one’.

As can be seen from the above examples, the participants responded positively to the comments and mostly did what they were asked to do in the comments, which can be understood as taking the audience’s attitudes and views into account and eagerness to write in the best way possible. Appendix M contains more examples of the analysis of the influence of the students’ comments on the changes made in the second draft.

Table 7

Nature of the Second Draft Changes

Participants	Revision of Text 1	Revision of Text 2	Revision of Text 3
---------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------

MNS98	<p>1. Using some of the website features (colouring the text and adding a photo)</p> <p>2. Correcting some of the grammatical mistakes</p> <p>3. Rewriting the introductory sentence</p>	<p>1. Adding example; Talking about personal experience regarding the advertisements</p> <p>2. Correcting a few grammatical mistakes</p>	<p>1. Adding example :Talking about the aim of her future organisation: how it will work and whom she will work for</p> <p>2. Correcting a few grammatical mistakes</p>
Soma	<p>1. Using some of the website features (colouring the text and adding a photo)</p> <p>2. Correcting a few grammatical mistakes</p>	<p>1. Adding example: Talking about Nike as an example to support her argument</p>	<p>1. Adding example from her own life in order to develop her discussion</p>
Faith	<p>1. Using some of the website features (colouring the text and adding a photo)</p>	<p>1. Adding example about a car advertisement to support her ideas</p>	<p>1. Expanding an idea: Expanding and modifying the third point in order to clarify her ideas</p> <p>2. Adding example</p>
Panda	<p>1. Using some of the website features (colouring the text and adding a photo)</p>	<p>1. Adding example: improve her writing by adding more sentences and</p>	<p>1. Talking about an example of donation and how this leads</p>

	2. Expanding an idea	examples to make her ideas much clearer	to change someone's life
Sweety	1. Correcting the grammatical mistakes 2. Using some of the website features (colouring the text and adding a photo)	1. Adding example	1. Adding example in order to justify her claim
Ghost21	1. Correcting her grammatical mistakes and the choice of vocabulary	1. Re-writing her introduction 2. Adding example to support her main ideas	1. Adding example: Talking about the effects of her project on the students and how they reacted

5.4 The themes derived from the interview data and the field notes

Thus far, the illustration of the individual participants has been outlined using an individual example. The aim of this was to show how three iterations of three different writing tasks revealed patterns of interaction, as well as revision and change over time. A single participant was used to illustrate the process of blogging and the analysis and interpretation procedure and to indicate not only a sense of typical patterns but also the range of different responses. What has been shown is a rather homogenous set of responses. What follows is a more detailed presentation of the key themes that emerged from the interview data and the field notes, adding the perspectives articulated by the six individuals and their EFL teacher to the observed writing behaviour patterns. The presentation begins with the voice of Faith to link her behaviour patterns with her own perspectives, and then it develops the themes with the views of the whole sample reflected in the

presentation of the findings. As stated in Chapter Four, the interview data was transcribed, and the field notes were written up and then coded. Walliman and Buckler (2008, p. 226) define codes as “labels or tags used to allocate units of meaning to the collected data”. The analysis/coding process, which was mentioned in sections 4.10.3 and 4.10.4, allowed the data from interviews and field notes to be organised under main headings, which I called codes; these codes allowed the development of a more integrated understanding of the situation, which would help to answer the research questions. These main codes were then further analysed to identify more specific sub-codes. The codes and the sub-codes generated from the interviews and the field notes will be presented and discussed to answer the research questions in the following sections.

5.5 Answering the research questions

The data analysis shows that blogging used as a method for teaching L2 writing has led to a number of changes in terms of understanding a text and what it means to write a text, as well as the classroom pedagogy. One of these changes is that the participants increasingly understood writing in L2 as a process as well as a product. A second change concerned the understanding of being a writer. How the participants understood the role of the teacher and their peers through increased interaction also changed when blogging. These changes will be discussed in more detail in the following sections, where the research questions will be answered and the findings of the analysis will be presented. To answer the research questions, a figure will be presented in relation to each question that will highlight the data set that was used to answer each research question, and the generated codes will be discussed.

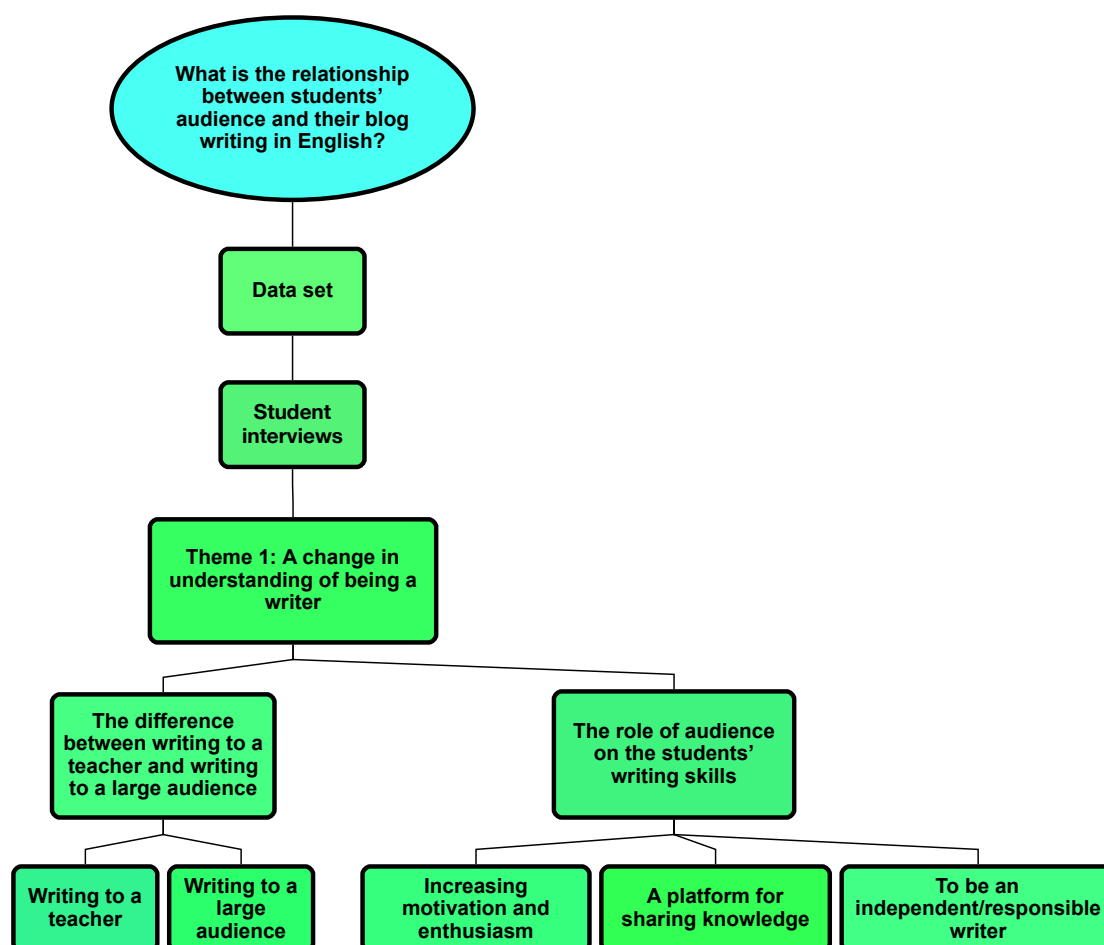
5.5.1 Research question 1

Blogging was a new experience for most of the participants in this current study; as such, it was important to address the following question: What is the relationship between students’ audience and their blog writing in English?

Evidence for answering the first research question about the relationship between students’ audience and their blog writing in English can be found in the student interviews data presented in Figure 11.

Figure 11

The Relationship Between Research Question 1 and the Data Set (Student Interviews)



5.5.1.1 A change in understanding of being a writer

The main theme found in the data (see Figure 11) seemed to be a change in students' understanding of what it means to be a writer. This will be illustrated in the following sections.

5.5.1.1.1 The difference between writing to a teacher and writing to a large audience

The participants shared their stories about writing blogs for a larger audience than the teacher, and they demonstrated how they felt when they had an audience in mind to address when blogging. Naturally, the first thing that came to the participant's mind while learning writing in ESL through blogging was to compare

her feelings when she learned English through the traditional method and through blogging. For instance, Panda found that with the traditional way of teaching/learning writing in ESL, the learner wrote for the teacher only, whereas in the case of blogging, the learners had a wide audience who read and commented on their blogs: “There is a big difference. Writing in the classroom is limited and exclusive to the teacher, while writing in blogs is available to everyone with access to the site and everybody has the chance to read and criticise his/her friends’ writing” (Panda, student interviews, 25 June 2017). Ghost21 expressed some disappointment that in the traditional way of teaching ESL writing, no one else was reading her posts except the teacher, who read it ‘to alert’ her to the grammatical and spelling mistakes. Panda was also disappointed since in the traditional way, the teacher did not go into details to search for the content.

Ghost21 believed that when she was writing through the traditional way, she was not writing to express her opinion or to refresh the subject concerned by providing thoughts to attract the reader. In other words, there was no concern about the reader or the audience since they were not there: “I know that no one will read my article except my teacher in class who will only comment on my spelling and grammatical mistakes” (Ghost21, student interviews, 27 June 2017). Ghost21 suggested that in the traditional way, her writing was not considered good because of the grammatical and spelling mistakes in her written text. Therefore, the whole written text was judged as good or bad according to the number of grammatical and spelling mistakes it contained. Panda concluded that for these reasons, her writing was “rigid and boring”, and the only thing she looked for when writing was “having a good grade from the teacher with as few mistakes as possible” (Panda, student interviews, 25 June 2017).

5.5.1.1.2 The role of audience on the students’ writing skills

The data from the student interviews showed that the students’ audience had various advantages, which are outlined below.

1. Increasing motivation and enthusiasm: having an audience motivate the students to write and focus on the content and ideas of their blogs. Faith believed that the presence of the audience was a positive factor that made her endeavour to satisfy them: “Through blogging, I have a wide range of audience, which makes me endeavour to satisfy them” (Faith, student interviews, 25 June

2017). Soma stated that blogging “makes me write for a real audience, which makes me more enthusiastic” (Soma, student interviews, 27 June 2017). According to MNS98, the fact that there was an audience when blogging gave her “the opportunity to know the opinions of many people about my writing” (MNS98, student interviews, 26 June 2017). There was a focus on the presence of an audience, and in this comment, the focus was on the audience’s response, which affected the students when they revised their posts. In the traditional way of teaching ESL writing, the only audience was the teacher, whose role might be perceived as highlighting grammatical and spelling mistakes. Therefore, the learners wrote ‘to-be-corrected’ texts, which are more likely to lack content and authentic ideas, as they are not viewed as a priority of the teacher; therefore, they are not the priority of the learners. The participants, however, believed that the feeling of having an audience interested in the knowledge and information in their blogs gave them ‘enthusiasm’ to work hard to ‘satisfy the audience’.

The participants sought to write about interesting and attractive ideas since the presence of an audience necessitated it: “Blogging teaches me to take care of the content which makes writing more interesting” (Ghost21, student interviews, 27 June 2017). The experience of writing became exciting, as the participants wanted to know the other participants’ response to their blogs: “Every time I publish an article, I get excited for the reaction of my colleagues and teacher after reading it” (Ghost21, student interviews, 27 June 2017). Soma also described her feeling of enthusiasm when she realised that “when blogging, I was writing for a real audience who would discuss and comment on my writing and not only for the teacher. I liked the idea of blogging because it made me write with more enthusiasm because what I will write will be available for reading by all my colleagues” (Soma, student interviews, 27 June 2017). Soma used the word “enjoyment” to describe her experience with blogging since there was a real audience who read her writing and cared about its content. Therefore, Soma thought that blogging was “more interesting” since the learners wrote for a real audience who wanted to understand the content of the blog and comment on it to improve it. She also linked blogging with enthusiasm since “what I will write will be available for reading by all my colleagues, not only the teacher” (Soma, student interviews, 27 June 2017).

2. A platform for sharing knowledge: Blogging also created

opportunities for the participants to share knowledge and experience and to learn from each other since the teacher was not the only audience in the writing class, as was previously the case in the traditional writing class. The other learners were also the audience who could comment on and discuss the blogs. They learned from the blogs and the comments of the other learners and the teacher on these blogs: “The use of blogging makes students read and benefit from each other’s experiences” (MNS98, student interviews, 26 June 2017). This enabled the students to learn about the world and life, as well as language. This affordance, the presence of the audience, was not available in the traditional way of writing, as the other learners did not read their peers’ texts. Faith believed: “Blogging gives me the opportunity to compare my work with that of the other colleagues and share experience and knowledge” (Faith, student interviews, 25 June 2017). Likewise, Sweetie stated that blogging “enhances knowledge because you read the ideas of other people and benefit from them” (Sweetie, student interviews, 26 June 2017). In addition, Panda found learning from other learners an affordance of blogging: “It gives me the chance to learn several techniques in writing by reading other students’ writings” (Panda, student interviews, 25 June 2017). As Tables 5, 6 and 7 above show, through blogging, the students not only learned more about the content but also learned about different forms of expression and a more varied set of language options. The participants had a sense of achievement when they used the blogs to learn ESL. The sense of achievement stemmed from their ability to write a blog for different audiences and discuss a variety of topics, for which they received praise and appreciation: “different readers create huge difference in the type of ideas and the way of presenting and supporting it” (Ghost21, student interviews, 27 June 2017).

3. To be an independent/responsible writer: Blogging seemed to allow the learners feel independent, which meant that they had to make the modifications and be responsible for what they had written: “In blogging, I know that my colleagues in class will read my article and my teacher, as well. Therefore, I always improve the style and content” (Faith, student interviews, 2017). This was the outcome of the external support and encouragement the students received and how they internalised this; this internalisation might be in response to more than praise. It was the responsibility that made the learners care about their writing and its content as they published their blogs. Soma put

the same idea into different words: “Blogging gives a sense of achievement despite the mistakes we make” (Soma, student interviews, 27 June 2017). Despite the mistakes the learners made, they still had that sense of achievement since with blogging, the focus was on the content, ideas and knowledge that the bloggers demonstrated in their blogs. Soma said that blogging “encourages the student’s self-esteem and confidence” (Soma, student interviews, 27 June 2017). The term ‘confidence’ was used to express how the learners felt when blogging. This feeling of confidence can be attributed to the fact that their identity was anonymous, but it could also stem from creating a written work that reflected their beliefs and views, which emanated from their genuine willingness to communicate information to others: “Blogging creates an environment in which I feel confident and free to express my views” (Panda, student interviews, 25 June 2017).

Using blogs made the learners feel like real writers who shared knowledge, revealed attitudes, and addressed a real audience. The presence of an audience created by blogging encouraged the learners to write more effectively to satisfy the different types of audience and gain appreciation for both their writing style and the content of the blogs. It is also the sense of responsibility created in the learners when using blogging that they must write about something interesting and informative in an attractive manner.

5.5.2 Research question 2

The second research question was: How does the use of blogs impact on students’ attention to text (product) and students’ attention to the act of writing (process)?

Evidence for answering the second research question about the impact of blogging on the students’ attention to text (product) and students’ attention to the act of writing (process) can be found in the student interviews and blog comments, as shown in Figures 12, 13 and 14.

Figure 12

The Relationship Between Research Question 2 and the Data Set (Student Interviews)

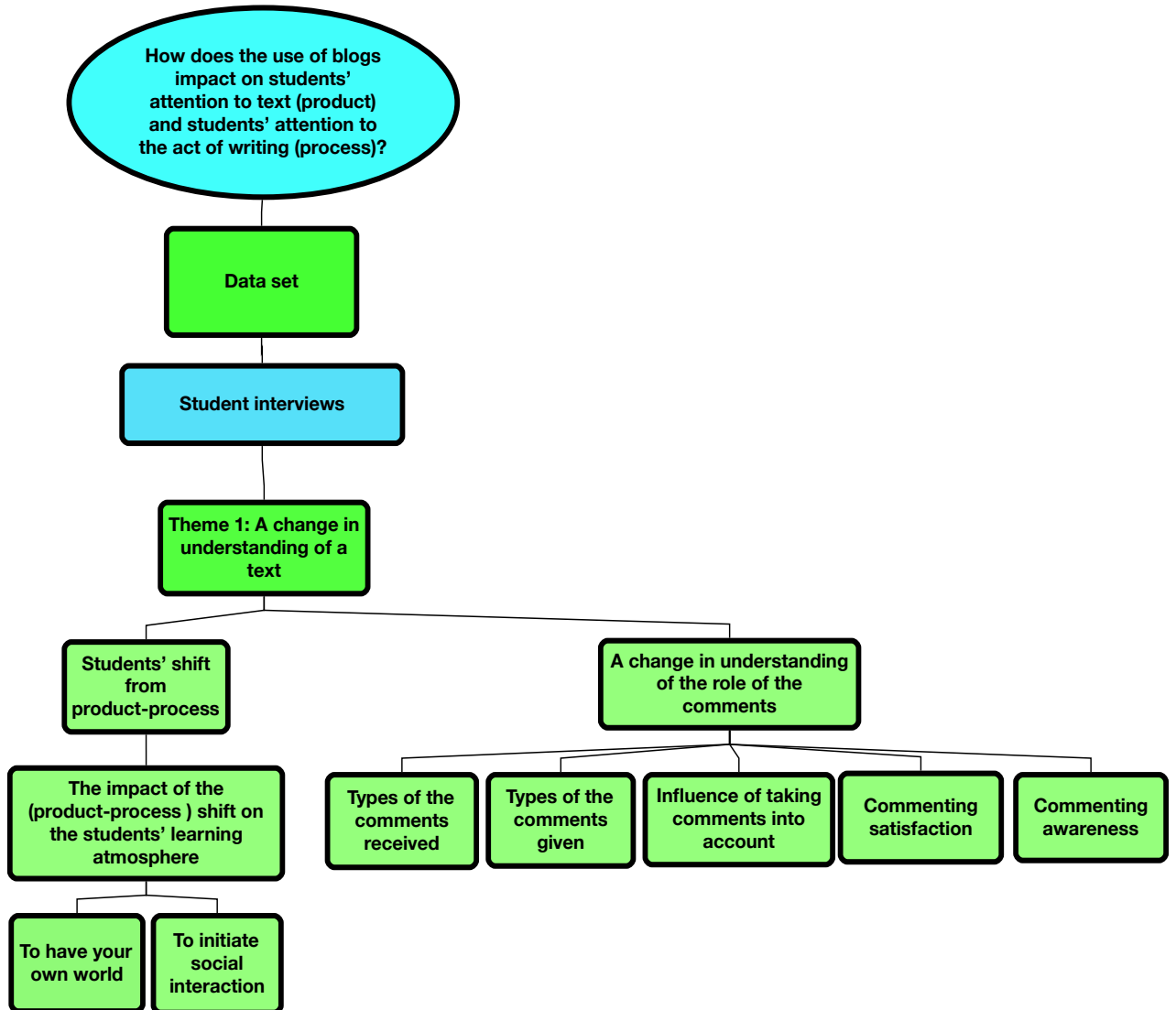


Figure 13

The Relationship Between Research Question 2 and the Data Set (Blog Comments)

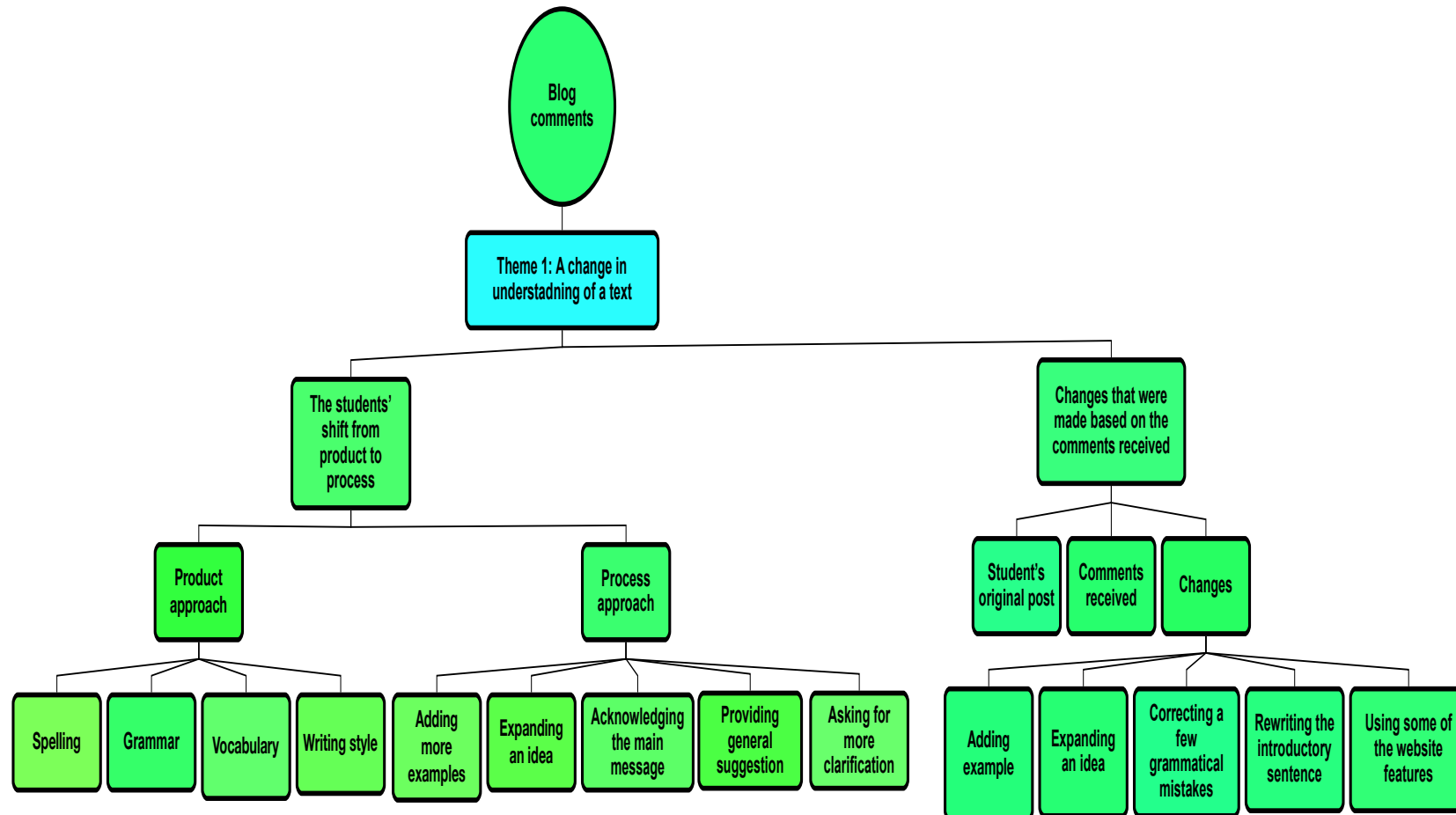
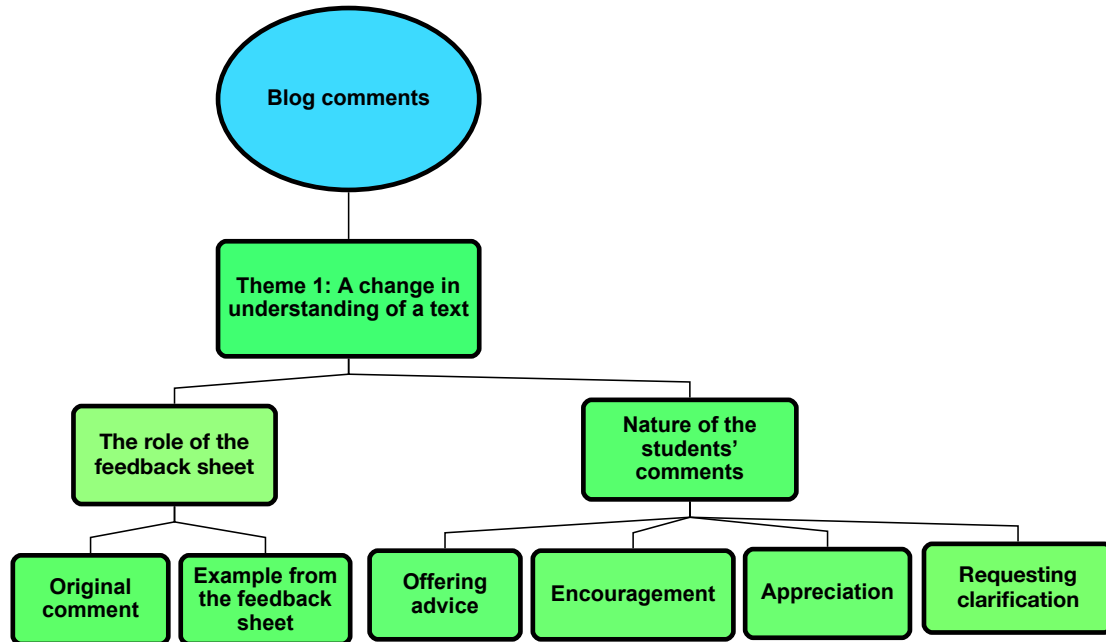


Figure 14

The Relationship Between Research Question 2 and the Data Set (Blog Comments)



5.5.2.1 A change in understanding of a text

The main issue found in the data (see Figures 12 and 13) was that there seemed to be a change in students' understanding of what it means to write a text. This will be discussed in the following sub-sections to answer this research question.

5.5.2.1.1 The role of the feedback sheet

Commenting was considered as a difficult task to be done by the students (Campbell, 2004) for the following reasons: the lack of guidance, the lack of appropriate language, and students felt embarrassed and sometimes viewed the feedback they received as criticism (Hardavella et al., 2017). The data of this research illustrated that a scaffolding framework can be used with students who are experiencing commenting for the first time, such as giving them a feedback sheet that can be used as a back-up plan; this sheet contains incomplete sentences that can be completed by the students (see Appendix I). The data of this research also showed that the feedback sheet was helpful and useful, and most of the students used this sheet at the beginning of their blogging experience;

this can be seen in their first comments on the first blog post. Table 8 below summarises the findings of the students' comments' types in terms of the role of the feedback sheet. For instance, one of MNS98's first comments included one of the incomplete sentences on the feedback sheet: 'I enjoyed reading your article, I liked all the tips that you proposed especially the one about not speaking loudly, I totally agree with you in that. Keep it up'. Her second comment was a little deeper, requesting more information and clarification, and she used her own sentence: 'Lovely ideas, could you please clarify the second point and rewrite your conclusion, good luck'. Initially, Faith used sentences from the feedback sheet, for example, 'I like the post because it gives me some tips to make a good impression on my teachers'; however, her third comment was an original comment written by her: 'I learned something about the things we can do for poor people, but I think you want to add more details, good luck'. Sweety also wrote her first comment based on the feedback sheet: 'Reading about how to have a good first impression on a new neighbor [sic] makes me think about my neighbor [sic] attitude of me and how was it. I really appreciate you and you can add that you can visit your neighbor [sic]'. In her third comment, she used original sentences: 'Wonderful, you summarised the ideas in the article in a very good way, I wish if you can expand the examples and add information. Good luck'.

Therefore, we can say that this feedback sheet helped the students to develop their experience of commenting on each other's work, especially at the beginning, and once they became aware of the type of language that can be used in commenting and the writing aspects that can be tackled, they finally gained enough confidence to start using their own sentences in commenting on their peers' work; this can be seen in the types of the second and the third comments of the students (see Table 8). The comments themselves were different in terms of the quality and depth. Most of the students' first comments were under two codes, 'encouragement' and 'appreciation', whereas the students' second and third comments concentrated on other writing aspects, such as 'requesting clarification' and 'offering advice' to enrich their peers' work. For example, the main purpose of Soma's first comments was encouraging, 'Very nice attempt, Sunflower'; at this point, she was still at the beginning of her blogging experience and working on her commenting and blogging skill. Once she gained enough commenting experience and confidence, she posted the following comment:

'Amazing, you have done a great work, a point to mention, add an example about one of the Ads which helped you to form your opinion and which support your main idea, God bless you'.

The interview data also illustrated that the students were able not only to comment on others' work but also to comment on/criticise their own written work. When MNS98 was asked about the ways in which she could improve one of her posts, she said: 'Giving examples, rewriting the main ideas, using other examples from my own experience, verifying the use of words' (MNS98, student interviews, 26 June 2017). Soma commented on improving her work by saying, 'supporting each point with an example, posting a picture or a video or changing font shape and colour' (Soma, student interviews, 27 June 2017).

Table 8*Students' Comments in Terms of the Role of the Feedback Sheet*

Participants	Type of the 1st comment	Example	Type of the 2nd comment	Example	Type of the 3rd comment	Example
MNS98	Example from the feedback sheet	I enjoyed reading your article, I liked all the tips that you proposed especially the one about not speaking loudly I totally agree with you in that. Keep it up.	Original comment	The most beautiful thing about your article is its simplicity and depth at the same time. What I liked was that you did not bother with formulations and add many	Original comment	A sophisticated and flowery speech, I understand the way you prepared the topic and arranged it, but I hope that you pay attention to drafting

				<p>pictures to make the topic more interesting, I hope to clarify the point that talks about the importance of advertising to us by linking the example not only at the local level, but on [sic] the global level.</p>		<p>some sentences become more clear, especially in the second part of the topic. I also hope that you will reformulate the conclusion more clearly.</p>
Soma	Original comment	Very good attempt, Sunflower.	Original comment	So beautiful, you did a great job relating each idea to a	Original comment	I appreciate your raising of the above topic, especially the

				<p>host of reasons.</p> <p>Note: Adding examples of ads that helped you form your opinion will make your article more attractive.</p>		<p>idea of the project that you undertook. I hope that I will have the opportunity to implement it in the near future.</p>
Faith	<p>Example from the feedback sheet</p>	<p>I like the post because it gives my [sic] some tips to make a good impression on my teachers.</p>	<p>The comment was in the student's first language</p>	-	<p>Original comment</p>	<p>I got the message of your post, but I think you want to add more details and examples to support your ideas, good luck.</p>

Panda	Example from the feedback sheet	I like this post because it has many great ideas. Also, I like your style in this post, all the best.	The comment was in the student's first language	-	Original comment	I love the way that you used in giving reasons and examples. I wish for you all the best.
Sweety	Example from the feedback sheet	Reading about how to have a good first impression on a new neighbor [sic] makes me think about my neighbor [sic] attitude's of me and how was it. I really appreciate you	The comment was in the student's first language	-	Original comment	Wonderful, you summarised the ideas in the article in a very good way, I wish if you can expand the examples and add information. Good luck.

		and you can add that you can visit your neighbor [sic].				
Ghost21	Example from the feedback sheet	I really like your post because you organized it by [sic] good way, but I think if I was the writer the part (when you tell the truth always when you speak with her, so that can make good impression)	Original comment	Interesting, your thoughts are really beautiful, in fact you convinced me. Your style, I liked your supporting examples of the topic, but I hope you add an illustrative example at the last point to	Original comment	I got your way in organizing [sic] your article and arranging the ideas in it. It will be more interesting if you add a future vision of the work that you did with the little one... always forward.

		should be changed by some way because it is not lovely to use (so) after (when close), so you can remove it.		make it more clear. you will always be successful.		
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Note: The starter sentence from the feedback sheet is in **bold**

Providing the students with the feedback sheet to be used in selecting suitable language to comment on their peers' work seemed to help in developing several aspects of the students' written work, which are outlined below.

5.5.2.1.2 A change in understanding of the role of the comments

As stated in section 5.5.2.1, students were given a feedback sheet to help them to construct their comments in the blog appropriately. The feedback sheet gave the students examples of appropriate language that can be used in commenting. This is due to the crucial role that commenting plays within the blogging experience, as it is the basis of the students' second draft of a post. In her interview, Soma mentioned the type of comments she left on her peers' work: "Frankly, I always put constructive and positive comments concerning what my peers publish, because a good word affects students so much, and then I write notes for amendment, if any" (Soma, student interviews, 27 June 2017). Choosing the appropriate language to be used to criticise students' work may have an influence not only on the students' learning experience but also on their psychological aspect; criticising students' work by using harsh, negative words may affect the students' learning experience in general and their acceptance of the new teaching method, which, in this case, was blogging. In their interviews, students expressed how delighted they were and how much they appreciated their peers' comments: 'It was a nice feeling. My colleagues were interested in the comments which I have left on their work and that made me feel important and influential on their writing' (MNS98, student interviews, 26 June 2017). Using a scaffolding framework with the students that contained the appropriate language to be used and guiding them in the early stages of commenting helped the students to view comments as a way to develop the writing skills of all the students. Soma said: 'As I said before the blogging experience, I was thinking that the idea of commenting or criticising what my peers write might be embarrassing, but I found that it is on the contrary, writing skills of both parties might develop' (Soma, student interviews, 27 June 2017). Moreover, the comments they received were not considered as embarrassing criticism, and they were described by Sweetie and Ghost21 as "constructive". Panda also considered the comments as a way to improve her writing: "I make use of my teacher's and colleagues' criticism of my writing, thus I learn from my errors". The learners

accepted comments as constructive criticism that they did not mind and they did not take it personally, as they knew that the focus of blogging was their knowledge and style of writing and not their personality, which was not even known. Panda associated having comments on one's post with shame and hesitation, but with the new blogging experience, she felt more confident and enthusiastic about receiving comments:

“We can exchange comments without shame and without hesitation. In fact, these comments and interventions between students and teachers always change their writing to the best, make them feel confident about themselves, and give them enthusiasm, waiting for strong and encouraging views and interventions (Panda, student interviews, 25 June 2017).

5.5.2.1.3 The students' shift from product to process

Considering writing as a product means focusing on the end product of the writing, such as spelling, grammatical and punctuation mistakes, without paying attention to the different phases that you go through as a writer while crafting a certain text (Gear, 2011). However, considering writing as a process suggests looking at the strategies that the students use when writing, their level of independence and confidence as writers, and their understanding and knowledge of writing as an act that needs managing. When writing is deemed a process, this includes planning for writing and brainstorming (Graham & Kelly, 2013). Taking the writing process into account means writers have to consider how best to move between planning, transcription and revision in ways that may not always be linear. Omani ESL writing pedagogy still approaches writing as a product, where the main focus is on the formal properties of the end product. Therefore, teachers in the Omani context of teaching ESL writing often seek correct grammar and spelling and do not focus on the content of the written work (Ahmed & Abouabdlkader, 2016). In her interview, Ghost21 highlighted that her teacher would not consider her writing as good because of the grammatical and spelling mistakes: “She will not discuss the content more than the outer cover of the subject presented in the article structuring, proper spelling and grammar” (Ghost21, student interviews, 27 June 2017). All the students believed that the teaching of writing in the ESL context in Oman was aimed at achieving “good grades”, as Ghost21 put it, which was achieved by writing that used correct

grammar and spelling. Due to the application of blogging as a medium for teaching L2 writing that allowed the students to practise writing in different stages compared to the traditional way, and due to their use of the feedback sheet, as mentioned in section 5.5.2.1.1, and how it provided them with appropriate examples to consider, writing areas to focus and comment on that they started to use in their early stages of commenting, the participants in this current study started to realise that the process of writing a text and its end product have equal importance. They also started to focus on both the form of the text and its function. The blogging data yielded examples of how the participants started to focus on the function (the message) of the text. In their feedback and comments on their peers' blogs, they considered the content of the blog, the strategies that were and should be used to improve it, and the writer's knowledge of the topic and the main message of the work. Table 9 below summarises the nature of the students' comments, which shows how the students started to highlight the content/message of the students' work instead of concentrating on the grammatical aspects only, which was obvious in the second and third comments.

As mentioned earlier, the main focus of the students' writing was on the grammatical and vocabulary aspect, and they used either to receive the teacher's comments based on this aspect or to receive their final writing mark only without receiving a comment. That is the reason for the product approach comments that the students left on their peers' first posts, as well as the lack of the appropriate commenting knowledge and their concentration only on the grammatical and vocabulary aspect. For example, Ghost21's first comment related to the product approach when she said, 'You should write (with out) as a one word like (without). Also, I think you should write (on the other hand) instead of (In other hand). I think you will be an excellent writer if you do all your best and follow the right steps', while her second comment asked the writer to answer the question 'What does this sentence mean "Advertisement is a way of life?"', which showed growth, a new understanding, and new writing areas to consider while commenting. She did not ask for grammatical or vocabulary modifications, but she was thinking beyond that about the main message of the previous sentence and how it may fit in the post about advertisements. Another comment related to the product approach was written by Panda, asking a student to check some spelling mistakes, 'You really have a nice opinion and a good idea about this topic. But in

some sentence you have some grammar mistakes. So you should be careful next time. All the best', whereas in her third comment, 'I love the way that you used in giving reasons and examples. Is it possible to expand the second point? I wish for you all the best', she was acknowledging the writer's writing style. Her concern as a reader and an EFL student was not the spelling or grammatical mistakes, but it shifted to concentrate on the main message behind the writer's post and how can she benefit from her friends' posts to improve her writing skill.

Table 9

Nature of the Students' Comments in Terms of Students' Shift from Product to Process

Participants	Type of the 1st comments	Type of the 2nd comments	Type of the 3rd comments
MNS98	<p>Concentrating on the use of correct vocabulary and grammatical rules (product approach)</p> <p>Acknowledging the main idea and learned message of the post (process approach)</p>	<p>Clarifying the second point (process approach)</p> <p>2. Asking them to rewrite part of the conclusion because it wasn't clear enough (process approach)</p>	<p>Recommending that other readers should read and benefit from this post</p> <p>2. Asking them to state the lessons learned from the third post (process approach)</p>
Soma	<p>Asking them to check the writing style of the introduction (product approach)</p>	<p>Giving general advice to expand the main idea of the text in order to succeed in delivering the</p>	<p>Acknowledging how brilliant the idea of the writer's donation project is and the influence of the post on her as a reader</p>

		message (process approach)	(process approach)
Faith	Asking them to check the spelling (product approach)	Giving general advice to expand the main idea of the text in order to succeed in delivering the message (process approach)	Asking them to state the main message of the third post Asking for more details Acknowledging the message learned from this post (process approach)
Panda	Concentrating on the use of correct vocabulary and grammatical rules (product approach) Asking them to correct their spelling mistakes (product approach)	Asking them to clarify the last point and add examples (process approach) Asking them to write from the customer's perspective as well: 'How will the use of the advertisements benefit them? (process approach) 3. Asking them to correct their spelling (product approach)	Acknowledging the importance of donation in our society Acknowledging the writer's style of writing, asking for an idea to be expanded (process approach)
Sweety	Giving general advice to expand the main idea of	Giving general advice to expand the main idea of the	1. Acknowledging how interesting the introduction was and

	the text in order to succeed in delivering the message (process approach)	text in order to succeed in delivering the message (process approach)	how successful using one of the Omani charities was (process approach) Asking for other examples to be added to clarify the message of the post (process approach)
Ghost21	Asking them to concentrate on the use of correct vocabulary and grammatical rules (product approach)	Giving general advice to expand the main idea of the text in order to succeed in delivering the message (process approach)	Giving general advice (adding examples) to expand the main idea of the text in order to succeed in delivering the message (process approach) Asking them to confirm the message of the third post regarding the importance of donation (process approach)

5.5.2.1.3.1 The impact of the product–process shift on the students’ learning atmosphere

This changing perspective from product to process impacted the students’ learning atmosphere. The impacts are outlined below.

1. To have your own world

When blogging, the participants in this study felt they were in their “own world”

where their friends read their written work and gave comments. They liked this world since they felt they had a “kind of freedom to write, plan and make the shape seems interesting. I even have to explain the examples in details so that they understand the idea because I do not count my words” (Sweety, student interviews, 26 June 2017). The terms “plan”, “explain the examples” and “make the shape seems interesting” are about writing as a process, where the writer uses their cognitive abilities to plan the written work and support the discussion with examples, as well as using language that makes the text more interesting. The participants in this study liked this “world” since it gave them “freedom”, and this freedom can be understood as using their abilities and strategies to produce their piece of writing. MNS98 stated: “I feel comfortable and proud that I achieved or completed my required tasks” (MNS98, student interviews, 26 June 2017). The participants were allowed to start with writing the draft or planning and then using examples. They wrote some ideas on the side of the page and then integrated them, which was not encouraged as a strategy in the more traditional approach of writing pedagogy, where the learners often start writing the text without planning or drafting. “Blogging has this affordance which allowed us to apply different writing strategies thinking of the main ideas, writing examples, drafting, writing the second drafts based on my friends’ and EFL teacher’s comments. These strategies were totally different from the one that I used to” (Panda, student interviews, 25 June 2017).

2. To initiate social interaction

The participants in this study described writing as an interaction between the text and the reader or the audience. For example, “Blogging provides us with a great opportunity to discuss our written text with our peers and improve our writing skills. It is like we are working together to construct the same written post” (MNS98, student interviews, 26 June 2017). As mentioned in section 5.5.1.1.1, the writer must have an audience in mind to modify their writing style in the way to approach the readers or audience; this shows how revision strategies are supported through access to peer feedback. Soma explained this in her own words, stating that the knowledge that her colleagues were going to read her blog made her “improve the style and content, so the number of people who will benefit from the article will be more” (Soma, student interviews, 27 June 2017). This quotation indicates her awareness that a written text should take into account the

addressed audience, whose needs and expectations affect how the text is written and how this information becomes a resource for revision. Another example of how feedback supports revision practices was that the learners took the teacher's and peers' comments seriously and modified their blogs according to these comments. For instance, MNS98 received this comment on her third post: "One of the most well written posts which I really liked to read as usual. P.S: Could you please talk about the aim of your future organisation; how it will work and whom will work for and so on. Will be waiting for your edited version. Keep your work up as usual 😊". MNS98 responded to this comment by adding these sentences to her edited post: "That will help a lot of people in need. Also it is going to solve some problems such as the lack of jobs opportunity and that's all to achieve the aim behind our existence which is to help each other, build and develop the earth". This comment was also given to MNS98 on her first post: "Nice tips. I liked when you said smiling is another way to steal your friends' hearts. Take care of the introduction. Good Luck". MNS98 responded to this comment by modifying the introduction from "There are many ways to form good relationship with your classmate but the most important thing is first impression, therefore, you have to care about your first impression" to "First impression, is one of the most important issues that any person should think about when meeting people for the first time. There are several things that we need to think about in order to make a good first impression". On her third post, she received this comment: "Could you please talk about one of your personal experiences that had an influence on your recent opinion regards the use of advertisement". She responded by adding the following example in her second paragraph: "As it happened to me after I finished high school, my father gave me his phone and it was working perfectly but I wanted a new one and sure I saw it on TV ad". Table 5.4 summarises the modifications/additions that the students made based on their teacher's and peers' comments. The examples given here indicate that the focus of the learners was not the grammatical or spelling mistakes, but the aim was to modify the text in a way that made it interesting to the audience. The majority of the participants regarded other participants' comments as helpful and therefore responded to them and made the required corrections and additions: "I can read my teacher's and colleagues' comments and criticism which helped to enhance my writing. For example, I added some example to the subject, elaborated in each example, gave

a general or future background of the topic, and corrected the grammatical mistakes if any” (Panda, student interviews, 25 June 2017).

The participants in this study did not consider the text as static but as having the potential for changes and additions. This change did not come naturally; it developed over time, and students gradually became more adept at both adding comments and responding to comments they received for each new text they wrote. The data indicates that this skill is not acquired spontaneously but as a result of practice, and blogging provides the context for repeated practice. For example, Faith, Sweety, Soma, Panda, MNS98 and Ghost21 responded positively to their teacher’s and peers’ comments and made the required changes that they believed would improve their writing. In her interview, Soma emphasised that “an intelligent student always learns from the others” (Soma, student interviews, 27 June 2017), while MNS98 explained that exchanging comments with her friends made her “have a nice feeling. My colleagues were interested in the comments which I have left on their work and that made me feel important and influential on their writing” (MNS98, student interviews, 26 June 2017). Writing a draft and then modifying the draft was also a sign that the learners used writing strategies to rewrite the texts and apply the changes asked for by their teacher and peers: “Through comments, I can understand the reactions of others, so I can develop my writings” (Sweety, student interviews, 26 June 2017).

For the learners, it was a journey of discovery including new domains of language use and adopting a range of different writing styles that communicated the intended content. The learners seemed “relaxed”, as MNS98 put it, with this shift in their learning of writing in ESL in the Omani context. Sweety used the words “expands my intellectual perceptions” to describe the function of blogging, which required the participants to read their peers’ blogs and criticise them and add their comments, as well as to comment on their style of writing. This is about the role of the writer’s background knowledge and how it can be used explicitly in writing and modifying. Thus, writing acts that draw on tacit knowledge become explicit knowledge that can be consciously accessed. Sweety’s words reflected the idea that writing a blog did not take place without the use of the writer’s schema, which was enriched and supported by reading other participants’ blogs. Blogging and the fact that others will read the blogs create in the users the feeling

that there is a message intended by the writer that should be taken seriously, as its purpose is to have a certain effect on the audience. Faith stated that the participants started discussing the blogs' purpose when they received them. She also emphasised that "we started to write about study-related topics that concerned everyone, so we all had to focus on ideas and content, as well as writing strategies, rather than grammar and spelling" (Faith, students interviews, 25 June 2017).

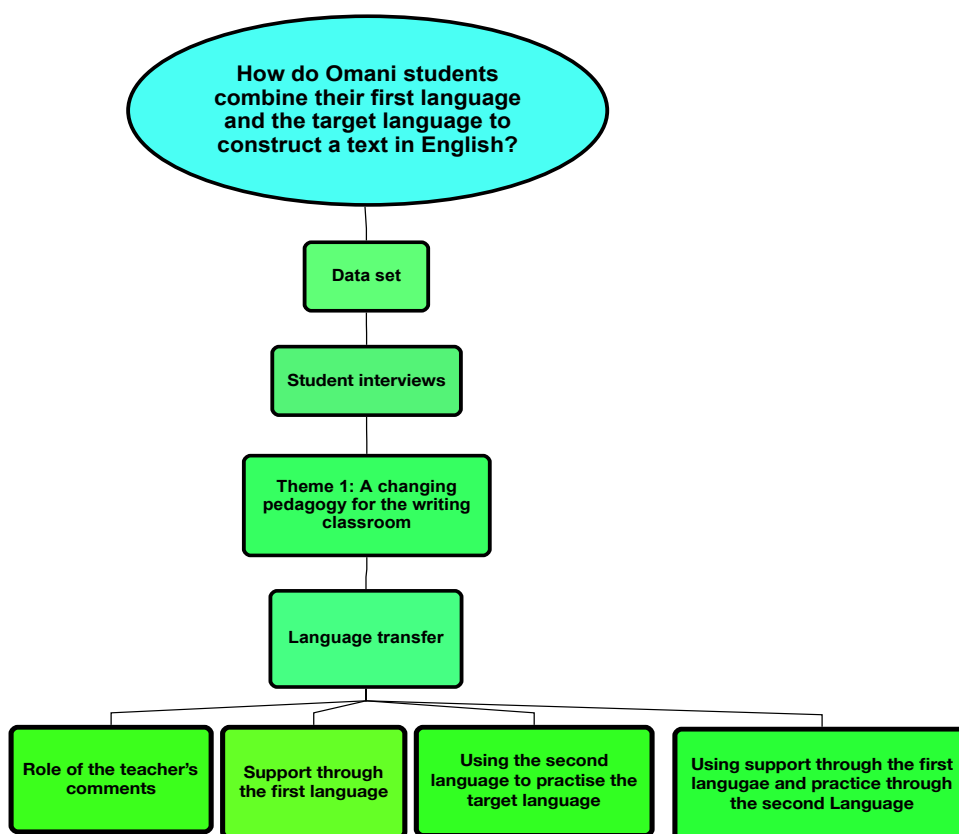
5.5.3 Research question 3

The third research question was: How do Omani students combine their first language and the target language to construct a text in English?

Evidence for answering the third research question about the way the Omani students used their L1 and L2 to write a text in English can be found in the student interviews students used their L1 and L2 to write a text in English can be found in the student interviews data, as shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15

The Relationship Between Research Question 3 and the Data Set (Student Interviews)



5.5.3.1 A changing pedagogy for the writing classroom

The main issue found in the data (see Figure 14) was that there seemed to be a changing pedagogy for the writing classroom, which in this case, is 'language transfer'. To illustrate this and to answer this research question, several aspects will be discussed. In the second post, students were asked to comment on their peers' work using their preferred language, so they could use either L1 or L2. The students' EFL teacher's mother tongue was not Arabic and she used ESL (see section 4.7.2) in this research to add her comments. Nothing in the data indicated that the language she used could affect the students' choice. In fact, it was not the language choice that had a great impact on the students' work but the influence of these comments, as they were a source of encouragement during the whole blogging experience. Panda confirmed this in her interview when she was asked about the role of her EFL teacher's comments during her blogging experience by saying, "Those comments always help me to be the best; those praising and encouraging words on my writing and those points that needed more focus as well" (Panda, student interviews, 25 June 2017).

Regarding the students' language choice, the student interviews data indicated that participants can be divided into three groups, which are discussed below.

1. Support through the first language: the first group preferred comments to be in their L1, Arabic. Sweety preferred using her L1, Arabic, to communicate with the other students and to comment on their blogs. She also preferred them to use L1 to comment on her writing. The reason Sweety preferred Arabic to be the language of communication and commenting was that "Arabic is easier and conveys the meaning quicker" (Sweety, student interviews, 26 June 2017). In other words, she thought that she and the other students could express themselves in a clearer way when they used Arabic since it was their first language, saying, "It is clearer in the meaning" (Sweety, student interviews, 26 June 2017). This also meant that the speaker's message would be delivered more precisely in L1: "It explains the needed in details". Sweety believed that the use of Arabic in commenting on blogs written in English gave the students a better understanding of their mistakes and what was needed in more detail. Like Sweety, Panda found that Arabic was more suitable for commenting and exchanging comments with her colleagues. She believed that using Arabic made

it easy to “convey what I want to say to my colleagues and I can express my views more clearly” (Panda, student interviews, 25 June 2017). This reflects the ease and the comfort of the learner when using her first language in which she is proficient to express what she wants to convey clearly. Others’ use of Arabic meant that Panda knew exactly what they wanted her to do: “I fully understand what I am being asked to and try, as much as possible, to apply that in my writing in the modified version” (Panda, student interviews, 25 June 2017). Thus, using Arabic in writing comments helped the participants to avoid the disappointment that would have resulted from a breakdown in communication due to the lack of proficiency in the L2, while the use of Arabic would make everything clear and understood. In this group who wanted the comments to be in their L1, Arabic, the emphasis is on the commentary and response of the reader. The members of this group did not want to miss any detail of the comments, so they wanted them to be in Arabic. Their goal, therefore, was to apply these comments carefully to improve the post.

2. Using the second language to practise the target language: unlike Sweety, Faith preferred all the communication and comments to be in English since this would give her the opportunity to “learn English faster” (Faith, student interviews, 25 June 2017). Faith thought that writing comments in English and discussing with her colleagues in English would make her “accustomed to English language” and able to use it later in language learning. MNS98 had the same ideas as Faith and believed that using English in commenting would develop her L2 learning skills. MNS98 found that writing comments and discussing them in English was a good opportunity to “train my peers more on the language as well as to improve their ability in this language” (MNS98, student interviews, 26 June 2017). This was the belief that in an English language learning environment, every communication should be in English to master the use of this language on all occasions. She preferred “English language, because I write topics or articles in English and I see that comments will be better to apply them directly to the text and do not go through the effort of translation” (MNS98, student interviews, 26 June 2017). The focus of this group was on learning English in different situations and not only through the posts. They wanted comments to be in English to develop their English learning skills.

3. Using support through the first language and practice through the second language: Soma seemed to agree strongly with Sweety in the sense that she tended to use Arabic in commenting and in studying, as the learner who uses Arabic “will be more creative and distinctive in all his life matters, especially studying” (Soma, student interviews, 27 June 2017). Soma emphasised that proficiency in the Arabic language enabled the students to express themselves clearly and creatively in their L1. However, Soma did not mind using both Arabic and English in commenting. Arabic was good to use in commenting since “comments in Arabic language are clearer and more understandable”, while “comments in English language may refine our skills to develop our English language” (Soma, student interviews, 27 June 2017). Therefore, for the clarity and understandability of comments, Soma would use Arabic, but for learning ESL, she would use English to develop her language learning skills. Like Soma, Ghost21 tended to choose both Arabic and English to write comments on blogs. For example, if she wanted to comment on a blog and to show the positive points or other points that might need further modifications, she would choose Arabic since she could express herself more clearly: “I think the aim of commenting is to support and show the strong aspects of the written text and the others aspects, which may need to be modified. So I think that Arabic language is much expressive and I can deliver the idea easily” (Ghost21, student interviews, 27 June 2017). Ghost21 believed that the purpose of commenting was to direct the writer and support her to develop, so it should be very clear and understandable to achieve this; this was done more in Arabic. However, Ghost21 would like to receive comments on her writing in English so that she could challenge herself and see whether she could understand the message that the person who commented wanted to deliver. She also intended to find out how two languages expressed the same idea in different ways: “I prefer receiving it in English language, because I like to go through this experience which allowed me to check my ability to get what was delivered to me in English. At the same time, I would like to have advices and tips from my friends in both languages English and Arabic, this will help to have an idea regards the difference between both languages in getting the same idea” (Ghost21, student interviews, 27 June 2017). This group did not mind using both languages, as they believed that each language would have a function.

Some participants chose Arabic as the language for commenting and discussing the blogs' content since they could express themselves clearly in Arabic and deliver their message. However, other participants tended to use both languages: Arabic to understand the comments in detail, and English to develop their language learning skills. Another participant preferred to use English rather than Arabic since she wanted to learn English. This is interesting and raises some questions about what blogging is for; if the emphasis is on the commentary and response of the reader, L1 would seem to be more useful, whereas if the emphasis is on the writing and practising this in L2, L2 would be more useful. The differences reflected the participants' views and emphasis when reading the comments. When they emphasised the commentary and its content to modify their posts, they preferred Arabic, but when they emphasised learning English and writing in English, they preferred comments to be in English.

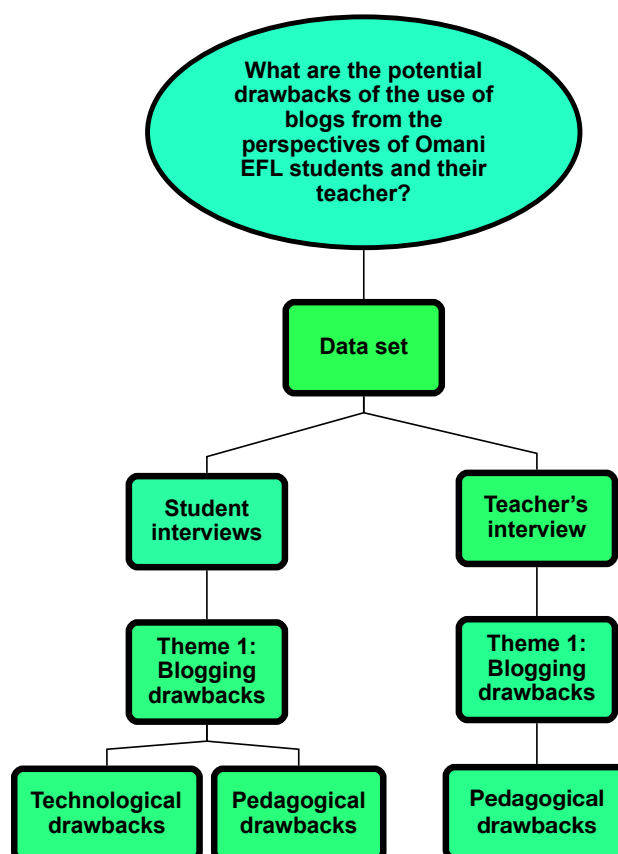
5.5.4 Research question 4

Despite the affordances and positive changes resulting from the use of blogging as a medium for teaching L2 writing in the EFL and ESL contexts, as mentioned in Chapter Two, section 2.4.2, blogging was believed to have some drawbacks that hindered the student's L2 learning and the teacher's teaching of L2 writing. This led to the formulation of question 4 for this research: What are the potential drawbacks of the use of blogs from the perspectives of Omani EFL students and their teacher?

Evidence for answering the fourth research question about the potential drawbacks of the use of blogs can be found in the data from the student interviews and the interview with their EFL teacher, as shown in Figure 16.

Figure 16

The Relationship Between Research Question 4 and the Data Set (Student Interviews and Teacher's Interview)



5.5.4.1 Blogging drawbacks

In this study, the data from the interviews with students and their EFL teacher illustrated that applying blogging as a medium in teaching writing skills may result in technological drawbacks and pedagogical drawbacks. Table 10 presents these drawbacks.

Table 10

Technological and Pedagogical Drawbacks

Technological Drawbacks	Pedagogical Drawbacks
1. The automatic correction of spelling and grammar	1. Integrating the technology requires time and effort

<p>2. A poor internet connection affects blogging application (posting and commenting)</p>	<p>2. Less interaction between the teacher and the students</p>
<p>3. The use of smart devices may affect the students' health</p>	

5.5.4.1.1 Technological drawbacks

MNS98 was the only student who highlighted that because of the automatic correction of spelling and grammar, blogging did not help the students to learn English since they did not focus on learning words and grammar: “Yes, as a student, I do depend on grammatical automatic corrector links with an aim to enhance the quality of my writing. However, depending on such links will affect negatively my overall English achievement” (MNS98, student interviews, 26 June 2017). Ghost21 found that the use of blogging is problematic when the internet connection is not strong enough and there is discontinuity. The students could not guarantee that the connection was good at the time of receiving the blogs and for commenting on them: “There are some negatives in using blogging. For example, blogging depends entirely on the internet and sometimes the network is weak or it is disconnected for different circumstances” (Ghost21, student interviews, 27 June 2017). Sweety referred to the same point, as she considered the weak connection to the internet to be a problem: “It depends on the strength of the connection of the internet because sometimes lack of connection leads to delay in the completion of work” (Sweety, student interviews, 26 June 2017). In addition, Faith considered internet connection delays to be an obstacle that significantly hindered blogging and receiving the posts and commenting on them at a suitable time: “Because of the difference in timing when the students use the class blog, there is a kind of delay in receiving the comments from the students” (Faith, student interviews, 25 June 2017). Furthermore, Soma referred to the weak connection and interruption of the internet as an issue that affected blogging; however, she also mentioned that frequent use of smart devices could affect the students’ health, especially their vision: “Frequent use of smart devices affects the student’s health (i.e. for those who suffer from short-vision)” (Soma, student interviews, 27 June 2017).

5.5.4.1.2. Pedagogical drawbacks

The students' EFL teacher mentioned that the implementation of this type of technology in the Omani teaching context required time and effort to help the students to accept it and prepared to use it appropriately: "Integrating this kind of technology requires much more preparation and time, which may take some time till things calm down" (EFL teacher's interview, 28 June 2017). This was due to several factors, such as students not being accustomed to this method of teaching and the fact that they needed extra help when blogging: "Some of the students, especially those who don't have that much of experience need constant help in the use of blogging and its features" (EFL teacher's interview, 28 June 2017). Another disadvantage that blogging might have as a teaching method is that there is less interaction between the teacher and the students; consequently, the students may feel neglected. In this case, the only communication between the teacher and the students would be via blogging, which, according to the teacher, was not good: "Teachers need to deal with this kind of technology so carefully, there must be a kind of contact between the teacher and the students inside the class. Otherwise, students may feel neglected and only contact their teacher via blogging" (EFL teacher's interview, 28 June 2017). Moreover, Soma mentioned that "in some cases, blogging may affect negatively the actual interaction between the students and their teacher" (Soma, student interviews, 27 June 2017). This observation may appear contradictory, as interaction was also seen as a strength of blogging. What is being suggested here is that the online contact should not be seen to replace face-to-face contact, which is viewed as the context in which relationships are formed. Blogging, therefore, might be viewed as improving the quality of interaction about written texts and writing habits but is unlikely to address all forms of interaction necessary within the broader classroom context.

Despite the evidence of the advantages of blogging, it also has some drawbacks, one of which was related to the problematic and slow internet connection in Oman. Another problem was related to the fact that using technology in the Omani classroom was a new experience, for which not all the participants were prepared. Therefore, the participants needed additional help with blogging as a culture and as a technological experience.

5.5.5 Research question 5

As stated in Chapter Three, section 3.7, it is crucial to concentrate on the role of blogging within the local educational culture. In this study, the culture includes several elements, for instance, the student–student and student–teacher relationship, teaching methods, teaching strategies, curriculum, and the whole educational atmosphere. Therefore, it is important to address question 5: What is the role of blogs in the classroom culture of this study?

Evidence for answering the fifth research question about the role of blogs in the classroom culture of this study can be found in the data from the field notes, student interviews, teacher’s interview and blog comments, as shown in Figures 17, 18, 19 and 20. The results of the field notes were presented in Tables 11 and 12, and the results of the interviews and the blog comments are discussed while answering research question 5.

Figure 17

The Relationship Between Research Question 5 and the Data Set (Field Notes)

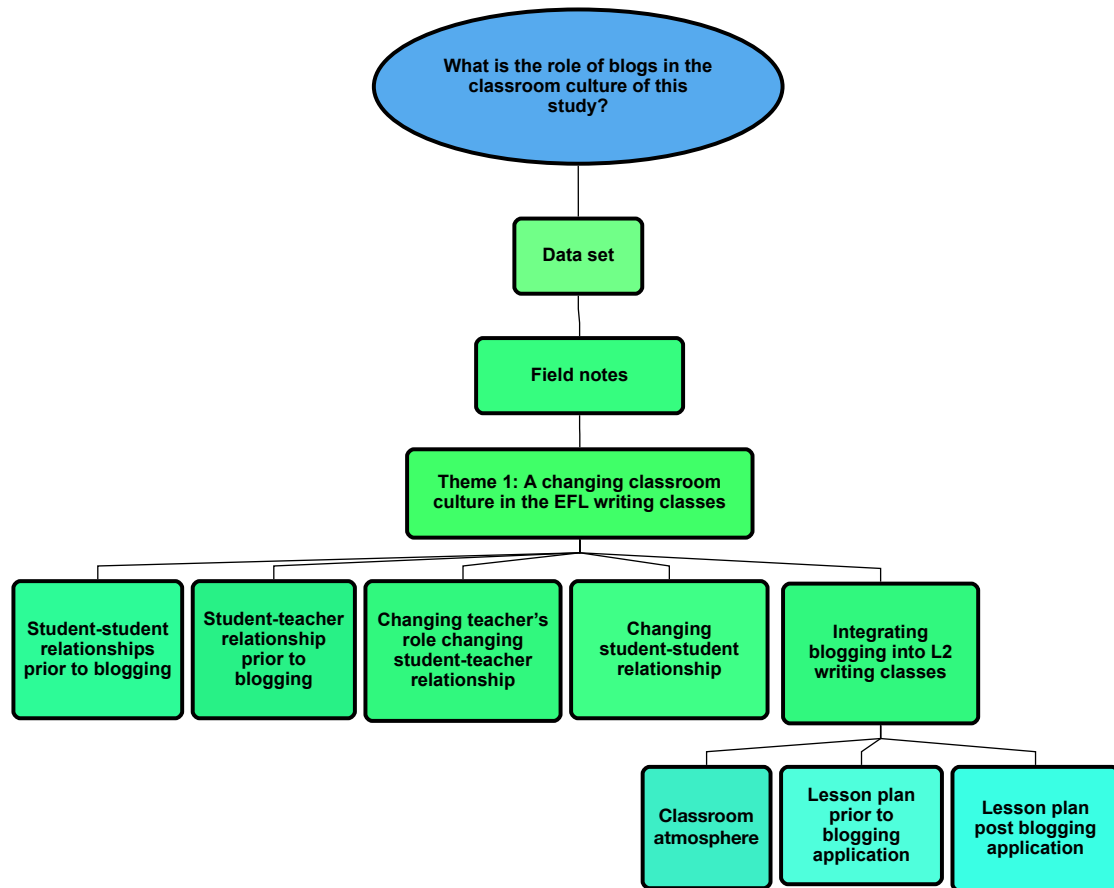


Figure 18

The Relationship Between Research Question 5 and the Data Set (Student Interviews)

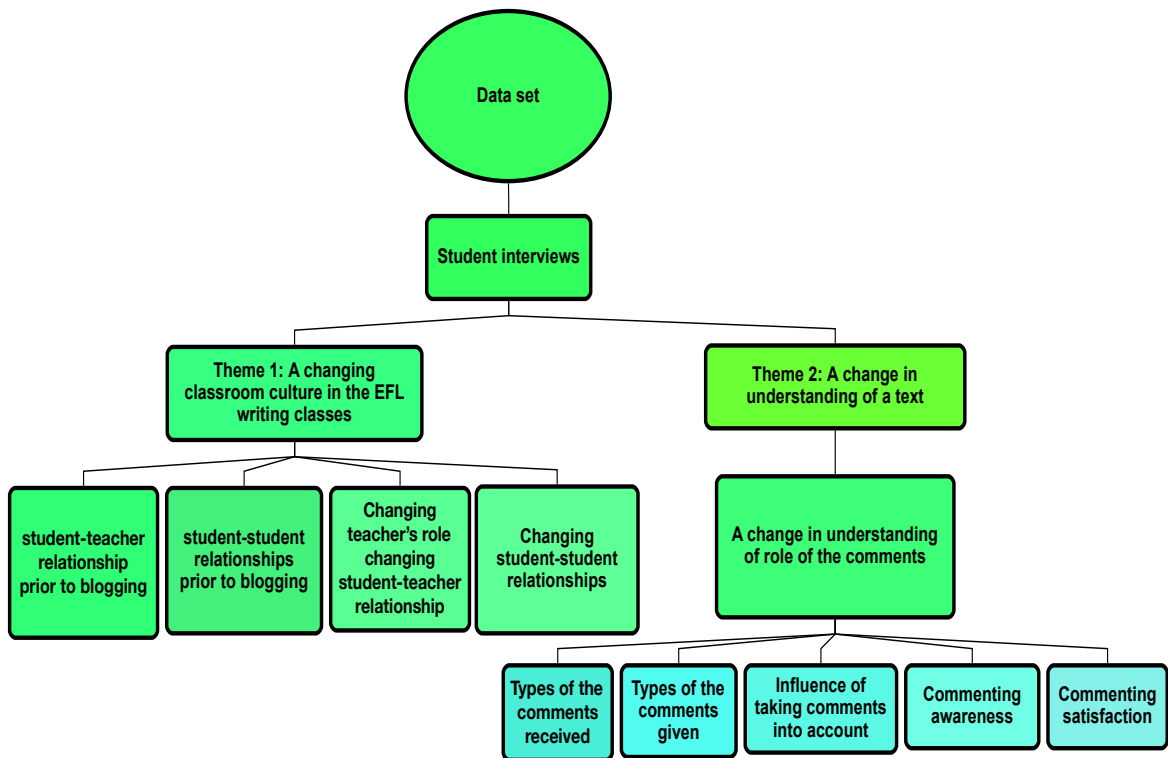


Figure 19

The Relationship Between Research Question 5 and the Data Set (Teacher's Interview)

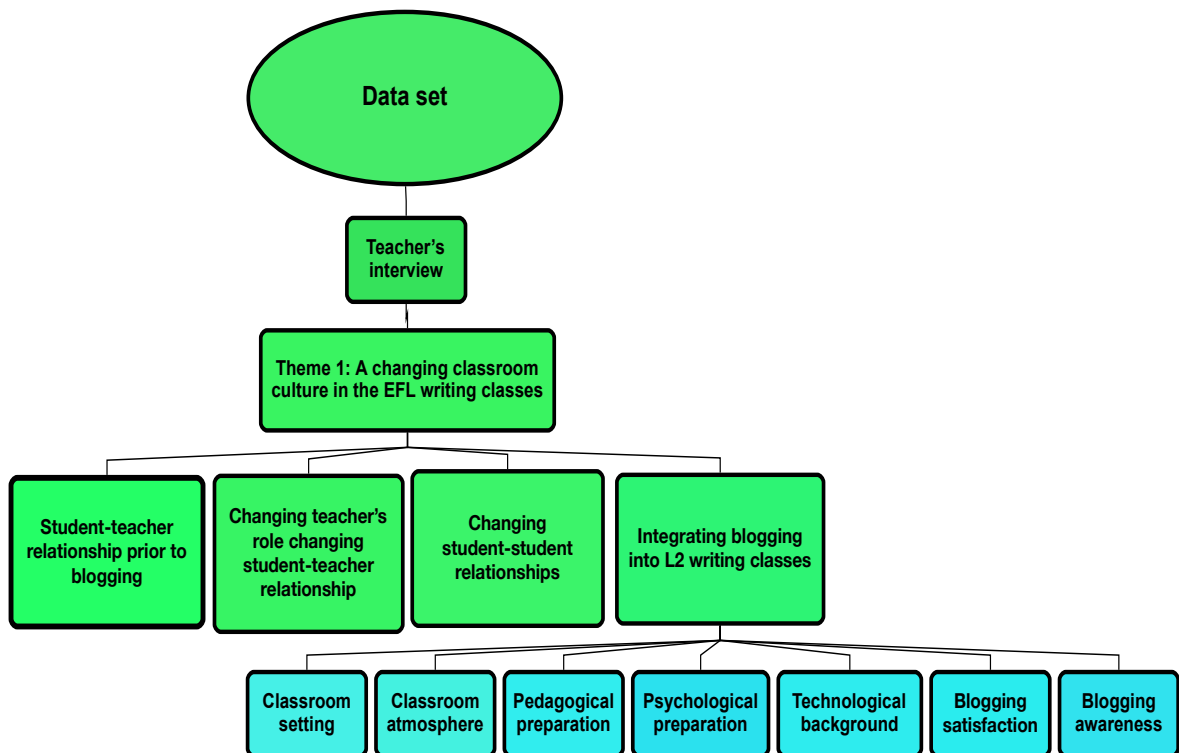
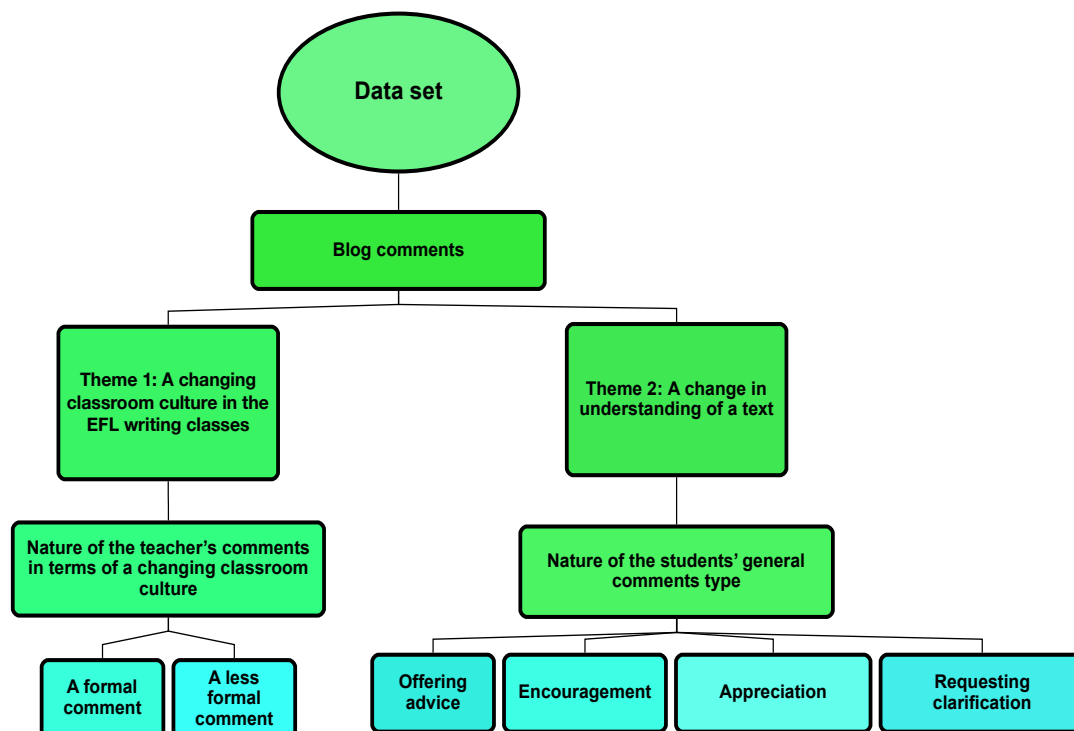


Figure 20

The Relationship Between Research Question 5 and the Data Set (Blog Comments)



5.5.5.1 A changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes

The main issue in the data (see Figures 16, 17 and 18) was that there seemed to be a changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes. To illustrate this and to answer this research question, several aspects will be discussed in the following sub-sections.

5.5.5.1.1. Changing teacher's role changing student-teacher relationship

According to the data obtained in this current study, the relationship between the bloggers and their teacher changed: the bloggers became more interactive and could discuss the different topics about which they wrote. The data from the field notes illustrated how the relationship between them had changed. There was an obvious difference between the first field note and the last one. Table 11 presents the analysis of the data from the three field notes; there was one month between each field note.

Table 11

The Results of the Field Notes Data in Terms of Relationships

	Atmosphere	Atmosphere example
Prior to blogging	Students were in their classroom	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strict teacher 2. Quiet class 3. Formality 4. Students were shy 5. Students did not initiate any kind of discussion with teacher\peers 6 . Teacher as authority figure Teacher-centred
Post blogging	Students were in the computer lab posting 1st draft of their 2nd post	friendly atmosphere Less teacher authority <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Students engaged in writing their post 4. Some students asked for help from peers\teacher
	Students were in their classroom	Less formal, active class <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Students had a role in their learning 3. Interesting ideas were discussed\shared 4. Teacher as a facilitator 5. Student-centred

The analysis of the field notes data revealed that there was a shift in the role of the teacher, which helped to change the relationship between the students and their EFL teacher in this study. Following the implementation of blogging as a regular strategy in EFL classrooms, the teacher dealt with the students as individuals who each had knowledge and innovative qualities that should be appreciated. Based on the field notes, at the beginning of this study, the classroom atmosphere “was so quiet, which was considered abnormal when it came to teaching a foreign language in EFL/ESL classes. One explanation might be the kind of cultural background of those students. Another one might be the kind of formal relationship they had between them and their teachers”. However, according to the second field note, “the general atmosphere of the class was active; students were engaged in writing their posts. Some of the students asked for help from their classmates in dealing with their blogs”.

During the application of this study, the language used by the teacher was guiding language that was used with the EFL students who were assumed to have relevant knowledge and who could therefore improve their style of writing. One of the teacher’s comments on MNS98’s work was: “One of the most well

written posts which I really liked to read as usual. P.S: Could you please talk about the aim of your future organisation; how it will work and whom will work for and so on. Will be waiting for your edited version. Keep your work up as usual ☺”. Additionally, in the third field note I wrote: “The teacher’s tone was more friendly, and she praised the students by using several words: Great job, Nice work, Well done”. Faith said in her interview: “Our relationship with the teacher is good. We became close to her because we were connected with her to discuss our topics and we also spoke to her about our study and how it was progressing” (Faith, student interviews, 25 June 2017).

In the first field note, I wrote: “Although the students have been together since September 2016, I have noticed that there was a kind of formality when it came to the whole class atmosphere. Some of the students were shy and didn’t interact with their teacher. One of the students, who was sitting at the back, asked her friend in Arabic to ask a question instead of her!”, whereas according to the third field note, “The class was active, interesting ideas were discussed. It wasn’t a teacher-centred class; on the contrary, students’ role was obvious in sharing ideas, suggesting new topics to be discussed, and offering a hand to their peers”. The teacher in this context was a facilitator who supported the students’ learning by using their background knowledge and learning from each other. The use of blogging made the Omani classroom less hierarchical since the students could learn from sources other than the teacher, for example, blogs, the internet, and other students. In other words, the general classroom atmosphere changed from a teacher-centred approach, where the main focus and the person who was doing most of the work was the teacher, to a student-centred approach, where the students had a role in their learning, sharing their views and helping other students. This change was obvious in the field notes data as well as the interviews:

“I have noticed how the relationships have changed between me and my students. At first, our relationship was too formal. I mean we used only to talk about the exercises we go through and the teaching elements of the lesson. However, now it became stronger and much more friendly. Sometimes, when we discuss one of the blog activities, especially the comments one, students talk about their favourite comments from both sides: their colleagues and me. Some of the students, who used to be shy,

started to ask more questions and trying to be involved. We started to have a side talk beside the lesson itself” (EFL teacher’s interview, 28 June 2017).

In her interview, Soma described her relationship with her teacher prior to blogging as “a very superficial relationship and I couldn’t dare to comment or criticise” (Soma, student interviews, 27 June 2017). This is similar to what was written in the first field note: “The teacher was so strict and focused only on the given task. She missed some of the students’ names. Some of the students were mad, others laughed and said in Arabic: ‘How can she still does not remember our names!?’”. Then, after the integration of blogging, I noted that “I felt a kind of friendly atmosphere; the teacher kept smiling most of the time, praising students who had finished composing their work. Note: the teacher fixed the hijab of one of the students while she was checking her work!”. The teacher–student relationship experienced a transformation since the factors that made the teacher an authority figure seemed to have been reduced and the students felt that they were not inferior to the teacher, as they had access to knowledge whenever they wanted. The following comment was made by the teacher on Soma’s post: “It’s really interesting that you have mentioned the kinds of actions which should avoided in order to leave a good impression, well done ☺. P.S: I hope that your edited version will contain some of the choices at the posting section, Good Luck ☺”. Terms of appreciation and praise were used, such as “lovely ideas”, “liked your conclusion” and “it is really interesting”; the teacher has started to use emojis within her feedback, which indicated another transformation as a sign of reducing the formality and a change in the student–teacher relationship.

The task of the teacher in blogging was to focus more on the strengths and positive aspects, as well as weaknesses and negative points. The teacher was aware that a balance must be achieved between achieving the previous goal and helping the students to adapt to the use of blogging. When applying a new teaching method, teachers should continue to evaluate the students’ learning, to check how effective this method was, as well as its drawbacks and how they can be overcome, and consider whether it should be recommended for other instructors to use within their EFL teaching. The EFL teacher in this study was asked in her interview to reflect on the blogging, which was used as a teaching

medium, and what she may do differently within her teaching strategies. In response, she said: “Blogging can be a great platform for self-learning, I could do one more task in which I could divide the students into groups, asking them to choose their own kind of post, going through the whole steps and watching how will they handle it. My role will be only to observe and give them the feedback on their first draft” (EFL teacher’s interview, 28 June 2017). When she was asked about what she hoped her students would learn from blogging, she said: “[for example] in order to have good language, you need to be independent; learning a language needs passion and to keep reading and writing not only in the class but also outside the class, which is much more important” (EFL teacher’s interview, 28 June 2017). This reflected the EFL teacher’s strategy in trying to evaluate the new teaching method that she was using with her students for the first time, as well as overcoming any difficulties she was facing. The students were not treated as if they were not participants in their learning and their knowledge was not significant. Rather, the students’ knowledge was appreciated and their efforts considered: “I can say that using blogging in teaching and learning English has created a kind of a busy network between me as a teacher and my students and between the students themselves. Every lecture, we have a topic which is related to the blogging experience and which we need to talk about” (EFL teacher’s interview, 28 June 2017).

Moreover, Ghost21 stated that blogging made her relationship with her teacher closer, and MNS98 described her teacher’s comments as “positive comments with constructive criticism that helps improve my articles” (MNS98, student interviews, 26 June 2017). The participants trusted that their teacher was interested in them, and her comments were constructive and intended to help them improve their writing. Ghost21 demonstrated this trust and stated that she was confident that the teacher was helping her to improve her English through her comments: “I am enjoying learning more about my weak points in writing because I am aware that my teacher’s main aim is to enhance my writing skills” (Ghost21, student interviews, 27 June 2017). The participants started to feel that the teacher was involved in giving them comments that were authentic and focused on the content and meaning (function of the language), as well as on grammar and spelling (form of the language). Ghost21 described the comments she received from the teacher as giving “positive energy that gives me self-

confidence regarding writing in English and it contains some beautiful suggestions that strengthen me” (Ghost21, student interviews, 27 June 2017).

5.5.5.1.2 Changing student–student relationships

There was also a shift in the student–student relationships. Students saw that their peers could be a source of knowledge, and they helped each other to improve their writing. Soma said: “I always feel the spirit of team work as I can improve my writing skills with the notes of my teacher and my peers” (Soma, student interviews, 25 June 2017), “Sometimes students help each other in understanding the work of some of the blog features, which was a new dimension. I have discovered that students sometimes may benefit each other in a better way” (EFL teacher’s interview, 28 June 2017). Students trusted each other and shared knowledge and experience, as blogging allowed them to be more informed. Furthermore, they no longer needed to compete to please the teacher and gain her satisfaction. In her interview, MNS98 stated that “the relationship among my colleagues improved. The level of our discussion increased, especially when we used to discuss the blogging topics, how we were so enthusiastic to receive the comments and edited our work. This was because we did not know the person who sent the comment and we wanted to show the best of our work” (MNS98, student interviews, 26 June 2017). A sense of equality was dominant among the participants since everyone had the opportunity to express her ideas and views, and an interactive spirit started to emerge among the participants. With blogging, the students had equal opportunities represented by equal access to knowledge and the use of blogs. Sweety stated: “Before blogging, I was not communicating with my colleagues continuously, but when we began blogging, I found that blogging is a good reason for our communication, as we became more connected and understood each other better” (Sweety, student interviews, 26 June 2017). In the first field note, I wrote, “Students didn’t initiate any kind of discussions with each other unless they were asked to work in pairs or groups”, while in the third one, I wrote that “I felt that students have changed in a way that some of them became much bolder in being part of the discussion in the class”. In this study, the six focal students used kind and supportive language that steered away from criticism and underestimation “My favorite [sic] part in the text is the body” was a comment made by Sunflower on Soma’s first post; other

examples are “wonderful writing... wish you the best” (Panda’s comment on Soma’s second post) and “keep up your creativity... God be with you in your creative work” (Soma’s comment on Panda’s second post).

As mentioned in Chapter Four, section 4.10.2, I had expected to find a strong link between the students’ comments and the changes in the student–student interaction and student–teacher interaction. However, it was really difficult to link these; the students’ comments were well-written and directed at several writing elements, but the language that was used in their feedback did not reflect a kind of change in terms of culture changes. There was a kind of stability in the expressions that were used by the students; they used gentle words and constructive phrases, but they used the same writing style throughout the whole project. This could be due to the influence of the culture of those students, as discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.7, which describes the Omani culture as being conservative and having a formal relationship between the students and their teacher. However, although the whole class atmosphere presented a kind of change in terms of relationships, this could not be reflected in the way the students addressed each other and their EFL teacher while commenting.

Nevertheless, as stated in section 5.5.2, analysis of the students’ comments’ types (see Table 6) indicated that there was a kind of transformation in the students’ relationship, as the first comments were shallow and the later ones were deep and constructive. In other words, this transformation was obvious based on the change in the purpose of the students’ comments shown in Table 6, which illustrated the type of students’ general comments.

Several elements contributed to this transformation, such as students’ change in understanding of the comments’ role and the way they started to view commenting and commented on each other’s blogs. For example, Soma’s first comment was “Nice information, well done”, while her second comment was “I had a great time while reading your article, the third example regards playing football wasn’t clear enough. Best of luck”. A kind of interactive spirit could be perceived in comments on Panda’s second post: “Interesting and organised post. Love the title of this post, it explains the idea of the post in general before reading and makes the reader excited to learn more about the post. Keep your writing as wonderful as always”. MNS98 used the language of praise and appreciation and

focused on the positive points in the post. The students felt responsible for giving their comments and were sure that these comments would have value and the blogger would read them and take them into consideration. The participants felt equally valued since their comments were expected to make a change and help the other bloggers to improve their writing. Ghost21 said that peers' comments gave them "motivation that would help to evolve" (Ghost21, student interviews, June 27, 2017). The bond of fellowship and friendship encouraged Ghost21 to try to help her colleagues to "evolve and encompass us all in this evolution" (Ghost21, student interviews, 27 June 2017). The participants exchanged ideas and knowledge, and they aimed to improve each other's writing. In this case, all the learners were making progress and learning from each other. This kind of progress was obvious in the second field note: "The class was much more active compared to the pre-blogging phase. The process of tackling a writing task using blogging might break the ice between the students and between teacher and the students. It might also be the way blogging allows the whole class to interact with each other anytime and anywhere that has made the learning experience such fun and challenging".

In the third field note, I also reflected: "The idea of blogging is to create a kind of community of learners where all the partners, teachers and students, work together towards one main goal, which is enhancing the learning environment and improving the teaching and the learning experience. Being part of this blog, having ownership of your work, and connecting to authentic readers besides your teacher have helped, as well, in creating this kind of community". The participants were not worried about how to satisfy the teacher or use expressions that reflected obedience but were focused on how to develop their learning and benefit from the teacher's comments. There was a shift in the participants' priorities in the sense that they, as Soma put it, wanted to "excite the reader and produce wonderful writing" (Soma, student interviews, 27 June 2017).

Blogging transforms the student-teacher relationship from a formal one, where the teacher is superior to the students as the only source of knowledge, to a less formal one, where the students feel more significant since they can be a source of knowledge and contribute to their learning process. Blogging also influences the student-student relationships and makes every student feel significant and that they are positive contributors to their learning. The competitive

spirit is reduced, as the essence of competition is satisfying and pleasing the teacher to obtain praise and appreciation, which all the students can do when blogging and exchanging knowledge. This kind of culture transformation that took place due to blogging must be taken into account, especially with regard to the variety of global cultures and how they accept change. Risse (2011, p. 3) confirms that “the Omani culture is accepting of new behaviours, but slowly”.

5.5.5.1.3 Integrating blogging into L2 writing

There are certain issues that should be resolved by the teacher prior to the integration of blogging into an EFL class, as “integrating this type of task [blogging] into the language classroom is not a very straightforward issue and thus requires a great deal of ground work beforehand” (Hourigan & Murray, 2010, p. 21). Blogging changed the way the teacher prepared and introduced the writing activity. The field notes data (see Table 12) from this study showed that prior to the blogging application, in the traditional class of L2 writing pedagogy, the teacher gave the learners a topic and asked them to write about it, seeking one draft only of a written piece free of grammatical and spelling mistakes, as the teacher was the only audience and the students’ role was to take into consideration the teacher’s feedback. This pattern of teaching, the teacher-centred approach, was used as the main strategy in teaching every unit, which made the students feel bored. On the other hand, applying blogging as a new teaching method allowed new strategies to be introduced, the teacher introduced the L2 writing activity through stages, and in every stage, the learners were involved in the activity in which they could work at their own pace. For example, in the first stage, the teacher did brainstorming for the learning about the text they were going to read, prepared them for reading, and then discussed the text by asking several comprehension questions. She also introduced the new words that were relevant to the topic and the text. Later, she asked the students to write their blog post, read each other’s blogs and give feedback, and discuss the feedback with the teacher and their peers. In the last stage, they wrote their second draft, taking into account their peers’ comments and their teacher’s feedback. It was noticed that the teacher tried to include blogging as much as possible while teaching the other tasks in the unit, for example, reminding the

students about the process they have to use and discussing the new tutorials that were added.

Table 12

The Results of the Field Notes Data Analysis in Terms of Blogging Integration

<p style="text-align: center;">Lesson plan prior to blogging application</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lesson plan post-blogging application</p>
<p>1. Reminding the students that each unit was handled by doing the following:</p> <p>1. introducing the title of the unit; 2. explaining the kind of writing genre they are writing; 3. asking them to write one draft only; 4. their mistakes will be discussed in general; 5. their writing will be graded on the grammatical and vocabulary criteria only; and 6. The teacher is the only audience of the students</p> <p>2. Teacher spent time on noting the students' spelling and grammatical mistakes.</p>	<p>1. Several stages were introduced:</p> <p>1. the title of unit was introduced; 2. deciding on the tasks which were included; 3. discussing the writing task; 4. students planning their writing post; 5. writing first draft; 6. taking their teacher's and peers' comments into account; and 7. writing their second draft</p> <p>2. Teacher was teaching the students and whenever it was possible, linked some of the teaching points to the blog.</p>

Using blogging changed the students' views regarding the teaching of writing skills: "I like it [blogging] for sure; it makes topics more interesting and enjoyable. Also, it provides me an opportunity to learn several techniques in writing by reading other students' writings" (Panda, student interviews, 25 June 2017). New topics and contests were used due to blogging, for example, the field notes data showed that the teacher introduced 'post of the month', which was done by selecting the most interesting post, and the winner was rewarded with extra marks. Another contest was held at the end of the blogging experience in which the students were asked to use the attached tutorial on how to customise their

blog. The winner was selected by the admin and notified by an email. There was clear learner involvement and participation in the teaching and learning process. The knowledge that the learners had about life in general, and about L2 in particular, was used to comprehend and acquire new knowledge.

In her interview, the teacher stated that much preparation was needed for the learners since the writing activity had three stages and every stage required planning. The teacher's interview data identified that this preparation is divided into two aspects, which are described below.

1. Pedagogical preparation: this included gaining enough experience in how to use the features of blogging, getting used to blogging as another pedagogical platform within the class, and creating a balance, especially at the beginning, between the lessons in the classroom and those in the computer lab since students have to go through three stages: writing their first draft, writing comments, and writing their second draft. The EFL teacher confirmed that "using blogging as part of teaching needs lots of preparation and practising. At first, as a teacher, you need to be aware of the blogging idea itself; to get enough experience in how to use the features of blogging and get used to the blogging as another pedagogical platform within your class" (EFL teacher's interview, 28 June 2017). Adjusting the lesson plan to include a technology section added another dimension to the teacher's lesson, especially since she was not familiar with using blogging in her teaching experience. Regarding this, she said: "Actually, not that much; usually, I was using a projector during my classes just to show the students their major mistakes and to play some games when I was teaching school students" (EFL teacher's interview, 28 June 2017). This was done by having enough practice and going through the blog and its different features. The teacher did this prior to the students being involved in the blogging experience. According to the teacher, the teaching experience became more fun and the teacher–student relationship became friendlier and stronger: "I have noticed how the relationships changed not only between my students themselves but also between me and my students; they became stronger and much more friendly" (EFL teacher's interview, 28 June 2017).

2. Psychological preparation: according to the EFL teacher, blogging is considered by most of the students in the Omani education system to be a new experience. Having your work as a student published and commented on needed

much preparation. It is not an easy step to apply and accept. Students need constant observation and help during the blogging experience; the teacher said: “As a teacher, you need to keep an eye on the students’ work, to keep motivating them, making them feel that it’s a safe world, working towards one main aim, which is to enhance the students’ English language” (EFL teacher’s interview, 28 June 2017).

Integrating blogging as part of the pedagogy is not an easy task. Before the application of blogging within the classroom, crucial preparation should be carried out. Several steps should be taken by the teacher in planning lessons and preparing the students for this new experience. Teachers should design detailed plans, including not only the tasks that will be addressed using blogging but also any difficulties and suggested solutions regarding how to overcome these difficulties. Changing a classroom culture does not happen quickly; therefore, investing time in developing collaborative techniques might facilitate this change.

5.6 Conclusion

The analysis revealed that change is a significant feature of the data. The changes include: a changing understanding of the text, with increased emphasis on the message, purpose and role of students’ comments; a changing understanding of being a writer, with increased emphasis on the role of the audience and the role of commenting in enhancing students’ writing; and a changing classroom culture, emphasising social interaction as one of the key pedagogical strategies. It is clear that engaging in blogging may be informing this change in relation to text and writing behaviour patterns, but blogging itself may depend on a classroom culture of social interaction to fully realise its learning potential.

Chapter Six: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This study explored the use of blogs in teaching ESL writing in the Omani context and the related challenges. The aim was to obtain an overview of how ESL/EFL was learned through blogs in Omani classrooms. The study was designed to gain this insight through the words and experiences of several participants who were involved in learning ESL through blogs. To achieve the aim of the research, data was collected from six female students and their EFL teacher at the Institute of Health in Oman. The study aimed to explore the transformations that blogging brought in the Omani ESL classroom, compared with the traditional method of teaching ESL writing, to shed light on the details of this experience as described by the participants. When conducting this research, several salient points were considered regarding the use of blogs in teaching writing skills. These points are discussed below.

6.2 The role of the audience

As stated in Chapter Five, section 5.5.1, the participants compared the traditional way of teaching ESL writing in the Omani context with blogs for learning ESL writing. A big contrast was in the role of the teacher as the only audience and that of the large audience, which led to participants feeling disappointed when they returned to learning writing traditionally. The comparison of their eagerness and willingness to write a blog and wait for their colleagues' feedback with their anxiety when waiting for the teacher's score shows the ultimate focus when writing in a traditional ESL classroom.

Based on the findings of this study (see section 5.5.1.1), the presence of an authentic audience had several consequences regarding the participants' motivation to write. One consequence was that the sense of enthusiasm increased, which drove them to write in the best way possible. The fact that there was an audience, as the teacher stated in the interview, encouraged the participants started to read more about the topics about which they were writing and the different functions that can be used to express their ideas. All this means that language learning was developing. Another consequence was that writing

for an authentic audience enhanced the learners' sense of ownership and desire to be independent writers. The bloggers started to possess a sense of achievement, which was also an encouraging factor in language learning (Godwin-Jones, 2003). The sense of ownership was promoted by commenting, which stimulated the learners' writing and raised their awareness of the process of writing. Giving and receiving comments from an authentic audience may have promoted a sense of ownership and attentiveness to the content writing. The reason for this is that the written text is theirs; they are required to take the best care of it and respond to the comments from the authentic audience. Thus, the learners became sensitive to both the merits and the challenges of online writing as they started to improve their writing after receiving the comments.

This is consistent with the view of Soares (2008), who stated that through blogging, students are given the freedom to write about the topics that interest them. This gave the participants in the current study the opportunity to develop a sense of ownership and the motivation to create a hypertext document. This created a sense of responsibility in them since they realised that they were solely responsible for the content and document creation. This responsibility made the participants in this study eager and ready to be straightforward in their discussion, as they needed to be trustworthy as writers. According to Soares (2008, p. 3), "above all, students feel freer to get writing practice, as teachers usually let them write about issues that interest them, develop a sense of ownership and get experience with the practical, legal and ethical issues of creating a hypertext document".

The current study's findings illustrate that to be a writer, one needs to hear the voices of one's peers. Blogging enabled the participants in the current study to make their voices heard, express themselves freely and share knowledge. For example, participants were able to justify their opinions when writing their posts about whether they were for or against advertisements. They also expressed their likes and dislikes of what was written and suggested ways to improve it. Moreover, they wrote about their experience and learned lessons from it. This discussion necessitates addressing the value of the social context of learning, where a learning community is created to carry social structures and practices essential for knowledge-creating approaches. Bredekamp (2014, p. 50) defines a community of learners as "a group or classroom in which children and adults

engage in warm, positive relationships; treat each other with respect; and learn from and with each other". The first essential step to establishing a social context of learning is to create shared knowledge practices and guide participants' activities towards eliciting a pursuit of shared enquiry.

Knowledge practices refer to personal and social practices associated with epistemic activities that include sharing and elaborating epistemic artefacts, such as written texts (Hmelo-Silver et al., 2013). Knowledge practices are based on shared routines, which are stable but dynamically evolving and include asking questions and searching for information. They also involve the search for novelties (Hmelo-Silver et al., 2013). Furthermore, this is related to the writer's identity and how blogging developed the writer's personal and social identity. Personal identity is developed when the learners endeavour to write about interesting and creative ideas that address an authentic audience. It is also developed in the learners' efforts to read about the topic and increase their knowledge (Ellerbrock et al., 2016). The social identity of the learner is developed by interacting in an online community of writers who share and exchange knowledge and comments (Chih-Hsiun, 2013). Writing has a social nature, and the writer's identity is shaped by their social experiences and how they view themselves as a writer (Cremin & Myhill, 2013). The writer's writing is shaped by the cultural and social norms they have acquired, which guided them to write in the way they do. The learner writers also rediscovered these norms through writing. Moreover, they write for socially influential audiences that share social purposes with the writer. In other words, we can say that an audience shapes a writer's sense of who a text is for (Wray & Medwell, 2013).

When blogging, learners adapt to the norms of the new writer identity, in which they have a responsibility to be creative in both their ideas and style of writing (Doerr, 2009). Some of the features of this adoption process are evident in the current study. The first is taking other comments into account to produce a blog that, from the students' perspectives, is as perfect as possible, and both addresses and delivers on the requirements of the audience (which was revealed in the participant discussion on how they felt when they received the comments and in the interviews). The second feature is a strong focus on using appropriate words and sentence structure as a condition for publishing (demonstrated by comparing the first version of the participants' blogs with the final one). The final

feature is using blogs to record events and experiences (which could be seen when MNS98 wrote about her own experience in making the first impression and provided tips on how to avoid having a negative one). According to the students, writing through blogging became fun. The sense that accompanies the adoption of blogging for learning L2 writing is that of pride, and, finally, comments and criticism were accepted.

It could be argued that blogging offers the writing affordances that could be conflicting for writing. From one perspective, through blogging, audience awareness has evolved within the participants: before and while writing their posts, they have their audience in mind. Kuhl et al. (2014, p. 1019) believe that “having a clear sense of who we are writing for makes the communication effective as well as increases the likelihood of meeting our goals”. While crafting their posts, the participants in this study constantly changed phrases and vocabulary choices, which was evident in the second version of the students’ posts. This demonstrates a metalinguistic understanding of phrasing something one way rather than another, and of having a sufficient understanding of the language to be able to exercise those choices. The change in the students’ focus raised interesting points; for example, we do not know how conscious they were in making this change, we just saw that they did it. From another perspective, the main aim of blogging is to be open to the world so that the public are able to read, comment on and criticise your work. The problem with blogging is that as a teacher, you are asking people to write an individual story, article or blog, and at the same time, you are asking them to comment on each other’s blogs. You are not asking people to critique the form, but the message itself.

Blogging allows a relationship to be created between bloggers and their audience (Swale, 2017). A writer can write to please, inform persuade, inspire or even to challenge, and these different intentions require a different text and a different understanding of what it means to be a good writer. Therefore, there can be tension between individuality on the one hand, the message, and social shaping on the other, the audience. Furthermore, in blogging, there are multiple audiences with multiple needs and reactions. This could create tension between what the writer/blogger wants to say and how to please or convince the writer’s large audience.

6.3 The shift from product to process

The students' comments on the blogs reflected the transformation that can be seen in the process of blogging (see Table 6), where the nature of the students' general comments was discussed. The students focused on the blogs' content; they made content-related suggestions and dealt with the text as a source of information that reflected the writer's knowledge and experience, as well as her effort to create meaning through the use of language. As shown in Table 9, the students did not view the text simply as a combination of sentences assembled with the correct grammar and spelling. Instead, they approached the text as the result of a developmental and communicative process that built meaning and content in the context of an interactive space and used language to do so. They were not taught or told to write a text from this more process-driven perspective, but what they did demonstrated a shift from a product-driven approach to a more process-driven approach. When the participants dealt with language in the blogs of their colleagues, they seemed to perceive language as a carrier of meaning and not an end in itself. Furthermore, the participants did not interact with the blogs as static entities; rather, they considered them as potential sources of knowledge to which further information and modifications could be added. This raises questions such as: What kind of understanding is this? Is it just about the text? To what extent are the students conscious when they are actively manipulating their own writing processes, and are they aware of the distinction between accuracy and message? At what point does this become metacognitive? Ultimately, what type of thinking is this? Further studies are required to explore these questions regarding writing and the type of thoughts that are underlying the writing process.

The process of blogging contributed to the transformation of the participants' focus to be on both the emphasis on the function of the text and an understanding of the text as a work in progress. The participants wrote the blogs, published them, and then received comments related to the modification of the content and style of their blogs. This process highlighted writing as the result of a developmental and communicative process, which involves rewriting, revising, editing, and writing up. Therefore, while blogging, the participants practised writing in the ESL Omani context as a process. For writers, writing comprises

stages such as planning, generating ideas, writing drafts, re-reading, revising, and editing. This is consistent with the view of Al-Noursy (2014) and Matsuda (2014), who state that using blogs can help the students to reflect on their writing processes. According to this perspective, learning writing is a developmental process where the learners reflect, change, and edit what they write, and become independent writers through this process. At this point, a distinction can be made between the development of the participants' editing to meet the requirements of an assessment by the teacher and producing a better version that meets the reader's needs and the development of the self-editing skill, which is a necessary component for revision of ESL/EFL writing in blogs.

The findings of this study (see section 5.5.2.1.1) illustrated that blogging, as a social media platform, created in the users the feeling that there was a message from the writer that should be taken seriously. This purpose of social media led the participants to focus more on the content and the impact of the written blogs, and the information they provide. Blanton (2005) states that giving the students the opportunity to practise their writing skill on an online platform, as is the case of blogging, helps the students to present a clear purpose that the readers should understand. Abdulateef Elegba (2018) states that blogs are often used as online diaries where bloggers post their daily news or how they feel about one subject. This property of blogging encouraged the participants to search the content and ascertain what information the blogs contained, as well as the elements that enhanced these messages so that they could be delivered to their wider audience. This can be clearly seen in Chapter Five, where the students' edited versions of their essays are presented (see Table 7).

Blogs were created as a medium of reflective writing, affording the learners the opportunity to express their ideas. These aspects of writing increased the learners' sense of autonomy and their perception of how language works to perform a communicative function (Lee, 2011). In other words, according to Lee (2011), blogs enable learners to be aware of themselves as autonomous learners and of associated language functions. From this perspective, writing is no longer perceived simply as an exercise in which the learners have to write grammatical sentences to obtain good scores from the teacher. Through blogging, the learners are placed in a situation where they have to write for authentic reasons and discuss authentic issues. The participants in the current study wrote about their

impressions and feelings, and their attitudes towards the topics about which they were asked to write. Through blogging, they were required to express their ideas and defend them within a network of learners. Blogging enabled the participants' feelings of being writers to be developed when they wrote about their own perspectives and experiences and shared them with other writers. It also allowed the participants to reflect on what they produced.

Each student's identity as a writer evolved, as stated in section 6.2. This gave the participants a sense of achievement, which boosted their learning. As Soma clarified in her interview, "In fact, I feel that I achieved something regardless of the mistakes I made while writing these articles. The feeling of satisfaction differs when you are evaluated by the teacher with praise from students" (Soma, student interviews, 27 June 2017). Through blogging, learners can write their ideas, express themselves, and share with others issues that matter to them, thus providing an authentic reason for writing genuine communication. For example, one of the study's participants, Ghost21, wrote about her experience with donations and a project to help people in need. Thus, learners can write about their experiences and create their own projects (Shelly et al., 2007). It is important to be aware that learners write not only for their peers or the teacher but also for a perceived audience in the wider world beyond the classroom. What seems to be the teacher's primary concern about accurate spelling and grammar becomes a shared standard for publication. This is even more important in an ESL setting, as through blogging, learners become writers who use L2 for communication since "by shifting focus to the practice, it is possible to see how blogs are not a genre of communication, but a medium through which communication occurs" (Boyd, 2006, p. 19). Linking accuracy with communication changes the dynamic of classroom writing, encouraging student writers to take ownership of accuracy for their own writing purpose.

6.4 The role of the feedback sheet

Several studies have provided two different views in terms of writing as a social activity and how successful blogging is in creating an effective learning environment within the EFL/ESL classrooms. Some studies agreed that using blogging as a new teaching medium has promoted the social interactivity within the learning environment (Blackmore-Squires, 2010; Dalir et al., 2013; Godwin-

Jones, 2003; İnceçay & Genç, 2014). The nature of blogging allows the students to play an essential role in each other's learning. Blackmore-Squires (2010, p. 44) states that "students were contributing to each other's learning and the more involved and engaged through writing posts and commenting the more effective this learning environment became".

Conversely, the studies conducted by Bloch (2007) and Domalewska (2014) found that the benefits of blogs have been limited when used to promote social interactivity among students in EFL classrooms. According to Domalewska (2014, p. 27), "increasing [interaction] between foreign language learners through blogging activities proved to be impossible to achieve". The reason for this is that in the previous studies, learners' commenting was limited, and the nature of the feedback given did not initiate further discussion and explanation. Therefore, we could say that the lack of one of the most significant elements of blogging, which is commenting, affected the promotion of social communication among the learners.

The findings of the current study align with the view of the studies which emphasise that using blogging in teaching English language, specifically writing skills, promoted a type of social interaction; this happened due to the effective use of commenting/feedback. We could argue that the most important element that promotes the success of any educational atmosphere, which is based on the use of blogging as a primary teaching method, is how the use of blogging provides a different type of interactivity and collaboration among the students, their teacher, and their audiences beyond their classrooms. This type of interactivity within the blogs is based on the students' feedback, which works as a connected platform between the students, their peers, and their audiences in the outside world. According to Bansal (2018), commenting plays an important role in several aspects: promoting the interactive environment inside the blog; creating a rapport and a connection between the learners and their teacher, the learners themselves and the outside world; improving the students' writing skill specifically and their English language in general; expanding the learners' learning awareness; working as a motivation factor, which leads the learners to continue modifying to satisfy their readers; and providing a platform to exchange ideas, points of view, and different learning/teaching experiences.

Based on the above discussion and as preparation for this study, the following facts were taken into account: promoting interactivity is the basic element for a successful teaching/learning environment via blogging; students might feel embarrassed or not have the appropriate language to comment on their peers' work; and students need sufficient guidance to give their peers constructive feedback. Campbell (2004) emphasises that the lack of feedback is one of the most significant limitations of the use of blogs in EFL/ESL classes. He also states that helping the students to learn how to write constructive comments, and the importance of taking these comments into account to promote interactivity, is one of the steps within the practical guide in blogging implementation. Ellison and Wu (2008) highlight the importance of giving the students enough practice and guidance to provide their peers with effective feedback, which will broaden the pedagogical benefits of blogging, stating that "students enjoyed commenting, but were not convinced of the pedagogical benefits and appeared to desire more guidance in regards to structuring their remarks to be helpful as opposed to be preachy or overall negative" (Ellison and Wu, 2008, p. 114).

Therefore, a feedback sheet that included incomplete sentences was designed and was used by the students as a first scaffolding step in this new commenting world. Throughout the duration of this study, students were informed that the feedback sheet is a guide to provide them with the appropriate language and give them ideas, suggestions and guidance on how to reflect/comment on their peers' work. Whenever they felt that they are confident enough and ready to use their own feedback, they were free to do so without consulting their teacher. The findings of this study showed that using this feedback sheet helped the students to go through this new experience smoothly, gain confidence in commenting, and be independent. This indicates students learned how to give feedback (see Table 8) when they commented on the second and third posts using their own original sentences, whereas on their first comments, most of the students used one of the sentences on the feedback sheet. This aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). At the beginning of this study, the feedback sheet was used as a scaffolding framework to support the participants in the early stage of their blogging experience and to develop their feedback skill. With the use of scaffolding, Wood and Wood (1996) describe the stages of learning as 'recruitment of the learner's interest in the task,

establishing and maintaining an orientation towards the task-relevant goal, highlighting critical features of the task that the learner might overlook and helping to control frustration' (p. 5). Following this, the students were able to produce constructive feedback using their own words. Vygotsky (1962) states that "what a learner can do today in co-operation, tomorrow he will be able to do on his own" (p. 104).

The findings of this study indicated that blogging promotes a type of reflective thinking/learning that allows the learners to constantly reflect on their learning, deciding the right time to go to the next step and be responsible for their own learning. Dewey (1933, as cited in Yang, 2009) defines reflective thinking as "the kind of thinking that consists of turning a subject over in the mind and giving it a serious and consecutive consideration". This was obvious when the students started to construct their own feedback and tackle different aspects in their peers' written work. It was also happening within the community of practice that was created and fostered by the use of blogging as a medium of teaching. The participants in this study used the blog as a platform for a discussion space, an avenue to exchange ideas, start another thinking route, challenge each other's points of view, ask for clarification, request modifications, and ask questions; this whole interactive process was done via practising commenting. In short et al. highlight that

as we work through inquiry [commenting], we do not usually end with one answer or even a set of answers. Inquiry does not narrow our perspective; it gives us more understandings, questions, and possibilities than when we started. Inquiry isn't just asking and answering a question. Inquiry involves searching for significant questions and figuring out how to explore those questions from many perspectives. (short et al., 1996, pp. 8-9)

The current study found that by giving the EFL/ESL learners the appropriate guidance, in this case in terms of giving their peers appropriate feedback, especially those who are practising blogging for the first time, they developed the ability to use appropriate language in criticising their peers' written work, started to consider commenting as a constructive method to improve writing skills, and gained confidence in and a better understanding of their learning, and eventually

achieved the main goal, which was enhancing the students' English language, and, in this case, writing skills specifically. This is consistent with the view of Dewey (1933, as cited in Yang, 2009, p. 18) who claims that "if we want to make our experience educative, it is essential to support ongoing growth in the process of continuing new inquiry".

6.5 Language transfer

Reviewing the literature illustrated that there is a wide debate on the benefits of using L1 in teaching L2 in general and teaching L2 writing skills specifically. Two groups can be identified: the first group that is in favour of using L1 in teaching L2; and the second group that is in favour of using L2 as the only teaching medium. The findings of the current study were also divided, as illustrated in Chapter Five, section 5.5.3.1.

The group that is in favour of L1 argues that in teaching L2, the student's mother tongue is vital in the teaching process and in acquiring L2. The group also believes that having a high level of L1 proficiency assists with L2 acquisition. Lambert and Tucker (1972) conducted a study in Canada with two groups: a control group and an experimental group. The control group was taught only in English during kindergarten and grade one, whereas the experimental group was taught in their mother tongue, French, and then both were taught in English in grades two, three and four. The findings of their study revealed that the control group scored lower grades in English, specifically in spelling and reading comprehension, before they were taught in English. However, the grades of the control group were equivalent to those of the experimental group in listening and speaking comprehension after grade two.

Based on the findings of this current study, the first group of participants preferred comments to be in Arabic to support their learning through the L1. The students who agreed with using L1 in teaching L2 were in the first group, they preferred Arabic to be the language of comments since this helped them to understand what improvements needed to be made and understand the intentions in a good way. This group wanted to understand every part of the comments and applied them to produce the best second version of the blog. The main goal of this group was not learning through blogging but producing a successful blog. The members of this group were only concerned about the

outcome, which was producing an error-free second version of their blogs. Comments on blogs were part of the L2 learning and they could not be ignored. The attitude of the members of this group reflected a misunderstanding of the use of blogging in L2 teaching and of the blogging experience in general. Learning about the writing process was not dependent upon the language in which it was learned. It could be argued that L1 allowed for access to abstract and critical ideas more naturally than L2 and made things clearer for the participants to understand the writing process (Bhela, 1999). According to Nation (2001), if the learners had a discussion in their L1 as preparation for L2 written tasks, they would probably receive higher grades than those who had the discussion in L2. This finding is consistent with Cummins' (1984) developmental interdependence hypothesis, about which he states, "to the extent that instruction in Lx is effective in promoting proficiency in Lx, transfer of this proficiency to Ly will occur provided there is adequate exposure to Ly (either in school or environment) and adequate motivation to learn Ly" (p. 41).

The students who agreed with using L2 as the only teaching medium are in the second group. They argued that when learning L2, L1 habits do transfer and have a negative influence on L2 acquisition (Nation, 2001), and errors do occur. In particular, this happens when the L2 learners have lower proficiency in their L2 and when there are several differences between the L1 and L2 languages (Hayati, 1998). "Learners of a second language tend to transfer the forms, meaning and culture of their L1 to the foreign language and culture when attempting to speak the language. By learning L2 habits, L1 habits are also transferred and then the errors occur" (Beebe & Seliger, 1988, as cited in Derakhshan & Karimi, 2015, p. 2113). Some authors go further and claim that learners who become bilingual may lose their L1 in the process (Lord, 2008, as cited in Derakhshan & Karimi, 2015). Karim and Nassaji (2013) conducted a study in which they found that students' L2 writing was influenced by their L1 writing procedures and strategies. Derakhshan and Karimi (2015) highlight several reasons for low L2 acquisition, among which they considered L1 interference as one of the main reasons. This is consistent with the findings in relation to the second group of the current study, who preferred comments to be in the English language, which was their L2. This helped them to learn English faster by using English to practise the target language, and they believed that in an English-

learning environment, English should be the language of communication in every detail. This group understood language learning through blogging as learning every detail related to blogging, and learning L2 took place in every step taken during blogging. Members of this group understand L2 learning through blogging in a different way to that of the first group. This group focused on blogging as a means and on language learning as a goal, which was the opposite for the first group.

Most of the previous studies on using either L1 or L2 in teaching a second language had two different views: either against, such as Romero and Manjarres' (2017) study, or for, as in Yu and Ren's (2013) study. However, within these research studies, researchers had already chosen to teach the target language using either L1 or L2. Few studies have examined the use of comments on blogging in L1 or L2 and what the students might prefer. In this current study, students were given the freedom to choose their preferred language to comment and they justified their choice, as the interview data demonstrated. This raises important points, the first of which is that the teacher did not mind whether students were using English or Arabic, which could have made the students more comfortable not having to use the target language all the time, meaning that the students may have been less anxious. The second point is that based on the various findings of the previous studies on the use of either L1 or L2 in L2 acquisition, we can say that with regard to teaching L2 and how students acquire the target language, it is not really important to identify which language should be used in the teaching process. This current study suggests that what is really important is the teacher's role in the learning process and how they can address the learners' needs and involve them within their teaching. In this sense, teachers are advised to give the students some freedom in terms of their learning.

The third point is that most of the research on learning English has been conducted in other contexts. Not every context has to deal with the same issue, for example, the Omani context. The majority of the research on language transfer has been conducted on Western students, for instance, in Canada. We can say that the learning process that is happening within these Western educational cultures does not apply in the Omani educational culture. Classroom culture contains several elements that vary based on the characteristics of each one. These elements might include how teachers talk to students, how students

see themselves and their teachers, how teachers address the students' feedback, and the role of the teacher and the student within this unique culture. It is actually within the relationship between the students and the teacher that the learning happens. Therefore, rather than viewing the teacher as an entity on their own and the students as an entity on their own, we need to look at the learning that is happening within the relationship between the teacher and the students. This relationship is not an abstract one, and it is within the Omani context that this relationship is established.

6.6 A changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes

Regarding the use of blogging in the educational system, most of the previous studies explored the negative or positive impacts blogging can have on teaching and how we can apply blogging in teaching ESL/EFL or presented a historical review of blogging and the use of online tools in teaching. For example, Blackmore-Squires (2010) investigated the use of blogging in enhancing students' writing skill and found that blogging had a positive impact on promoting collaboration, trust, confidence, and writing for an audience. Domalweska (2014) examined the use of blogging for collaborative learning, and the study's findings demonstrated that blogging played a significant role in establishing collaboration within the classroom. He also highlighted several difficulties that could occur as a result of blogging. However, very few studies have addressed the educational culture in general and the cultural changes that could occur in the classroom culture while applying blogging as a pedagogical method. Risse (2011) discusses the importance of any EFL/ESL teacher being aware of the educational culture, especially when the educational culture is totally different from the teacher's own culture. According to Risse (2011), an American instructor who started to teach in Dhofar University, one of the Omani academic institutions, "even before choosing the textbook or writing the syllabus, I believe the aspect of culture difference should be specifically addressed for TESOL teachers new to Arabia or new to the school where they are teaching" (p. 1). She states that being aware of the characteristics of any new educational culture "decreases the chance of misunderstandings getting in the way of learning" (Risse, 2011, p. 1). In her study on the Omani culture, Al Barawani (2010) emphasises the importance of learning about the educational culture, especially for the non-Omani teachers. Based on

the findings of her study, she confirms that “expatriate teachers and principals often expressed a need to learn about the Omani culture” (Al Barawani, 2010, p. 180).

This current study highlights that each country has its own unique educational culture that is totally different from that of another country. When we examine classroom practice in detail, we need to take into account these differences in culture; for example, differences in the use of the target language, the way the teacher is speaking and changing, how they are addressing feedback and students, and how students and the teacher interact with each other. Although these are minor practices, they are significant in terms of the shift/change that may occur within the educational culture. This aligns with the view of Romero and Manjarres (2017, p. 124), who confirm that “we cannot separate the study of language and language learning from culture and the context that surrounds the learner, especially when we refer to the learning of a foreign language”. In fact, this current study’s findings (see Chapter Five, section 5.5.5.1) reveal that several transformations occurred within the classroom culture in relation to the use of blogging in teaching English language in general and teaching writing skills specifically. These changes include changes in the teacher’s role, the teacher–student relationship, and the student–student relationships. Camilleri (2007) states that the second language teaching and learning experiences may change when blogs are used as a medium of teaching. These changes include conceptualising the writing process, the teacher’s role, and the students’ positions.

The findings of this study demonstrate that there are multiple tasks that the L2 teacher in the EFL/ESL context must perform when teaching L2 writing through blogging. The most significant task is to balance their role as a facilitator and caring figure and as a figure with relevant professional expertise who has been assigned an authoritarian role by society. The teacher should also strike a balance between the learners’ autonomy and their tendency to depend on the teacher in all aspects of the lesson. This is consistent with the view of Van Compernelle and Abraham (2009) and Lee (2011), who highlight that blogging increases the learners’ sense of autonomy since the learners express their ideas and use reflective thinking that makes them evaluate their writing and rewrite more efficiently. As learners’ autonomy increases, they become more

independent and less reliant on their teacher. Moreover, the teacher's authoritarian role was restricted and a friendly relationship and appreciation emerged. What assisted in altering the perception of the teacher's authoritarian role was that she was not the only source of knowledge for the students since they could obtain knowledge from each other and the internet. The authoritarian teacher's role was therefore reduced, and the students felt that they started to have a role and a choice in their learning experience. Wang and Winstead (2016, p. 23) confirm that "through technologies (e.g., social media, MOOC, personal website, blog, mobile network), information flows from the creator to the audience without the interference of a traditional authority or gatekeeper of information". In a sense, the teacher became a member of the community of learners herself, where everyone had the task of commenting and helping each other. In this case, the procedures of blogging created this atmosphere, and if an individual wants to join this social network, they have to follow the unwritten rules. Blogging changed the teacher–student relationship and how the teacher and students interact. It can, therefore, be concluded that blogging changed the teaching/learning culture and the role of both the teacher and the learners. This finding is consistent with the view of Wang and Woo (2010), who state that using blogging has changed the teacher's role and tasks in the second language learning classroom.

This discussion could be linked to the age of the internet and the dialogic theory (Wegerif, 2013) that how to be in the internet age and to have the opportunity to engage with a wider audience and a wider range of information outside the classroom walls is changing the ways in which teachers engage with content knowledge and content understanding. The findings of the current study illustrate that the role of the teacher might shift from being a gatekeeper to someone navigating different forms of writing and trying to develop the metacognitive understanding of the students, as they have the opportunity to engage with other people. Essentially, here, teachers are required to give up some control and are therefore no longer certain about what is going to happen next. Teachers need to feel confident in their practice; letting go is potentially problematic, but confident teachers are able to work in different ways. Therefore, this is also about the teacher's role; it relates to what type of teacher you are in the classroom. The ability to maintain that sense of losing control in a learning context depends on actually being a teacher in that context. According to Mahini

et al. (2012, p. 1618), "In E-learning environment each of the teacher duty can be done by a few people until the duties can divided specially among several people and the quality of education will be increased, thus the teacher changes her role as the role as the only source of knowledge".

In a competitive learning environment, students do not trust each other in terms of knowledge since they believe that the teacher is the only person with this and the students lack knowledge or know very little (Reinders et al., 2006). As stated in Chapter 5, section 5.5.5.1, just as blogging has transformed the teacher–student relationship, it has also changed the student–student relationships. The mechanism of blogging improves the student–student relationships since it is based on reading the blog, commenting on it, and sending the comment to the blogger, who then reads the comments and edits the text, and then sends the final version of the blog. All the students have to read the blogs, comment on the content and ideas, and use the information shared with and by everyone. Li (2014) highlights six benefits of using blogging to enhance students' writing, one of which is that it promotes "teacher–student and student–student interaction" (p. 112). The current study's findings illustrate that blogging has created a rapport among the participants and made them view blogging as a social activity, as they are all equal in accessing information, having a rapport with the teacher, and possessing a sense of responsibility and ownership. Consequently, the competitive spirit is not triggered since the participants cannot achieve the goal of being good writers without working effectively with other bloggers.

The question that could be asked here is with the use of blogging, how can we create/facilitate this type of social interaction? The findings of the current study illustrate that the creation of this social spirit when blogging is used as a medium of teaching L2 writing depends on the degree to which the learners are ready and willing to follow the rules of blogging and participate in writing and discussing comments. It also depends on the teacher's role, especially at the beginning of the whole journey, such as how they provide scaffolding for the students during the early stages, help them to overcome the difficulties that may occur, and encourage them to participate in an effective way. Furthermore, it depends on how eager they are and prepared to learn through blogging and to obey the norms of a new blogging culture, which is social in nature. Alsamadani (2018, p. 45)

states that “blogging is a key to learning, as they [students] share ideas, socialise, communicate, debate, discuss and better express their ideas when they see those of their classmates, and vice versa”.

Karten (2013) distinguishes two types of culture. The first type is the “culture of blame” (p. 1), where the individual’s fear of punishment or criticism fosters an unwillingness to take risks and/or accept responsibility for making mistakes. This culture perpetuates silence in facing problems and situations to avoid the individuals being blamed or punished. The other type of culture is the culture of support, which provides assistance and encouragement, enabling individuals to ask questions, express concerns, and admit to making mistakes without the fear of being ridiculed or punished (Karten, 2013). Arab culture may still have elements of a blame culture, in which people avoid speaking and doing things to avoid making mistakes and being ridiculed (Gamble & Gamble, 2013). Although the participants in this study may still have expectations informed by a blame culture, through blogging, they started to break their silence, to comment on their peers’ written work, and to express their ideas without fear of blame. In the Omani educational culture, this could be considered as a significant shift and a change, as Risse (2011) describes regarding the Omani students at the University of Dhofar in Oman:

The Omani culture encourages people to be reserved, to not speak up or show emotions in public, especially young women. In addition, it is often impossible to know if students are confused because 1) students will often attempt to cover their confusion and 2) students' non-verbal signals may be difficult for non-Omanis to understand. (Risse, 2011, p. 5)

The current study sheds some light on the way the classroom culture needs to be the focus of change and that this might be as important as any pedagogic strategy or writing medium. Therefore, while there is evidence here that blogging can lead to a change in classroom culture, which might be perceived as an indirect affordance of blogging, it is also clear that this affordance might be dependent on cultivating social behaviour within the writing classroom so that blogging and social interaction can develop within a reciprocal relationship. It is necessary to understand the classroom culture and observe how it is changing.

The teacher's acceptance, the quality of relationships and the knowledge of the medium, in this case, blogs, change the way students view themselves and their teachers. This requires an advanced understanding of the technology, not only understanding how it works and how the technology might change the relationships in the class but also being able to anticipate these factors and being willing and able to change. Technology necessitated that teachers increase their education and understanding of learning (Drew, 2012). Teachers in the Omani context need to be prepared for the transformations generated by using technology in the teaching and learning of ESL. They also need to be aware of integrating technology into the teaching process and obtain the benefits; however, they should also be aware of the disadvantages and how to mitigate them (Abdallah & Albadri, 2010; Albadri, 2012). This discussion could be linked to the posthuman approach to technology in the classroom. Pedersen (2010, p. 242) argues that "[posthumanism] can be viewed as a form of systems theory where both humans and animals constitute each other through constant interaction with each other and with their common environment". Teachers who need to apply any educational technology within their teaching approach should be aware of how learning with technology happens. It is not really about how students are using this technology; it is within the relationship/interaction between the teacher on one hand and technology on the other hand and the students themselves, depending on the type of technology and the context in which the learning happens. It is not about the affordances that this technology might bring, but about how people are using these affordances' agents. All these different elements contribute to the students' learning experience and cannot be separated. Densmore (2017, p. 2) explains that "the human-centric view of the world gives way to a more pluralistic and democratic perspective that allows for non-human animals and things to have moral impact and for recursive learning to occur between humans and things".

6.7 Conclusion

This study was conducted to explore the use of blogs in teaching ESL writing in the context of Oman and the challenges related to it. Blogging as a social media platform develops the feeling among participants that writers' message is taken seriously. This purpose of social media allows the participants to focus more on

the content and impact of the written blogs, as well as the information they provide. The presence of an authentic audience had consequences regarding the participants' motivation to write, such as the sense of enthusiasm and ownership, and their desire to be independent writers increased. Blogging created a sense of responsibility among participants they realised that they were solely responsible for the content and the creation of the document. This responsibility made the participants eager and ready to be straightforward in their discussion, which is required to become trustworthy writers.

It has been found that blogging enables the participants to make their voices heard and to express themselves freely and share knowledge. It develops the writer's personal and social identity through knowledge practices, which referred to personal and social practices associated with epistemic activities that include sharing and elaborating epistemic artefacts, such as written texts. It creates relationships between bloggers and their audience. The blogging process contributed to the transformation of the participants' focus on both the emphasis on the function of the text and an understanding of the text as a work in progress. Blogs are a medium of reflective writing, allowing the learners to express their ideas. These aspects of writing increase the learners' sense of autonomy and their perception of how language works to perform a communicative function. Through blogging, they express their ideas and defend them within a network of learners. Blogging empowered the feelings as a writer when participants wrote about their perspectives and experiences and shared them with other writers.

Blogging allowed the participants to reflect on what they produced. It gave them a sense of achievement, which boosted their learning. The use of blogging in teaching the English language, specifically writing skills, promoted a type of social interaction through the effective use of comments/feedback. In this study, two groups of participants are recognised. The students who agreed with using L1 in teaching L2 fall in the first group and they preferred Arabic to be the language of comments since this helped them to understand what improvements needed to be made and understand the intentions in a good way. The students who agreed with using L2 as the only teaching medium fall in the second group; they argued that when learning L2, L1 habits do transfer and have a negative influence on L2 acquisition, and errors do occur.

Classroom culture is the relationship between the students and the teacher. Each country has its own unique educational culture that is different from that of another country. It is found that several transformations occur within the classroom culture about the use of blogging in teaching the English language in general and teaching writing skills specifically. The most significant task as a teacher is to balance their role as a facilitator, caring, and professionalism. The teacher should also balance the learners' autonomy and their tendency to depend on the teacher in all aspects of the lesson. The Omani culture encourages people to be reserved, to not speak up or show emotions in public, especially young women. It is recommended that classroom culture be the focus of change and that this might be as important as any pedagogic strategy or writing medium. Therefore, there is evidence here that blogging can lead to a change in classroom culture, which might be perceived as an indirect affordance of blogging; it is also clear that this affordance might be dependent on cultivating social behaviour within the writing classroom so that blogging and social interaction can develop within a reciprocal relationship. It is necessary to understand the classroom culture and observe how it is changing. Thus, blogging can change the Omani classroom culture, which, as a result, may improve the teaching of ESL writing with the professional role of teachers, and improve the student–teacher relationship.

Chapter Seven: Contribution, Implications and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will first discuss the contribution of my study to EFL learning practices and Omani L2 teaching practices. Next, I will use the implications of the study's findings to make recommendations for international EFL teaching practice, including that of the Arab world. Subsequently, I will discuss the study's limitations and provide suggestions for future studies that other researchers could conduct to fill the gap in the existing literature. Finally, I will present a reflection on my learning process and experiences during my PhD studies.

7.2. Contribution to the EFL learning practice

1. Role of the audience

This study has contributed to the knowledge by identifying the role of the audience in learning L2 when using blogs. In the previous studies, although blogging seemed to be a productive method of learning L2 writing, the right audience was not identified, which meant that blogging was mostly unsuccessful. In Farhadi Shamsabadia's (2015) study, writing monologic blogs would not be an effective learning method, as no new knowledge was introduced. Again, writing to a non-interactive audience would not be effective, as the audience could leave the blogging site since they found too many errors.

In my study, I have chosen students with the same objective, namely learning L2 writing. Previously, the students in this class were only writing for their teacher as the audience. The EFL teacher commonly graded them depending on their performance in grammar and vocabulary; she did not ask students to provide more content. Therefore, students did less research on improving their writing. Students did not improve their language and style to attract readers since there was no audience other than the teacher, who was only interested in their grammar. Learners who kept making grammatical and vocabulary mistakes were considered "not good writers". This study promoted audience enlargement by making peer learners part of the writer's audience.

The current study's findings showed that a more extensive audience increased the learners' passion for learning L2 writing. Students saw a change in learning method from a boring and rigid one to a more exciting and interactive

one. Every time they wrote a blog, they were eager to see the comments made since they were different. This made them more explorative, and they attempted to satisfy their audiences. They felt that their writings were being critiqued based on context, style, tone, and grammar. Learners who had been less enthusiastic about learning L2 writing since they kept receiving negative comments based on their grammatical mistakes gained eagerness and confidence to learn L2 writing, as they started receiving positive comments on other areas of their writings.

The findings also showed that a more extensive audience gave the writer a sense of responsibility (Soares, 2008). In the previous culture of the study, which had one reader, learners wrote for grades and praise from their EFL teacher. This made them have a task completion attitude instead of being more attentive and justifying their work. When they had a larger audience, they considered different readers and were keener to satisfy them all. This would improve their sense of responsibility since they were not just writing to earn a mark, but presenting their ideas, sharing knowledge, and revealing attitudes on a particular topic to an authentic audience.

By having a more extensive audience, the learners were exposed to more topics, writing styles, opinions of others, and motivation. When students read other writers' work, they would question and ask for examples, and then they would understand how someone else sees their work that has not been explained well and would improve on it (Chih-Hsiun, 2013). A larger audience gave the learners a platform to share and compare writing styles, expression, and content delivery, unlike before when they only adhered to the teacher's formats.

The previous teacher-centred form of teaching seemed to favour the students who were good at grasping grammatical and vocabulary aspects and leave out the non-performers, which would demotivate them. In this study, I found the teacher's role as the audience of a learner to be more of an instructor, an organiser of projects to be done by students, offering help when they have challenges in learning new concepts. The teacher should consider students' learning L2 writing from various aspects of their knowledge to make an overall transformation of their writing and enhance their confidence. Therefore, this study has contributed to the knowledge by showing how a more extensive audience could accelerate learning by increasing a student's passion for writing, promoting

independence in writing, and gaining more experience and knowledge from a vast population.

2. A changing classroom culture in EFL writing classes

The findings of this study confirm that the use of blogs in enhancing Omani learners' writing skills led to a changing classroom culture in different aspects. A broader framework enabled less formal relationships between learners and their fellow students and between learners and their teacher. There has been a transformation in learners' and teachers' roles, beliefs and feelings, and the general learning atmosphere.

According to Wigglesworth and Storch (2012), language learning, written or oral, is a social activity in a social context. This study has shown that blogging made learning a social agenda, whereby students' efforts contribute to acquiring knowledge in writing by a student, their peers and their teachers. Learners are given appreciative comments and challenged to provide more information and correct; consequently, they are more motivated. During an interview, MNS98 stated, "Our relationship improved. The level of our discussion increased, especially when we used to discuss blogging topics. We were so enthusiastic to receive the comments and edited our work" (MNS98, student interviews, 26 June 2017). This is contrary to how the learners and teacher perceived the learning process as the learner's responsibility. The learners only received guidance from their teachers.

The efficiency of the blog's contribution in this research has been guided by its role in the cultural change in the learning environment, beliefs, learners' attitudes, and relationships with people involved in the process. The success, or failure, in learning a foreign language depends on several key elements, such as learners' social and cultural background, personality, way of perceiving, and surroundings (Bhatti et al., 2020).

The findings of this study illustrate that previously, learning was done with a teacher-centred approach. Learners viewed the teacher as the sole source of knowledge. The teacher's relationship with students was mainly formal; students felt inferior, could not initiate a discussion, and could not criticise their peers' written work. However, with the use of blogs, student–student interaction gradually changed from formal to less formal in each session. The teacher's role

changed from an authority figure to a facilitator in learning (Wang & Winstead, 2016). Practising blogging made the learning atmosphere less hierarchical, giving the bloggers an opportunity to practise more through their social interactions, share various views, and be another source of knowledge from other students, technology and blogs.

Furthermore, blogging has helped teachers to establish teaching methods by understanding students' interests and skills that facilitate their learning of L2. For example, EFL teachers can allow students to choose topics to write about in their blogs. Consequently, teachers can identify the students' interests and individual differences, which will eventually raise their level of responsibility and improve their learning experience.

Within this study, the role of students in relation to their peers has been changed by blogging from that of competitors to facilitators of learning. First, the learner has been granted responsibility for information accuracy and proper content delivery, thus making them very attentive to their writing. A feeling of responsibility is also given to them to comment and contribute to valuable data on their peers' blogs and motivate them more. The blog has also shifted learners' priority from pleasing the EFL teacher to pleasing a larger audience, exposing them to more research and facilitating more learning.

Another contribution of the blog is that it has changed the attitude of learners towards their peers. Previously, they did not connect much and did not understand the role of classmates. However, blogging has contributed to changing the classroom environment to a kind and friendly learning one open to positive criticism. The blog provided a platform for freedom to discuss and share knowledge for both parties, namely teachers and students. Therefore, this study has enhanced understanding of teaching and learning of L2 in the Omani context by showing how blogs can improve learning a second language.

3. The role of the feedback sheet

The use of feedback sheets in this study has contributed to blogs' efficiency in teaching and learning foreign languages. It has done so by changing the learner's perception of comments, scaffolding learners in the comment construction, and promoting a healthy social interactive environment for learning.

According to Zahoor and Kousar's (2018) study, during the first stage of blogging, producing feedback is difficult. The reason for this is that the learner does not know what is expected of them. Vygotsky (1962, p. 104) states that "what a learner can do today in co-operation, tomorrow he will be able to do on his own". Therefore, this study has introduced a guide for helping learners to understand and be exposed to the commenting process.

The feedback sheet used in the first session of comment making included incomplete sentences, which guided learners on how to go about it. This contributed to learners' development of appropriate language to comment on their peers' work and enabled them to experience what commenting is all about. That is why these learners made a gradual improvement in each session of the comment making. By understanding what aspects their peers might be checking in their work, they could also criticise and make revisions before presenting their work. Their understanding of the content, research and phrasing styles led to more learning. Learners' thirst for more knowledge meant that they understood the concepts and wanted to learn more.

This study has demonstrated that when learners developed the appropriate language for making comments, they understood that the comments were meant to help them and other bloggers to improve their writing and not criticise them. The use of the feedback sheet changed the view of comment making as 'embarrassing' in learners' eyes, which is how they had perceived it earlier (Campbell, 2004; Hardavella et al., 2017). Students who had associated comments with shame and hesitation felt more confident and enthusiastic about receiving comments. They were more optimistic about comment making and sought encouragement, challenges and motivation to improve their blogs that would reflect on their L2 acquisition. The feedback sheet defined comment making as a constructive and positive exercise, giving them confidence and independence and improving their feedback skills.

In the previous studies, it was concluded that the use of blogs in teaching L2 learners is difficult. The studies conducted by Bloch (2007) and Domalewska (2014) found that the benefits of blogs have been limited when used to promote social interactivity among students in EFL classrooms. However, the reason for this is that learners' commenting was limited, and the nature of the feedback given did not initiate further discussion and explanation. In this study, my

application of a feedback sheet opened a platform for blog discussions. Students felt free and confident to ask a question when they were asked questions they received positively. As students asked for clarifications and modifications, sharing ideas and questioning, they practised the interactivity process through comments. Similar to the study conducted by Short et al. (1996), this inquiry led to more answers that reflected more knowledge of the language. It also promoted socialisation among learners and their teachers, creating a good relationship for learning.

Studies that have been conducted and had difficulty in obtaining positive results in relation to the use of blogs in teaching L2, for example, those of Bloch (2007) and Domalewska (2014), were unsuccessful since they did not have proper mechanisms for familiarising learners with the commenting procedure. This current study used the feedback sheet, enabling learners to develop good commenting skills and confidence in comment making, as well as learning how to respond to comments given. Furthermore, the role of comments has been well defined, which has enabled a conducive environment for learning through positive criticism.

4. Language transfer

My primary aim in this study was to re-examine the learner's SLA concept from a new perspective. Previous studies that explored learning a second language focused on the nature of the target language in relation to the L1 and the learner's cognitive skills. Theories related to L2 learning have commonly been described through cognition psychology. In the previous studies, samples were chosen randomly and subjected to learning L2 without considering individual cognitive differences. For example, in the study conducted by Lambert and Tucker (1972), the researchers randomly selected samples of kindergarten students; they taught some in English, while others were taught in French, their first language. However, the researchers did not consider the cognitive differences of these learners.

In this study, I have attempted to shift the focus to the freedom of choice of the mode of study and the teacher–learner relationship. I allowed the learners to decide which method to use to learn L2 (Drummond & Murphy-Reyes, 2017). When I gave Omani students the option to use either L1 or L2 in making

comments on their peers' work, they were able to identify which methods were flexible for them in the development and enhancement of L2 writing.

The students who wanted to comment using L1 felt that understanding the instructions fully helped them to learn English faster. Since they had written their blogs in English, a language in which they were not proficient, students felt that they required explanations in simple language that they could relate to quickly, identifying their strengths and weaknesses in L2. Therefore, the role of L1 in this type of student is crucial. If their teacher had instructed their peers to use L2 to make comments on their work, they would have been highly disadvantaged since they could not express themselves well. Neither would they understand the acknowledgment and remarks regarding corrections from their peers. Learners of this type might take a long time to learn L2 because of the long translation process from L1 to L2, but they were able to achieve the study's objective at the end of the project. On the other hand, the learners who opted to use L2 to comment on their peers' work and wanted comments on their blogs made in L2 felt that familiarising themselves with the L2 context often facilitated their faster L2 acquisition. They learned how others framed their context and compared it with their own, and they acquired new skills from other students. Others thought that the use of L2 in the easy or the acquired knowledge helped in practising and enhancing L2 skills and only used L1 in areas where they found it difficult to express themselves using L2. However, students who use this method might make many grammatical errors emanating from L1, and when they finally learn L2, they might forget the use of L1.

Therefore, the method of data collection that I used in this study has contributed to the knowledge in terms of understanding the impact of the instructor's role on helping the learner in the journey of self-discovery regarding the appropriate methods for learning L2. The learner's exposure to different learning methodologies allows them to reach their potential and gives them a degree of freedom in determining what works best for them. The learners gave views free from bias since they were not subjected to giving their experiences based on a specific learning methodology while in situations in which they felt comfortable.

7.3 Contribution to teaching EFL in an Omani context

1. The shift from product to process

In this research, I explored how a blog was influential in teaching L1 learners in Oman to write in L2. The method commonly used by teachers has been the product-based approach, whereby teachers have been grading students' performance depending on how grammatically error-free their texts are (Matsuda, 2014). Here, the audience is the teacher. Every time a student presents their work, they are only worried about its grammatical effectiveness. This study has suggested that the design of this course in applying blogging as a pedagogical intervention, which is considered a new teaching approach within the Omani context, helped the students to shift from a product-focused to a process-focused approach. While the relationship between the product approach and the process approach to learning how to write has been well documented in the literature, there has been relatively little in-depth analysis of how blogging, as a technological application, can contribute to the shift to the process approach.

In this study, students were asked to write blogs on which their peers would later comment. In the first session of making comments, the students were not confident; most remarks were appreciative, and comments related to corrections were primarily based on grammar, spelling and vocabulary rules. This was to be expected since those are the areas that their teachers often check, which is product-based. However, the blog had exposed them to a larger audience. The learners' work was assessed by many people and received different responses. The first experience of commenting gave them a clue to the terms that could be used to comment on their peers' work and confidence in constructing their sentences to make comments for their peers.

In the second session, students seemed more confident and sought more details about their peers' work, such as clarity, examples, and detailed conclusions of the context of the blog. Corrections were mainly made based on sentence clarity and their phrasing method. The blog contributed to a gradual improvement in the learners' confidence. The audience showed appreciation, which motivated them to write better blogs through the use of congratulatory remarks. Therefore, students felt that they were writing to real audiences and they were enthusiastic, unlike when they presented their work to the teacher alone.

The audience also gave the learners the responsibility to explore more because of their different quest for information. Through remarks that requested more clarification, examples, and application of their blogs, the learners were exposed to the deeper tasks. Despite the mistakes they had made, their self-esteem was not negatively affected. Comments just encouraged them and challenged them to seek further answers, thus enhancing their desire to satisfy their audience.

During the third session of comment making on blogs, learners' comments enquired about the information's application and the main idea discussed in the blog. The blog led learners to include broad content, and therefore there was more learning of L2. The blog also established a suitable medium for sharing knowledge and experience, a platform to compare their work with that of their peers, learn other people's ideas, and identify different forms of expression.

The study has contributed to the knowledge by showing how the use of blogs in teaching L2 writing can improve learning. This study has shown that the implementation of blogs led to a shift from a product-based approach that concentrated on only one area of learning – namely grammar, vocabulary and style – to a process-based approach. Blogging transformed the learners' focus to emphasise the text's function and understanding of the text as a work in progress. Without knowledge, peer commenting on blogs shifted L2 learning from a product-based approach to a process-based approach by requiring them to plan, generate ideas, make drafts, re-read, edit and revise their content, as the process is characterised by Al-Mahrooqi and Denman (2014).

This research showed how the language used in commenting on a learner's blog had a significant impact. It determined their chances of improvement in their motivation and self-esteem. The exposure to different types of thinking helped them to identify the different individualities, thus challenging them to plan and phrase their work to cover a wide range of audiences. This study did not imply that paying attention to spelling and grammar while writing is unnecessary but confirmed that both approaches are important and should perhaps be used in combination when teaching writing skills, which will eventually help to improve the students' writing.

7.4 Implications and recommendations

The current study has identified several implications based on the above-mentioned contributions to EFL learning practice and Omani L2 teaching practice. This study recommends using blogs in the EFL classroom in Oman; however, it is advised to consider the drawbacks resulting from the Omani classroom culture and the broader social consequences of using blogs (see section 5.5.4). The learners' attitudes towards and perspectives on the experience are also crucial, as understanding them will shape the recommendations for using blogs in the Omani EFL classrooms. The argument being made is that although blogging changes practice, regardless of the cultural context, teachers need to be aware that it is not simply a shift from one medium to another but that the pedagogy and classroom culture might also change. It is recommended that teachers consider their roles within writing classes using technology and how to position themselves within these classes due to these likely cultural changes.

Furthermore, it is recommended that teachers carefully plan the syllabus, its objectives, the outcomes expected from each unit, the challenges that might be faced during the application of blogging, and how they could be overcome. In addition, they need to think about the specific steps of the lesson plans and when blogging will be used, and design a descriptive outline of the entire syllabus that will include where, when and how blogging will be applied. Understanding the previous perspectives in advance will help teachers to gain an overview of the whole journey ahead and thus be prepared for a greater set of changes on a range of different levels than they had anticipated.

For some students, blogging could be a new experience. They might not be ready to start posting their ideas and discussing them with other audiences. Consequently, it is recommended that students undergo a process called familiarisation (Hyland, 1993). In this process, students could be introduced smoothly to blogging and supported step by step, bearing in mind that some might be being introduced to blogging for the first time. It is not enough to simply explain this medium in general, and it may be better to show them different examples of a weblog and ask them to compare different types of weblogs. Students could be given specialised workshops in which they would be introduced to the world of

blogging in stages and learn about its different features, for example, how to register, how to create their own blog within a class blog, how to post and edit a blog post, what commenting means and how to do it, and which language they should use. Careful planning will give students an insight into the use of blogs and motivate them to use blogging. They may even have their own ideas about how to make the best use of the affordances it offers. It is this handover of ownership of the learning that is typical of the data reported here. Using blogging in teaching is, for anyone, an extreme shift from familiar practice in which preparing students, not only at the pedagogical level but also at the psychological level, is crucial.

In several EFL contexts worldwide, the teaching of writing focuses on writing sentences about the newly taught vocabulary to ensure that learners have learned these words and their meaning. However, when learners face authentic writing tasks such as writing a letter or a description of their aims and goals to study in a college or university, they cannot write or express themselves in words (De Oliveira & Silva 2013; Hinkel, 2013). The reason for this is that students were not taught to produce written texts based on authentic purposes, and they were not given the appropriate guidance and proper assistance while writing (Al-Gharabally, 2015).

This study recommends teaching L2 writing in a way that is different from sentence-based instruction and is a way of communicating ideas and perspectives to the reader. Teaching writing is about creating authentic classroom tasks to encourage the learners to write to achieve communicative goals. The aspect that distinguishes the learning of writing skills from the learning of other skills is that the learners depend on their knowledge of life, the world and their first and second languages to create the written text (Cotos, 2014). In contrast, in learning reading and listening, they use their comprehension knowledge to comprehend the text; in this case, teaching learners how to write in L2 requires creating situations to use their knowledge and points of view and articulating them in the correct language. Most important is defining writing in L2 not only as a linear sequence of steps but, also as a process of knowledge transformation. There is a genuine need to teach EFL in Oman to enable the learners to use English in authentic and day-to-day life situations. The Omani government believes that all students should learn English. There is a need for

communicatively teaching EFL and enabling the students to learn English for real-life situations and purposes (The English Language Curriculum Section, 2010). This requires action and change in the teaching methods adopted in the classrooms.

Students' privacy is one of the aspects that needs a detailed plan before the application of blogs and any educational tool within the teaching system of educational institutions. To overcome any embarrassment, lack of confidence, or breach of the students' privacy, it is recommended that instructors keep the students' identities private and maintain the accessibility of the educational tool. One practical solution is to create a private blog that selected students can access and participate in using a username and a password. In addition, they should be shown how to maintain the security settings in their blog. Once the students are ready for their work to be published for the outside world to read, this feature can be disabled, allowing anyone to read their work and comment.

7.5 Suggestions for future studies

This study presents promising results and recommendations and provides suggestions for future studies that will be an informed addition to the literature. The participants in this study were females in their foundation year who were highly skilled in dealing with technology and had fluent English language proficiency. Therefore, future research could include male participants with no prior technical expertise and a lower level of English language proficiency to investigate the extent of the influence of these factors on the blogging experience.

This study has only explored learners in the same age group with similar reasons for learning L2 writing. Further studies need to be conducted to gain an understanding of how blogging can be effective in a class with learners in a different age group. How would the age difference contribute to comments given by learners? Additionally, how would the reason for learning L2 writing affect blogging? In this study, it has been shown that in each session, the comments led the learner to explore more and more about their blog topic to learn more. How effective would this be in a class with students who have different reasons for learning L2? For example, one who is learning for career purposes, such as being a writer, who wants to know how to write instructions and respond to information documented in L2.

This study has obtained promising results and provided recommendations in the field of teaching/learning L2. However, the participants in this research were of one gender: women. Further studies need to be conducted to determine whether blogging would be equally effective in mixed-gender groups. The reason for this is that the Omani culture is conservative and might affect the comment making sessions in a classroom setup with male and female students. There is a need for research to be conducted to identify how this would affect the student–student relationships and the freedom to comment and ask questions and make recommendations in this situation.

Similarly, the teacher–student relationship will need to be researched while using blogs in a mixed-gender class. How would the Omani culture affect the classroom culture in terms of language use, freedom, and the relationship of a student and a teacher of the opposite sex?

Previous studies have suggested that when designing a weblog, all the affordances it offers should be used, which would help to maximise the benefits of blogging. This might include a commenting section, a YouTube and image insert section, and adding a link to the tool to modify the spelling and indicate grammatical mistakes. However, another finding of this study is that the use of the spelling and grammar service provided with the blog was sometimes viewed as a drawback. Some of the participants preferred to go through their work and modify it themselves, as they believed that this type of careful attention would improve their English proficiency in general, whereas using the grammar and spelling service may have a negative influence. Therefore, it is suggested that a future study should include two groups, a control group and an experimental group, and the English language proficiency of the two groups should be similar. Both groups would be taught by using blogging; the first group would be offered the grammar and spelling service, and the second group would work without this service and would have to modify their work themselves. The researcher could then compare the work of the two groups to determine the impact of this service on the students' writing proficiency. The reliance on the grammar and spelling service might reduce the accuracy but increase the quality of the content, whereas the absence of this service might increase the accuracy but reduce the quality.

This study was conducted for only three months, and it was a new experience for the participants. This could be the reason for their positive attitude towards most of the study elements, as they may have been experiencing a novelty effect. Longitudinal studies conducted over multiple semesters might reveal whether attitudes change as the novelty wears off. The role of blogging in supporting reading might also offer possibilities for future research. It could compare the effects on writing and reading skills to determine whether the students' perspectives would be different or the same and whether they would face similar challenges. It could also explore how the challenges of a focus on reading may affect the learning environment and the student–student and student–teacher relationships, as well as whether the emphasis on supporting reading skills through blogs requires a different process and planning by the teacher.

One of the unexpected findings in this study was the change in the teacher's identity. The change in the student–teacher relationship in this study could affect the teacher's identity in an ESL/EFL class, and this can be linked to the pedagogy that employs blogging as a teaching method. However, it cannot be assumed that this type of change occurs in every teaching culture applying this method. Therefore, a further study is needed to examine this aspect to determine whether the teacher's identity can be changed due to the application of technology and the reasons for this type of change. This could be done by conducting a qualitative study in which the teacher and the students could be interviewed and observed prior to and after the application of blogging.

7.6 Limitations of the Study

Regardless of how much a researcher plans and attempts to anticipate any difficulties that may negatively influence the research, drawbacks can occur at any stage. Certain limitations, such as time constraints, characteristics of the research sample, and challenges inherent in the research design, can affect any data collection procedure. In this study, several limitations affected the data collection procedure. First, some students lacked the technological expertise to grasp the workings of the blog website and deal with simple tasks such as writing an email and completing the registration process. This led to a delay in the time it took to publish blog posts, especially the first one. In addition, there was a time constraint in that students had only one hour per week in the computer lab to

write their posts. This was due to the students' busy schedule; in some cases, especially at the beginning, it was necessary to postpone explanations of some of the blogging features to the following week. Furthermore, the selected class included only female students; consequently, the findings may not accurately represent the experiences of male Omani students in the Omani educational system.

7.7 Reflection

The completion of my PhD studies has opened the door for me to examine the Omani educational system and present my work offering an additional insight that could affect the teaching and learning of the English language in Oman and at an international level. This exciting journey has influenced and changed my views on several dimensions, my understanding as a researcher, and my understanding as a practitioner and on an academic level as a PhD student. All these changes have formed and affected my personality in general and transformed my understanding of the value of research specifically.

In the beginning, as an English teacher, I realised that I had a passion for teaching writing skills and had implemented several techniques and conducted various workshops explaining how to teach writing skills effectively. However, I noticed that for most Omani students, and even on a global level where English is taught as ESL or as EFL, the writing skill is considered the most difficult skill to be taught and learned. Furthermore, there was a lack of enjoyment in relation to the teaching techniques that were used to teach the writing skill. With this in mind, I believed that EFL/ESL students should be taught using a new medium that might encourage them to continue learning and improving their writing performance. Reading the literature led me to choose the main concept of my research, which is blogging. My main concern as a researcher was to examine the impact of a new medium and educational technology, which was proven to be effective. Initially, I was planning to examine the students'/teachers' perspectives on how to apply this technology and whether they believed this medium would be effective in teaching/learning the writing skill. However, the literature and my experience as a teacher led me to reflect on other aspects that had not been examined, namely the impact of blogging on student–teacher relationships. Few studies have focused on the dynamic relationships that

change within the classroom environment and their effects on the learning and teaching process. Another aspect was the role of the students' L1 in learning the writing skill and determining which language they preferred to use to talk about their own writing choices and why.

Moreover, as an English teacher, I was aware that I was the only audience for the students' work; I read their work, commented on it, and asked them to modify it. Since blogging is based on group work where the students work together, reading and commenting on each other's work, I decided to explore the impact of this wider audience on the students' writing improvement. Furthermore, few previous studies have focused on the role of the teacher in integrating blogging as part of their teaching system. Being a teacher for several years has made me aware that employing any new teaching technique requires in-depth thinking and planning by the teacher. Therefore, I wanted to explore this, especially if the teacher was using this technology for the first time with students, and to gain an understanding of the challenges they faced during the application of blogging.

On an academic level, attending several workshops, seminars and conferences and undertaking my MSc modules and completing their assignments created and shaped my personality as a future researcher. I have always been an open-minded human being. I have enjoyed reading since I was young. I have often had a critical view of the educational context in Oman and sought a way to highlight and understand the most critical issues in teaching English. Studying in the United Kingdom has helped me to find myself as a researcher and identify the appropriate strategies that I could use to explore any educational issue. This led me to adopt the interpretivist approach since it suits my beliefs as a researcher.

My professional understanding as a practitioner has also developed; being a postgraduate student at the University of Exeter has given me an excellent opportunity to meet many researchers who share my passion. Moreover, by attending their talks and exploring their ideas about their research, I have benefited from listening to them to enlighten my thoughts and ideas about the type of researcher I want to be in the future. During this journey, I have acquired various techniques and skills, for instance, several communication techniques, thinking outside the box and in a critical way, continually asking questions, and

respecting others' points of view and trying to comment on them positively, that will shape my personality as a future instructor.

7.8 Conclusion

This research has sought to examine the extent to which new technology can enhance EFL writing in the Omani context. The study used blogs in a class of L2 learners where they were required to post three different posts and make comments on their peers' blogs. This research had several objectives, the first of which was to gain an understanding of the relationship between the students' audience and their blog writing in English. The second objective was to determine the impact of the blogs on students' attention to text and their attention to the act of writing. An additional objective was to ascertain the role of the first language and the target language. The final objective was to identify the drawbacks of the use of blogs from the perspectives of Omani EFL students and their teacher and determine the role of blogs in the classroom culture.

This study has contributed to improving teaching L2 writing through the use of peer comments in blogs. In previous studies, comments have not been successful since learners were not guided on how to approach the whole commenting process. Participants in previous research felt embarrassed, lacked confidence, and did not know how to construct comments. In an attempt to find a solution to this, this study has introduced a scaffolding method for comment making. After using the first feedback sheet that included incomplete sentences to guide the learners, I noticed that the learners learnt the language used to make comments and gradually improved in each session. They also understood the role of comments and changed their previous perception that comment making criticised their work. Therefore, this study has contributed to the knowledge by identifying a method that can improve comments to obtain positive results from them when used in blogs used to teach L2 writers.

Other studies have selected research participants without considering their cognitive differences. This research has helped to improve the methodologies and findings in blog usage in teaching L2 writers. The study has found that freedom of choice in the language used to make comments is vital. It has helped learners to discover which method suits language transfer to achieve the best results in learning L2 writing. The role of the first language and how it

can be used to facilitate learning how to write a second language has been appreciated.

This research has significantly helped to change the classroom culture. It has helped to identify that learning can be more effective if it is taken as a social agenda. This has been made possible by a change in the learning relationship between learners and the EFL teacher. The learning atmosphere has been made less hierarchical in blogging by changing the teacher's role to become a facilitator in learning and not simply an authoritative figure who tells the learner what to learn. Learners have been able to see each other as learning friends rather than as competitors. Their beliefs and attitudes in criticising each other's work have been embraced constructively, unlike before, changing the learning environment to a more harmonious one, thus promoting learning.

This study has illustrated that the process-based approach works better than the product-based approach used in previous studies by EFL teachers. It has shown that L2 acquisition goes beyond just the grammatical, syntax and vocabulary concepts. This study has shown that by using comments, learners can learn more by being exposed to a larger audience and being inspired to find solutions by themselves. The previous method used was that of the teacher giving the learner information and testing their comprehension of the writing skills by checking their grammar and vocabulary. This study has shown that a learner needs to conduct research, plan their ideas for good phrasing, explain themselves appropriately in writing, criticise their work, and revise it. This exposes them to challenges that enable them, while solving these challenges, to acquire knowledge and enhance their L2 writing skills.

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Appendix (A)

Students' questionnaire

SECTION I – GENERAL INFORMATION

First name:

Surname:

Q. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

Q. What is your age?

- 17 years old
- 18 years old
- 19 years old
- 20 years old

Q. Please state your academic specialisation/current major: -
_____ (E.g. A-Level History)

SECTION II – ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Q. Do you have a formal qualification in English language?

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes, please state the qualification you achieved:

Q. How would you describe your level of proficiency in spoken English:

- Fluent/Native Level
- Advanced

- Intermediate
- Beginner

Q. How would you describe your level of proficiency in written English:

- Fluent/Native Level
- Advanced
- Intermediate
- Beginner

Q. How would you describe your level of proficiency in aural English (i.e. listening to English):

- Fluent/Native Level
- Advanced
- Intermediate
- Beginner

Q. How often do you speak English:

- Every day
- 3-5 times per week
- Once per week
- Less than once per week

Q. How often do you write or read in English:

- Every day
- 3-5 times per week
- Once per week
- Less than once per week

Q. In what circumstances are you most likely to speak English

- At home with family
 - Socially with friends/on social media
 - At college/school
 - I speak English in all of these situations equally
 - Other (please explain)
-

Q. Overall, how would you describe your proficiency with the English language:

- Fluent/Native Level
- Advanced
- Intermediate

- Beginner

SECTION III – CONFIDENCE IN DEALING WITH TECHNOLOGY

GENERAL

Q. How important do you consider technology (computers, smartphones, the internet etc.) to be in your everyday life:

- Very important
- Fairly important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

Q. How important do you consider technology to be for your education / college work

- Very important
- Fairly important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

TECHNOLOGICAL DEVICES

Q. Which of the following technological devices do you currently own\have (tick all that apply):

- Desktop computer
- Laptop computer
- Smartphone

Q. Which of these devices do you use most often (tick one only):

- Desktop computer
- Laptop computer
- Smartphone

Q. How often do you use your chosen device:

- Every day
- 3-5 times per week
- Once per week
- Less than once per week

Q. Which of these devices do you use to access the internet (tick all that apply):

- Desktop computer
- Laptop computer
- Smartphone

Q. Which device are you most likely to use to access the internet (tick only one):

- Desktop computer
- Laptop computer
- Smartphone

Q. How important do you consider your technological devices to be in your everyday life:

- Very important
- Fairly important

- Slightly important
- Not at all important

Q. How important do you consider your technological devices to be for your education / college work

- Very important
- Fairly important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

Q. Overall, how would you describe your confidence in dealing with technological devices:

- Excellent
- Good
- intermediate
- Beginner

INTERNET USAGE

Q. How often do you use the internet:

- Every day
- 3-5 times per week
- Once per week
- Less than once per week

Q. In what settings do you access the internet (tick all that apply):

- At college/school
- At home
- Via mobile internet (3G/4G)

Q. How often do you use the internet for the following activities (place a tick in the relevant box):

	Every day	3-5 times per week	Once per week	Less than once per week
Emails				
Information/News				
Online Shopping / Auctions				
Work / Business / Studies				
Games				
Social media / Chatting				
Blogging / Online communities				

If you use the internet for any activities not listed in the table above, please state them in the box below, including the frequency of use:

Q. How important do you consider the internet to be in your everyday life:

- Very important
- Fairly important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

Please explain why in the box below:

Q. How important do you consider the internet to be for your education / college work:

- Very important
- Fairly important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

Please explain why in the box below:

Q. Overall, how would you describe your confidence in surfing the internet:

- Excellent
- Good
- intermediate
- Beginner

BLOGS

Q. Have you ever read an online blog:

- Yes
- No

Q. If yes, for what reason did you read that blog (tick all that apply):

- College work / education
- Information / news
- Leisure / entertainemnt

Q. If no, why do you think you have never read a blog (e.g. I had no reason to, I don't know what blogs are)? Please write your answer in the box below and give as much information as possible.

Q. How often do you read / access blogs (for any purpose):

- Every day
- 3-5 times per week
- Once per week
- Less than once per week

Q. Have you ever written your own blog or contributed to one:

- Yes
- No

Q. If yes, please explain in the box below. Include as much detail as possible, including the type of blog, the setting in which you used the blog (e.g. home or school), why you used the blog, etc.

Q. Have you ever been required to use a blog for college or school work by your tutor?

- Yes
- No

Q. If yes, please explain in the box below. Include as much detail as possible, including the type of blog, the setting in which you used the blog (e.g. home or school), why you used the blog, etc.

Q. Please describe any other instances where you have used blogs or blogging, for any reason not stated above in the box below:

Q. How important do you consider blogs and blogging to be in your everyday life?

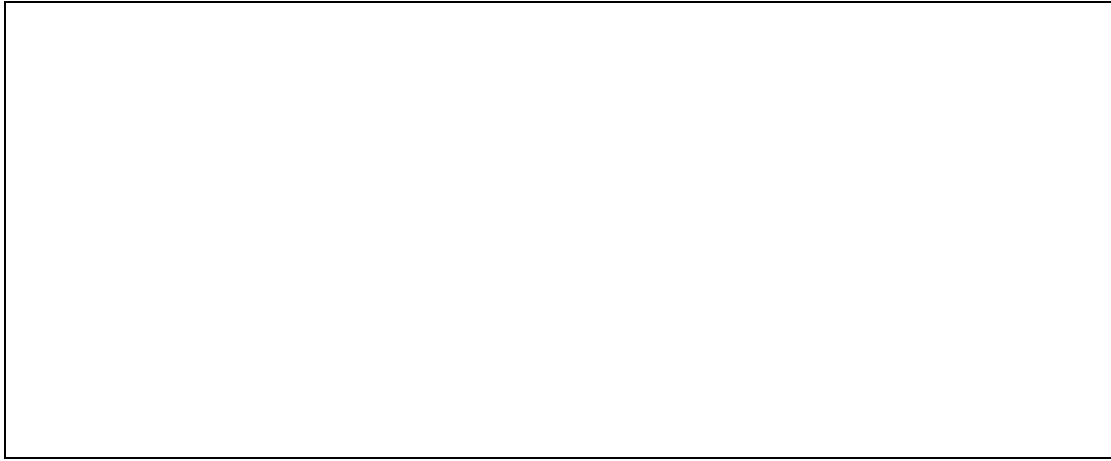
- Very important
- Fairly important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

Please explain why in the box below:

Q. How important do you consider blogs and blogging to be for your education / college work:

- Very important
- Fairly important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

Please explain why in the box below:



Q. Overall, how would you describe your confidence in dealing with blogging:

- Excellent
- Good
- intermediate
- Beginner

The END

Appendix (B)
Students' questionnaire
(Modified)

SECTION I – GENERAL INFORMATION

- First name:
- Family name:
- User name:
- Blog title:

Q. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

Q. What is your age?

- 17 years old
- 18 years old
- 19 years old
- 20 years old

Q. What is your general area of study? _____

Q. Please state your academic specialisation /current major: -
_____ (E.g. A-Level History)

Q. Your blog's username _____

Q. Your blog's title _____

SECTION II – ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Q. Do you have a formal qualification in English language?

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes, please state the qualification you achieved:

Q. How would you describe your level of proficiency in spoken English:

- Fluent/Native Level
- Advanced
- Intermediate
- Beginner

Q. How would you describe your level of proficiency in written English:

- Fluent/Native Level
- Advanced
- Intermediate
- Beginner

Q. How would you describe your level of proficiency in aural English (i.e. listening to English):

- Fluent/Native Level
- Advanced
- Intermediate
- Beginner

Q. How often do you speak English:

- Every day
- 3-5 times per week
- Once per week
- Less than once per week

Q. How often do you write or read in English:

- Every day
- 3-5 times per week
- Once per week
- Less than once per week

Q. In what circumstances \ cases are you most likely to speak English

- At home with family
 - Socially with friends/on social media
 - At college/school
 - I speak English in all of these situations equally
 - Other (please explain)
-

Q. Overall, how would you describe your proficiency \ skill with the English language:

- Fluent/Native Level
- Advanced
- Intermediate
- Basic
- Very low

SECTION III – CONFIDENCE IN DEALING WITH TECHNOLOGY
GENERAL

Q. How important do you consider technology (computers, smartphones, the internet etc.) to be in your everyday life:

- Very important
- Fairly important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

Q. How important do you consider technology to be for your education / college work

- Very important
- Fairly important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

TECHNOLOGICAL DEVICES

Q. Which of the following technological devices do you currently own (tick all that apply):

- Desktop computer
- Laptop computer
- Smartphone

Q. Which of these devices do you use most often (tick one only):

- Desktop computer
- Laptop computer
- Smartphone

Q. How often do you use your chosen device:

- Every day
- 3-5 times per week
- Once per week
- Less than once per week

Q. Which of these devices do you use to access the internet (tick all that apply):

- Desktop computer
- Laptop computer
- Smartphone

Q. Which device are you most likely to use to access the internet (tick only one):

- Desktop computer
- Laptop computer
- Smartphone

Q. How important do you consider your technological devices to be in your everyday life:

- Very important
- Fairly important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

Q. How important do you consider your technological devices to be for your education / college work

- Very important
- Fairly important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

Q. Overall, how would you describe your confidence in dealing with technological devices:

- Excellent
- Good
- intermediate
- Beginner

INTERNET USAGE

Q. How often do you use the internet:

- Every day
- 3-5 times per week
- Once per week
- Less than once per week

Q. In what settings do you access the internet (tick all that apply):

- At college/school
- At home
- Via mobile internet (3G/4G)

Q. How often do you use the internet for the following activities (place a tick in the relevant box):

	Every day	3-5 times per week	Once per week	Less than once per week
Emails				
Information/News				
Online Shopping / Auctions				
Work / Business / Studies				
Games				
Social media / Chatting				
Blogging / Online communities				

If you use the internet for any activities not listed in the table above, please state them in the box below, including the frequency of use:

Q. How important do you consider the internet to be in your everyday life:

- Very important
- Fairly important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

Please explain why in the box below:

Q. How important do you consider the internet to be for your education / college work:

- Very important
- Fairly important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

Please explain why in the box below:

Q. Overall, how would you describe your confidence in surfing with internet:

- Excellent
- Good
- intermediate
- Beginner

BLOGS

Q Have you ever read an online blog:

- Yes
- No

Q. If yes, for what reason did you read that blog (tick all that apply):

- College work / education
- Information / new Leisure / entertainment

Q. If no, why do you think you have never read a blog (e.g. I had no reason to, I don't know what blogs are)? Please write your answer in the box below and give as much information as possible.

Q. How often do you read / access blogs (for any purpose):

- Every day
- 3-5 times per week
- Once per week
- Less than once per week

Q. Have you ever written you're a post in a blog or contributed in writing a one:

- Yes
- No

Q. If yes, please explain in the box below. Include as much detail as possible, including the type of blog, the setting in which you used the blog (e.g. home or school), why you used the blog, etc.

Q. Have you ever been required to use a blog for college or school work by your tutor?

- Yes
- No

Q. If yes, please explain in the box below. Include as much detail as possible, including the type of blog, the setting in which you used the blog (e.g. home or school), why you used the blog, etc.

Q. Please describe any other instances where you have used blogs or blogging, for any reason not stated above in the box below:

Q. Overall, how important do you consider blogs and blogging to be in your everyday life?

- Very important
- Fairly important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

Please explain why in the box below:

Q. How important do you consider blogs and blogging to be for your education / college work:

- Very important
- Fairly important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

Please explain why in the box below:

. Overall, how would you describe your confidence in dealing with blogging:

- Excellent
- Good
- intermediate
- Beginner

The END

Appendix (C)

Feedback form

I've invited you to fill out a form

We would love to hear your thoughts or feedback on how we can improve your experience!

1. Your Name
2. Your Email .
3. Have you found website interactive and user friendly?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
4. Your opinion about colour scheme?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Good
 - c. Satisfactory
 - d. Poor
5. Is website well organised?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
6. Are relevant tutorials available?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
7. Have tutorials helped you for registering blog?
 - a. Very helpful
 - b. Fine
 - c. Not helpful
8. Have tutorials helped you for creating blog?
 - a. Very Helpful
 - b. Fine
 - c. Not Helpful
9. Have tutorials helped you for customizing blog?
 - a. Very Helpful
 - b. Fine
 - c. Not Helpful
10. Can you comment on your friend's blog?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

11. Was the registration process
 - a. Easy
 - b. Difficult
 - c. Need to be adjusted

12. How did you find the grammar and spelling checker's link
 - a. Helpful
 - b. Fine
 - c. Not helpful

13. What other options would you like to have within your blog?

Your overall comments on
website and Suggestions for improvement

Appendix (D)

Student and teacher's interviews

The Students' Interview:

1. Has using blogs in L2 writing added to your learning experience in English as a foreign language?
If the answer is yes, can you give us some examples.
If the answer is no, can you explain why is that?
2. Has using blogs in L2 writing affected your collaboration with the teacher and your colleagues?
If the answer is yes, could you explain by giving few examples?
If the answer is no, could you explain why?
3. What are the benefits of using blogs as a part of pedagogy in L2 writing?
4. Are there any potential disadvantages?
5. Does using blogs as a part of L2 pedagogy affect the student-student relationships and the teacher-student relationship? How?

The Teachers' Interview:

1. Has using blogs in teaching L2 writing added something more than the traditional method of teaching L2? How is that?
2. Has applying blogs as a pedagogical way affected your collaboration with the students in the Omani EFL context? How is that?
3. As a teacher, how can you integrate blogs as part of the pedagogy in L2 writing?
4. Can you describe using blogs in L2 writing pedagogy as beneficial? What are the benefits?
5. Are there any potential disadvantages? If yes, what are they?
6. Does using blogs in L2 writing pedagogy affect the student-student relationships and the teacher-student relationship? How is that?

Appendix (E)

Student and teacher's interviews

(Modified)

The Students' Interview

1. How did you do with blog, did you like it, why, give us example?
2. How do you feel after posting your essay?
3. Did you like using blogs? why?
4. What is your blog about? Give me an example
5. How is writing a blog is different from other experiences in writing in the classroom? Give me examples
6. How was your relationship with your friends at the beginning of the year?
7. Do you think that your relationship with your friends has changed? In what way? Why is that?
8. How was your relationship with your teacher? Do you think that over the year, it has changed? In what way? Why is that?
9. Pick out a blog of L2 writing which you think is a good writing
 - a. Why do you think it is a good one?
10. Did blogging help you to do so?
11. Pick up an example which you think is needed to be improved?
 - a. What would you do now to make it better writing?
 - b. Why did it work or not... giving examples
12. Did you read your friends work? Did you leave comments on their posts?
13. What kind of comments do you usually like to post on their work?
14. Did you check your peers edited work? Did they use your comment in editing their work?
15. How do you feel about that?
16. Did your peers comment on your blogs? What kind of comments do you usually receive?
17. Did you use their comments on editing your main work? How do you feel about receiving and posting comments on your peers' work?
18. Do you think it's a useful task which help to improve your writing? How is that?
19. Before using blogging, whom did you write to, or who was reading your work and commenting on it?
20. How about using blogging, do you feel that you are writing for someone else? Whom? Does this change the way you deal with your writing?
21. How do you describe the differences between both situations?
22. How is writing a blog is different from writing in any L2 experience \setting? How it helps with the writing in any L2?
23. Which language did use when writing the comment? Why?
24. Did you receive comments from your teacher? Do you think that they were useful ones? How is that?

25. Do you remember one of your teacher's comments which you really like the most or not? What is it? Why do you like it or not?
26. Are there any negative sides in using blogging to teach writing skills?

Teacher's interview

Question 1 & 2: Warm-up questions (not for data collection)

1. Can you tell me about your teaching qualifications?
2. How long have you been teaching English as a foreign language?
3. Did you use any kind of technology within your teaching? What are they?
4. Have you ever used blogging within your teaching? If the answer is yes, can you give me any examples?
5. As a teacher, how can you integrate blogs as part of the pedagogy in L2 writing?
6. Has using blogs in teaching L2 writing added something more than your normal way of teaching L2? (TRADITIONAL WAY) How is that?
7. In term of teaching what will you do differently?
8. If you design a new lesson with blog now, what might you do differently?
9. 9. From integrating blogging to your teaching did you hope that did you hope that your students will learn from blogging? What you think your students get out of it?
10. Has the use of blogging within your teaching changed the class atmosphere? How is that?
11. 11. Did your relationship with the students have changed, in what way? How is that?
12. Do you think that the relationship between the students have changed? in what way?
13. Has applying blogs as a pedagogical way affected your collaboration with the students in the Omani EFL context? How is that?
14. Can you describe using blogs in L2 writing pedagogy as beneficial? What are the benefits?
15. Are there any potential disadvantages? If yes, what are they?

Appendix (F)

Field note form

1. Date	
2. Time	
3. Place of Observation	
4. Number of Observation	
5. Duration	
6. Number of Observers	
7. Planned Agenda	
8. Student' place	
9. Lesson flow	
10. Overview	
11. Raw Notes	

12. Analytical Comments	

Appendix (G)
(Students' form)

Blogs in Language Learning; Enhancing Students' Writing Through Blogs

Details of Project

My name is Laila Almas AL_balushi. I am a PhD student at the university of Exeter and doing a non-commercial project on the use of blogging to teach and enhance students' writing skills. During this study, your English teacher will participate by doing the following. First, she will introduce a class blog in her teaching. Second, she will ask you and your fellow students to post their essays on the blog. Third, she will provide you all with feedback on the blog. In these lessons, you will be asked to do several tasks; to participate in a class blog (First, you will create your own page on the class blog and then you will have to post three essays on your page, provide each other with constructive feedback and edit your original essays based on the received feedback from your peers and your teacher). Some of you and their teacher will also be interviewed and everyone will be observed twice by the researcher. To establish the aims of the project, a mini conference will be held, including you and your teacher to present the following issues; the purpose of the present study, its major themes, the process of it is research and the participants' role. The whole research will be conducted on a voluntary basis and thus permission and consents will be provided and documented. As participants, you will take part in lessons as normal but taking part in the interviews is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any point. This study is estimated to last for about three months. The results of the study are expected to become a starting point for further in-depth insights into the issue in question as well as a relevant background for comparison and contrasting of the EFL teaching experience in non-English worldwide community. Hence, the present study has both empirical and theoretical significance. By helping through your participation you will be contributing to our understanding of how best to support students in becoming better writers.

Contact Details

For further information about the research /your data, please contact:

Name: Laila AL_Balushi

Postal address: 3 The Hayes apartment, Cardiff, CF10 1AQ

Telephone: 00447491616321

Email: La319@exeter.ac.uk

If you have concerns/questions about the research you would like to discuss with someone else at the University, please contact: Dr. Judith , J.Kleine-Staarman@exeter.ac.uk

Confidentiality

Interview tapes and transcripts, the data of the questionnaire and the class blog will be held in confidence. They will not be used other than for the purposes described. The third party who might have an access to your data and for the data analysis purposes will be my supervisor. However, if you request it, you will be supplied with a copy of your data, so that you can comment on and edit it as you see fit (please give your email below so that I am able to contact you at a later date). Your data will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Data Protection Notice

The information you provide will be used for research purposes and your personal data will be processed in accordance with current data protection legislation and the University's notification lodged at the Information Commissioner's Office. Your information data will be kept for a year and it will be stored in the researcher personal laptop, in a special file locked with a code known only by the researcher. Your personal data will be treated in the strictest confidence and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties. The results of the research will be published in anonymised form."

Anonymity

Your data will be held and used on an anonymous basis, with no mention of your name, but we will refer to the group of which you are a member.

Consent

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.
I understand that

- There is no compulsion for me as an interviewee to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may withdraw at any stage;
- My blog data will be used to support and add more clarifications to the answers of the research questions;
- I have the right to refuse permission for the use of my blog data;
- I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me;

- Any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications or academic conference or seminar presentations;
- All information I give will be treated as confidential;
- The researcher will make every effort to preserve my anonymity.

.....
 (Signature of participant)

(Date)

.....
 (Printed name of participant)

(Email address of participant if they have requested to view a copy of the interview transcript.)

.....
 (Signature of researcher)

(Printed name of researcher)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s).

Your contact details are kept separately from your interview data.

Appendix (H)
(Teacher's form)

Blogs in Language Learning; Enhancing Students' Writing Through Blogs

Details of Project

My name is Laila AL_balushi. I am a PhD student at the university of Exeter and doing a non-commercial project on the use of blogging to teach and enhance students writing skills. During this study, you will participate by doing the following. First, you will introduce a class blog in your teaching. Second, you will ask your students to post their essays on the blog. Third, you will provide them with feedback on the blog. In these lessons, your students will be asked to do several tasks; to participate in a class blog (First, they will create their own page on the class blog and then they will have to post three essays on their page, provide each other with constructive feedback and edit their original essays based on the received feedback from their peers and their teacher). Some of the students and you as their teacher will also be interviewed and everyone will be observed twice by the researcher. To establish the aims of the project, a mini conference will be held, including you and your students in order to present the following issues; the purpose of the present study, its major themes, the process of its research and the participants' role. As participants you will teach your lessons as normal, but taking part in the interviews is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any point. This study is estimated to last for about three months. The results of the study are expected to become a starting point for further in-depth insights into the issue in question as well as a relevant background for comparison and contrasting of the EFL teaching experience in non-English worldwide community. Hence, the present study has both empirical and theoretical significance. By helping through your participation you will be contributing to our understanding of how best to support students in becoming better writers.

Contact Details

For further information about the research please contact:

Name: Laila AL_balushi

Postal address: 3 The Hayes apartment, Cardiff, CF10 1AQ

Telephone: 00447491616321

Email: La319@exeter.ac.uk

If you have concerns/questions about the research you would like to discuss with someone else at the University, please contact: Dr. Judith , J.Kleine-Staarman@exeter.ac.uk

Confidentiality

Interview tapes and transcripts, the data of the questionnaire and the class blog will be held in confidence. They will not be used other than for the purposes described. The third party who might have an access to your data and for the data analysis purposes will be my supervisor. However, if you request it, you will be supplied with a copy of your data, so that you can comment on and edit it as you see fit (please give your email below so that I am able to contact you at a later date). Your data will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Data Protection Notice

The information you provide will be used for research purposes and your personal data will be processed in accordance with current data protection legislation and the University's notification lodged at the Information Commissioner's Office. Your information data will be kept for a year and it will be stored in the researcher personal laptop, in a special file locked with a code known only by the researcher. Your personal data will be treated in the strictest confidence and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties. The results of the research will be published in anonymised form."

Anonymity

Your data will be held and used on an anonymous basis, with no mention of your name, but we will refer to the group of which you are a member.

Consent

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.

I understand that:

- There is no compulsion for me as an interviewee to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may withdraw at any stage;
- My blog data will be used to support and add more clarifications to the answers of the research questions;
- I have the right to refuse permission the use of my blog data;
- I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me;
- Any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications or academic conference or seminar presentations;
- All information I give will be treated as confidential;
- The researcher will make every effort to preserve my anonymity.

.....
(Signature of participant)

(Date)

.....
(Printed name of participant)

(Email address of participant if they have requested to view a copy of the interview transcript.)

.....
(Signature of researcher)

(Printed name of researcher)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s).

Your contact details are kept separately from your interview data.

Appendix (I)

Feedback Sheet

1. Write down any thoughts, questions, or ideas you had while reading. Write down the way you felt while reading the essay. This essay made me realize_____. This essay reminded me of_____. I hope that the writer explain the following _____ further by supporting his \ her argument with the following example _____.
2. My favourite part was _____ This essay made me wonder about _____. I hope that the writer could modify the previous point.
3. If you were the writer, what would you change? How is this essay like another one you have write? Give suggestions so the writer can enhance his essay.
4. What did the writer do to keep you interested in the essay? What would you recommend him to do to keep interested in reading the essay?
5. I like / dislike this essay because _____.
6. Does the essay leave you with questions you would like to ask? What are they? What are your favourite lines/quotes? Copy them into your comment box and explain why these passages caught your attention.
7. I think the writer is really trying to say _____ I think the part _____ should be changed because firstly, _____ Secondly, _____.
8. I really like \ dislike (this sentence / phrase / or this word) used in the essay because _____.

9. The writer should use the following (word \ sentence) instead of _____ because _____.
10. This part is very important because _____. Another thing is that _____. It can be enhanced if the writer _____.
11. After reading the essay, I wonder _____ . Also, _____ .
12. I love the way _____. I wish that _____. It seems like _____.
13. I'm puzzled over or wonder about _____.
14. I learned something about _____.
15. The writer's words made a picture in my mind _____.
16. Reading about _____ makes me think about _____.
17. I was very touched / angry when I _____. The thing(s) I read about was/were shocking / exciting because _____. The other reason why I think so is that _____.
18. The title of the essay is a perfect match \ should be changed because _____. The other reason why I think so is that _____.

19. _____ is a problem / conflict because first of all, _____. The other reason why I think this way is that _____. That is why I think the previous points should be changed.
20. This passage made me realize _____. This essay reminded me of _____.
21. If I had the chance to talk to the author of this essay, I would ask him/her _____.
22. My favourite part in the text _____.
23. The writer couldn't manage to keep me interested in the essay because _____. The _____ which the author mentioned seems unclear because _____. The overall message of the text is _____.
24. I can relate to the _____ because first of all, _____ and another thing is that _____.
25. I was surprised when I read about _____. This situation reminds me of something that happened in my own life _____.
26. I enjoyed reading about _____.
27. The most important thing that I gained was _____.


Appendix (J)

Students' writing strengths and writing improvements' areas: Sample

Transcripts' key

- The words in **RED** are the **CONTENT**
- The words in **PURPLE** are the **LANGUGAE**
- The words in **BLUE** are the **ORGANISATION**
- The words in brackets and in **BROWN** are the reseracher's analysis\explanation of the **VOICE**
- The words in **GREEN** and in brackets are the reseracher's analysis\description of the **COMMUNICATION ACHIEVEMENT**
- **NOTE:** The three edited posts were related to the same participant: **MNS98**

1. First Edited Post



There **are several** ways to build a good first impression on a new neighbor.

First of all, you should **welcome the new neighbor** by **greeting them warmly**. **Also, use small talk in order to be friendly. Give them a gift for their home and help them** in moving the furniture. Secondly, you should **contact** with them from time to time by **visiting them, inviting them to your home and introducing your other neighbors** to them too. **Thirdly, be polite** by showing them that you have good **manners and respect them**. **Besides, don't ask them personal questions because it may make them embarrassed. Fourthly, make strong relationship** through asking about them and **take care of them. Let your children play with their children. Moreover, do some activities together.**

In short, if you follow these **tips, you can get a good** first impression on your new neighbor.

[The participant is trying to make a connection between the topic and the reader, but still her voice wasn't obvious yet. She was only offering tips without further examples and explanation from her own experience, as an example]

[Communication achievement: **There is a good fluency within this post, most of the sentences were will written and understood**]

Given grade of each writing criteria of the 1st edited post

Comment [Office1]:	Language
Comment [Office2]:	Content
Comment [Office3]:	Language
Comment [Office4]:	Language
Comment [Office5]:	Organisation
Comment [Office6]:	Language
Comment [Office7]:	Content
Comment [Office8]:	Language
Comment [Office9]:	Content
Comment [Office10]:	Content
Comment [Office11]:	Language
Comment [Office12]:	Content
Comment [Office13]:	Content
Comment [Office14]:	Content
Comment [Office15]:	Content
Comment [Office16]:	Language
Comment [Office17]:	Content
Comment [Office18]:	Organisation
Comment [Office19]:	Content
Comment [Office20]:	Language
Comment [Office21]:	Content
Comment [Office22]:	
Comment [Office23R22]:	Language
Comment [Office24]:	Content
Comment [Office25]:	Content
Comment [Office26]:	Language
Comment [Office27]:	Content
Comment [Office28]:	Content
Comment [Office29]:	Organisation
Comment [Office30]:	Organisation
Comment [Office31]:	Content
Comment [Office32]:	Organisation
Comment [Office33]:	Language

MNS98	Writing criteria	Grade
1.	Content	2
2.	Language	2
3.	Organisation	3
4.	Voice	1
5.	Communication achievement	3

2. Second Edited Post

Does advertising help or harm?! (Edited version)



k25228425 fotosearch.com ©

As everyone else I love watching T.V, and as others too I hate commercial! In fact, I believe that those ads are not more than time and money wasting. Just to avoid those commercials I might clean the room, walk around, drink a cold drink, or even fight with my sisters.

To begin with, the way that those commercials interrupt my T.V programs is driving me crazy. For example, once I was watching new fantastic action movie, at first it was so exciting but when the ads started I just switched off the T.V and I didn't complete the movie.

Moreover, those ads are convincing us to buy things that we don't need. For instance, if you had a perfect amazing phone and you are more than satisfied with it suddenly a new ad appeared showing you an incredible new phone with things you've never dreamed with, so you will just run to waste your money. As it happened to me after I finished high school, my father gave me his phone and it was working perfectly but I wanted a new one and sure I saw it on T.V ad.

Lastly, T.V ads are usually providing false information that really bluffing the consumers. For example, at the ad they show women with weak dry hair and after using a shampoo her hair become silky and strong, but when you buy the shampoo it's just like any other shampoos. You might say that those ads might be beneficial and they may solve some of the economic problems but have we asked ourselves what is the cost?! just think how these commercials ads are destroying our lives, how do they waste our time and money?! Then you may realise what I am talking about.

- Comment [Office1]: Content
- Comment [Office2]: Organisation
- Comment [Office3]: Content
- Comment [Office4]: Language
- Comment [Office5]: Organisation
- Comment [Office6]: Language
- Comment [Office7]: Content
- Comment [Office8]: Language
- Comment [Office9]: Content
- Comment [Office10]: Content
- Comment [Office11]: Content
- Comment [Office12]: Language
- Comment [Office13]: Organisation
- Comment [Office14]: Language
- Comment [Office15]: Language
- Comment [Office16]: Organisation
- Comment [Office17]: Language
- Comment [Office18]: Language
- Comment [Office19]: Content
- Comment [Office20]: Organisation
- Comment [Office21]: Language
- Comment [Office22]: Content
- Comment [Office23]: Organisation
- Comment [Office24]: Language
- Comment [Office25]: Language
- Comment [Office26]: Language
- Comment [Office27]: Language
- Comment [Office28]: Language
- Comment [Office29]: Language
- Comment [Office30]: Language
- Comment [Office31]: Language
- Comment [Office32]: Organisation
- Comment [Office33]: Content
- Comment [Office34]:
- Comment [Office35R34]: Language
- Comment [Office36]: Content
- Comment [Office37]: Language
- Comment [Office38]: Organisation
- Comment [Office39]: Language
- Comment [Office40]: Language
- Comment [Office41]: Language
- Comment [Office42]: Language

[As a reader, we can feel the VOICE of the writer by using the first singular pronoun 'I', first plural pronouns 'WE' and first-person possessive pronouns 'ours'. Trying to 1. Explain her point of view by providing examples from her own experience; 2, Trying to draw a wider picture for the other side of the topic 'advertisement' by involving the reader to take a role and part of the responsibility for the harm that 'advertisement' may cause, not only to read but to think and decide]

[There is a sentence fluency within the post, sentences were well written and understood]

Given grade of each writing criteria of the 2nd edited post

MNS98	Writing criteria	Grade
1.	Content	3
2.	Language	2
3.	Organisation	3
4.	Voice	3
5.	Communication achievement	3

3. Third Edited Post

How can a small amount of money make a big difference?! (Edited version)



In one of my college classes this semester, the teacher told us to donate the amount of \$10 to help someone in any way. My project involved donating to MKA organization with the mentioned amount and work hard to ensure that it reached the right people. What I liked about this organization was that when you donate any amount of money you have to work there as a volunteer until your money impact appear in some ones' life.

At the beginning, they sent me to a poor neighborhood where such amount of money was no more-small! my assignment was to teach one of the locals something that benefits him/her for lifelong. I chose a little girl named Ann. I bought her 3 scarfs with the ten dollars and handed them to her. Then I told her to go to the nearby neighborhood to sell them each for 4\$.

With that poor pretty face, Ann's job was somehow easy. After exactly one hour Ann gave me the \$12 happily. I told her that starting from this day, she will work in selling and buying. In order to save her money, she is not allowed to buy anything that cost more than \$10! She didn't argue and walked away happy with what she achieved. dreaming of different future and new things that she used to avoid dreaming of. I left her and I'm not going to meet her for the next 3 months.

Now, after exactly 5 months of hard-working Ann owns her own clothes shop in her own piece of land just cause of the \$10 that I gave that day. Well recognize who got more benefits, is it me or Ann? What I it's hard to really know is that my life has changed, thanks to MKA organization and Ann. Now I'm donating \$10 monthly and planning to build my own charity organization in the future. That will help a lot of people in need. Also it is going to solve some problems such as the lack of jobs opportunities and that's all to achieve the aim behind our existence which is to help each other, build and develop the earth.

[You can feel the writer voice once the writer talks using an example from her own experience and trying as much details as possible just to let the reader get the good feeling of donation and helping others]

- Comment [Office1]: Content
- Comment [Office2]: Language
- Comment [Office3]: Content
- Comment [Office4]: Organisation
- Comment [Office5]: Content
- Comment [Office6]: Language
- Comment [Office7]: Content
- Comment [Office8]: Language
- Comment [Office9]: Content
- Comment [Office10]: Language
- Comment [Office11]: Content
- Comment [Office12]: Language
- Comment [Office13]: Language
- Comment [Office14]: Language
- Comment [Office15]: Organisation
- Comment [Office16]: Content
- Comment [Office17]: Organisation
- Comment [Office18]: Content
- Comment [Office19]: Language
- Comment [Office20]: Language
- Comment [Office21]: Content
- Comment [Office22]: Language
- Comment [Office23]: Organisation
- Comment [Office24]: Content
- Comment [Office25]: Content
- Comment [Office26]: Content
- Comment [Office27]: Language
- Comment [Office28]: Language
- Comment [Office29]: Language
- Comment [Office30]: Content

[There is a fluency within this post, the ideas are clear and understood. This is due to 1. the writer's choice of vocabulary; they were connected structured and textured words which form the whole story; 2. The writer's strong Voice.]

Given grades for each writing criteria of the 3rd edited post

MNS98	Writing criteria	Grade
1.	Content	3
2.	Language	3
3.	Organisation	3
4.	Voice	2
5.	Communication achievement	3

Appendix (K)

Students' writing rubric

MARK	CONTENT	VOICE	LANGUAGE	COMMUNICATION ACHIEVEMENT	ORGANISATION
3	All content is relevant to the task. Target reader is fully informed.	There is an expression of 'YOU; the writer' in the piece of writing. Can get the feeling, emotions and there is a kind of connection between the writer and the reader. The reader feels like if the writer is talking to him only.	Uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, appropriately. Uses a range of simple and grammatical forms with control and flexibility. Occasional errors may be present but do not impede communication	Uses the conventions of the communicative task effectively to hold the target reader attention and communicate straightforward and complex ideas, as appropriate.	Text is well organised using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns to generally good effects.

2	Minor relevance and/or omissions may be present	Minor Voice; In some part of the piece of writing, the reader can feel the writer's way of writing.	Uses a range of everyday vocabulary appropriately with occasional inappropriate use of less common lexis. Uses range of simple and some grammatical forms with a good degree of control. Errors do not impede communication.	Uses the convention of the communicative task to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward ideas.	Text is generally well organised and coherent, using a variety of linking words cohesive devices.
1	Irrelevances and misinterpretations of task may be present. Target reader is minimally informed.	The writer point of views\ideas aren't clear. The reader can not feel the writer's personality.	Uses everyday vocabulary generally appropriate with occasional inappropriate use of less common lexis. Uses a range of some simple grammatical	Uses the conventions of the communicative task in generally appropriate ways to communicate impede communication straightforward ideas.	Text is connected and coherent using basic linking words and a limited number of cohesive devices.

			forms with a good degree of control. While errors are noticeable meaning can still be determined.		
--	--	--	--	--	--

Appendix (L)

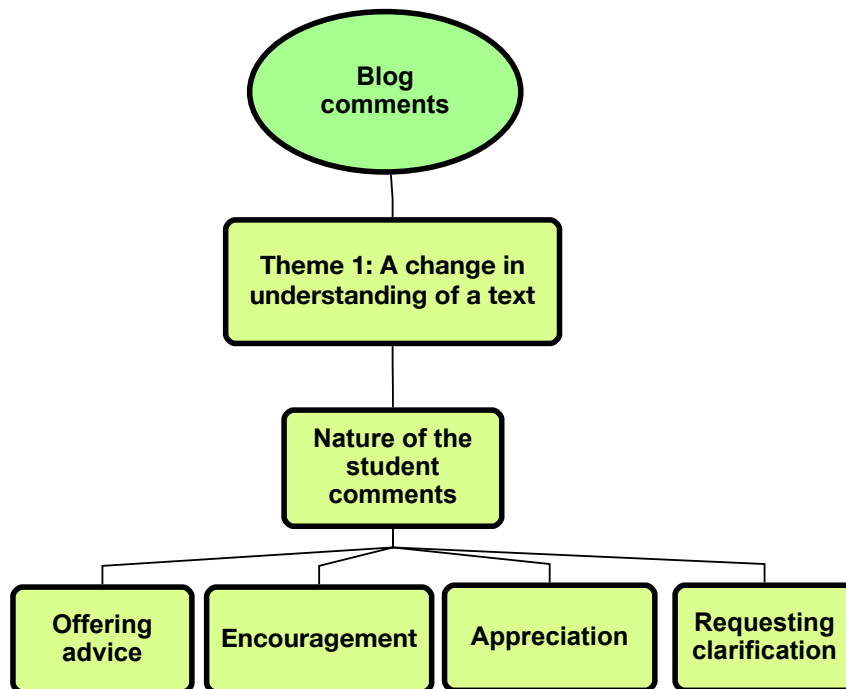
Students' comments' type

on another student's blog posts: Sample

Transcripts' key

- The words in **BLUE** are the comments of **Offering advice**
- The words in **RED** are the comments of **Appreciation**
- The words in **BROWN** are the comments of **Encouragement**
- The words in **GREEN** are the comments of **Requesting Clarification**
- The words in **PURPLE** are the **researcher's Explanation/Analysis** of the Students comments'
- **NOTE:** The comments were related to the following participants: **MNS98** and **Ghost21**

Emergent codes as the basis for a coding framework



Quotations from the comments	Codes	Categories	Themes
I enjoyed reading your article.	Appreciation	Nature of the student comments	A change in understanding of a text
Keep it up	Encouragement	Nature of the student comments	A change in understanding of a text
I hope that you pay attention to drafting some sentences become more clear	Offering advice	Nature of the student comments	A change in understanding of a text
Hope that you will reformulate the conclusion more clearly	Requesting clarification	Nature of the student comments	A change in understanding of a text

First Comments

mns98

MAY 5, 2017 AT 5:27 PM

[I enjoyed reading your article, I liked all the tips that you proposed especially the one about not speaking loudly I totally agree with you in that. keep it up]

Comment [Office1]: Appreciation

Comment [Office2]: Encouragement

As it is the first comment, the purpose is clear, encouragement and to motivate her colleagues as its their first essay, too

Second Comments

mns98

May 29, 2017 AT 5:40 PM

[The most important thing that I gained was the amazing tips that you provide I believe that you wanted to say that respect is the best way to have a good first impression with a teacher. Generally I liked your explanation.]
good luck(

Comment [Office3]: Appreciation

May 29, 2017 at 8:20 pm

كلام رافي ومنمق اعجبت بطريقة اعدادك للموضوع وترتيبك له لكن اتمنى ان تنتهي لصياغة بعض الجمل لتوضح اكثر خصوصا في الجزئيه الثانيه من الموضوع
واتمنى ايضا ان تعيدي صياغة الخاتمه بوضوح اكثر وفقك الله

Comment [Office4]: Offering advice

Comment [Office5]: Requesting clarification

MAY 29, 2017 AT 8:40 PM

اجمل ما في مقالك بساطته وعمقه في ذات الوقت ما أعجبتني انك لم تتكلم في الصياغات واضفتي
اتمنى ان تركزى اكثر اثناء كتابتك للجمل وتعدي مراجعة القواعد العديد من الصور ل جعل الموضوع اكثر تشويقا
اللغويه
بارك الله فيك ووفقك لما يحب ويرضى

Comment [Office6]: Appreciation

Comment [Office7]: Offering advice

A mixture of encouragement and giving few advices in order to improve the students' work; started with the encouragement and then moved to main advice

Third Comments

mns98

JUNE 24, 2017 AT 4:50 PM

I have changed a lot of my thoughts after reading this essay. I learned that a small amount might change a lot in people's life.

I recommend all people at a young age who don't know the benefits of money to read this essay.

Comment [Office1]: Appreciation

mns98

JUNE 24, 2017 AT 4:56 PM

I learned a lot from this essay as it showed me the right way of spending a small amount of money and how it could grow to make a big difference.

Comment [Office2]: Appreciation

mns98

JUNE 24, 2017 AT 4:50 PM

A sophisticated and flowery speech, I understand the way you prepared the topic and arranged it, but I hope that you pay attention to drafting.

Some sentences become more clear, especially in the second part of the topic. I also hope that you will reformulate the conclusion more clearly.

Comment [Office3]:

Comment [Office4]: Offering advice

Comment [Office5]: Requesting clarification

The way she wrote her comments elevated to contain several kinds of given comments in just a few sentences which give us an indication that the students started to understand the use of comments, their benefits, how to give constructive comments and concentrate on the writing elements that help to improve their peers and their own writing skills.

First Comments

ghost21

MAY 6, 2017 AT 12:37 PM

I really like your essay; you organized it by a good way, but I think the part (when you tell the truth always when you speak with her, so that can make a good impression) should be changed by some way because it is not lovely to use (so) after when close, so you can remove it. You should write (with out) as a one word like (without).

Also, I think you should write (on the other hand) instead of (In other hand).

I think you will be an excellent writer if you do all your best and follow the right steps.

Comment [Office6]: Offering advice

Comment [Office7]: Encouragement

Second Comment

MAY 31, 2017 AT 6:21 PM

مقال جميل واسباب مقنعة لأعتبر الاعلانات مزعجة وغير مفيدة في كثير من الاحيان. اعتقد انه سيصبح اكثر تنظيما لو قسم الى ثلاثة فقرات منفصلة. كذلك اعتقد انه من الافضل مراجعة بعض الاخطاء الإملائية والنحوية في الحقيقة لقد استمتعت براءة هذا المقال. لكنه سيصبح اكثر متعة لو اضفتي بعض الالوان والصور المدعمة له وفق افك

Comment [Office1]: Offering advice
Comment [Office2]: Encouragement

ghost21

MAY 31, 2017 AT 6:04 PM

سلمت يدك على مقالك الجميل. لرى ان لك مهارة جيدة في تنظيم الافكار وتدعيمها بامثلة مقنعة يمكنك استخدام عبارات اكثر جاذبية في بداية تحدثك عن كل نقطة. مثلا يمكنك استخدام العبارة (the first reason for my view is that.....) بدلا من العبارة الاكثر شيوعا (firstly.....). اعني لك دوام التوفيق

Comment [Office3]: Appreciation
Comment [Office4]: Encouragement

Comment [Office5]: Offering advice
Comment [Office6]: Encouragement

ghost21

MAY 31, 2017 AT 6:04 PM

Interesting, your thoughts are really beautiful, in fact you convinced me. Your style, I liked your supporting examples of the topic, but I hope you add an illustrative example at the last point to make it more clear. you will always be successful

Comment [Office7]: Appreciation

Comment [Office8]: Requesting clarification

Comment [Office9]: Encouragement

ghost21

.comment-author

MAY 31, 2017 AT 6:12 PM

.comment-metadata

.comment-meta

سلمت يدك على مقالك الشيق. استمتعت به كثيرا. افكارك جميلة ومنظمة في الحقيقة لقد افنتني اباسلوبك. اعجبت بامتلاك المدعمة للموضوع. لكن اعني لو اضفتي مثلا توضيحا في اخر نقطة ليبدو اكثر وضوحا. جزاك الله خير. و ادام عليك التوفيق والتميز

Comment [Office10]: Appreciation

Comment [Office11]: Offering advice

Comment [Office12]: Encouragement

Third Comment

June 23, 2017 at 9:41 pm

اعجبت بتنظيم مقالك وترتيب الافكار فيه. سيكون اكثر تشويقا لو اضفتي رؤية مستقبلية للعمل الذي قمتي به مع الصغرة انا... إلى الامام دائما

Comment [Office13]: Encouragement

Comment [Office14]: Appreciation

ghost21

JUNE 23, 2017 AT 9:34 PM

I got your way in organizing [sic] your article and arranging the ideas in it. It will be more interesting if you add a future vision of the work that you did with the little one ... always forward

Comment [Office1]: Requesting clarification

ghost21

JUNE 23, 2017 AT 9:34 PM

اعجبت بمقالك جدا فقد كان فيها الكثير من التيمم النبوية. لكن المزيد من الامثلة يجعل المقالة اكثر وضوحا ومتعة

Comment [Office2]: Appreciation

Comment [Office3]: Offering advice

ghost21

.comment-author

JUNE 23, 2017 AT 9:27 PM

.comment-metadata

.comment-meta

what does this sentence mean? "Advertisement is a way of life"

Good Luck

Comment [Office4]: Requesting clarification

Comment [Office5]: Encouragement

Appreciation, offering advice, requesting clarification in order to improve the students main work

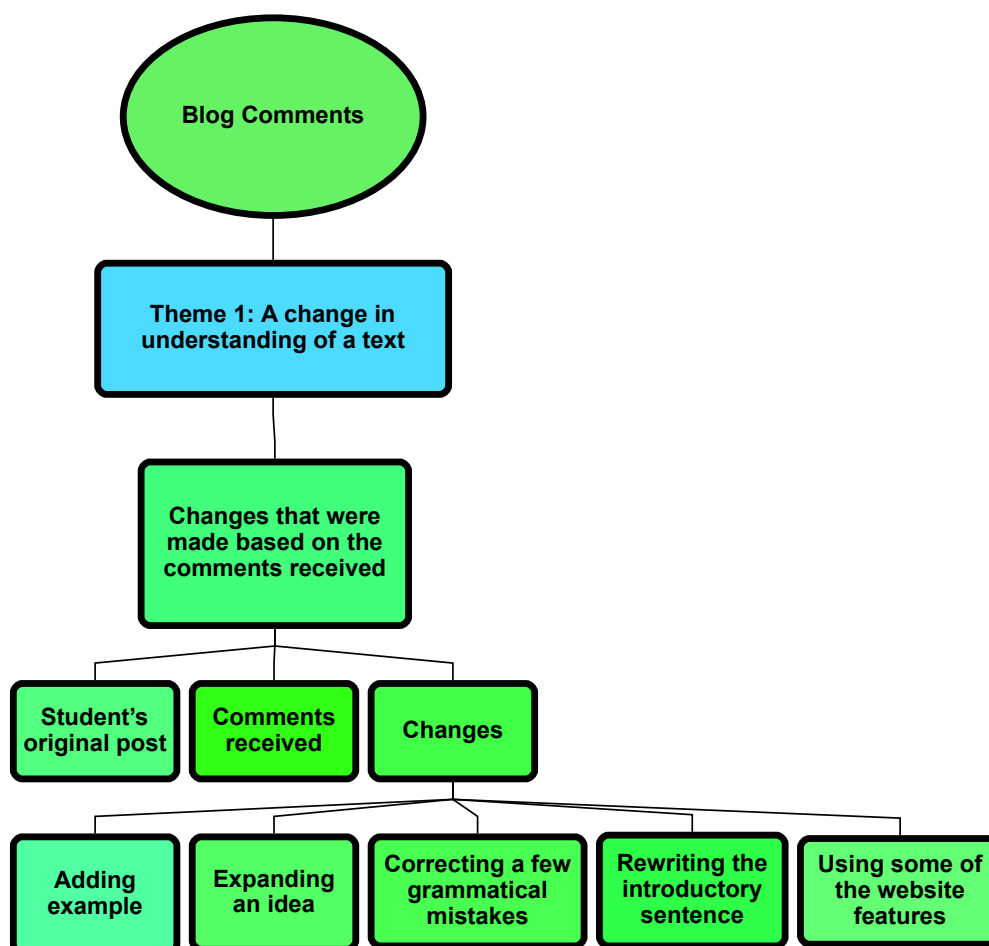
Appendix (M)

The effect of peer comments on student blogs: Sample

Transcripts' key

- The words in **RED** are the **Student's first draft**
- The words in **BLUE** are the **comments received**
- The words in **PURPLE** are the **Changes**
- **Note:** The posts were related to the same participant: **FAITH**

Emergent codes as the basis for a coding framework



Quotations	Codes	Sub-codes	Categories	Themes
<p>There are several ways to build good first impression on a new neighbor. First of all, you should welcome the new neighbor by greeting them warmly. Also, use small talk in order to be friendly. Give them a gift for their home and help them in moving the furniture. Secondly, you should contact with them from time to time by visiting them, inviting them to your home and introducing your other neighbors to them too.</p>	Student's original post		Changes that were made based on the comments received	A change in understanding of a text
<p>P.S: Hope your edited version will contain some of the choices at the posting option section</p>	Comments received		Changes that were made based on the comments received	A change in understanding of a text
<p>There are several ways to build a good first impression on a new neighbor</p>	Changes	Using some of the website features	Changes that were made based on the comments received	A change in understanding of a text

1. First original post

First impression

There are several ways to build good first impression on a new neighbor. First of all, you should welcome the new neighbor by greeting them warmly. Also, use small talk in order to be friendly. Give them a gift for their home and help them in moving the furniture. Secondly, you should contact with them from time to time by visiting them, inviting them to your home and introducing your other neighbors to them too. Thirdly, be polite by showing them that you have good manners and respect them. Besides, don't ask them personal questions because it may make them embarrassed. Fourthly, make strong relationship through asking about them and take care of them. Let your children play with their children. Moreover, do some activities together. In short, if you follow these tips, you can get a good first impression on your new neighbor and they may like you.

L. Albalushi
Student's original post

2. Received comments on the first post

sweetie MAY 3, 2017 AT 6:32 AM .

Reading about how to have a good first impression on a new neighbor makes me think about my neighbor attitude's of me and how was it . I really appreciate you and you can add that you can visit your neighbor.

L. Albalushi
Comments received

rose MAY 5, 2017 AT 4:14 PM

I learned something about how i can contact and dealing with a new neighbor and to make the relationship strong

teacher MAY 9, 2017 AT 8:56 AM I enjoyed how you expressed your ideas and supported them with strong examples, well done.P.S: Hope your edited version will contain some of the choices at the posting option section.

L. Albalushi
Comments received

3. First edited post



L. Albalushi
Using some of the website features

There are several ways to build a good first impression on a new neighbor.

First of all, you should welcome the new neighbor by greeting them warmly. Also, use small talk in order to be friendly. Give them a gift for their home and help them in moving the furniture. Secondly, you should contact with them from time to time by visiting them, inviting them to your home and introducing your other neighbors to them too. Thirdly, be polite by showing them that you have good manners and respect them. Besides, don't ask them personal questions because it may make them embarrassed. Fourthly, make strong relationship through asking about them and take care of them. Let your children play with their children. Moreover, do some activities together. In short, if you follow these tips, you can get a good first impression on your new neighbor and they may like you.

L. Albalushi
Using some of the website features

1. Second original post

Advertisements

Advertising is the process of describing the benefits of a product in a public medium in order to sell or promote a product. Nowadays our society is flooded with advertisements. In my opinion, advertisements are really useful as they are informative, supportive to the entertainment industry and entertaining.

First of all, advertising gives the customer the information about all the product. For example, advertisements give the features of the product as well as where the product is available in the cheapest rate. As a result, people don't have to go from one shop to another in search of a product.

Secondly, advertisement provides job to a large number of people to be

L. Albalushi
Student's original post

employed in the entertainment and communication industry including television and radio. For instance, young talented people get an opportunity to show their talents to the public by appearing in the advertisement and it will open a future carrier for them. Moreover, it is a major source of an income for several chatlines and also helps to generate money that is used in the production of television programs.

Finally, the advertisement is attractive interesting and entertaining. As a result, they provide viewers with a much-needed variety to break the boredom of.

In short, advertisements provide people the information they need about a product, they support entertainment industry and they provide entertainment.

2. Received comments on the second post

teacher **MAY 27, 2017 AT 10:44 PM** Well done; I like your way of writing and how you stick to your opinion. P.S: I hope if you could add other justifications which support your opinion. Good luck

L. Albalushi
Comments received

ashg **MAY 28, 2017 AT 10:55 AM** استمتعت كثيرا أعند حديثك عن صناعة الإعلانات واعتبارها شيء إيجابي، أهل من الممكن توضيح السبب الثاني بدعمه بمثال مناسب خاصة عند حديثك عن توفيره ل فرص عمل مجتئله. كل التوفيق .

L. Albalushi
Comments received

soma **MAY 30, 2017 AT 7:16 PM** جميل جداً، فمتي يعمل رائع عند ربط كل فكره بمجموعة من الأسباب ملاحظاً: إضافة أمثله للإعلانات التي ساعدتك في تكوين رأيك أسيزيد طرحك جمالا بآرك الله فيك

L. Albalushi
Comments received

rose **MAY 31, 2017 AT 5:42 AM** شكرا لك لطرح مثل هذا المقال و قد نال على اعجابي و بالطبع هناك الكثير من الناس يسعون وراء التخفيضات و الأمور التي قد تيسر حياتهم

3. Second edited post

Advertisements (Edited version)

Advertising is the process of describing the benefits of a product in a public medium in order to sell or promote a product. Nowadays our society is flooded with advertisements



In my opinion, advertisements are really useful as they are informative, supportive to the entertainment industry and entertaining.

First of all, advertising gives the customer the information about all the product. For example, advertisements give the features of the product as well as where the product is available at the cheapest rate. As a result, people don't have to go from one shop to another in search of a product. A good example for this is the car advertisements which provide the clients with plenty of information about the new features of the new car, its maximum prices, where and how they can buy it

L. Albalushi
Adding example

Secondly, advertisement provides job to a large number of people to be employed in the entertainment and communication industry including television and radio. For instance, young talented people get an opportunity to show their talents to the public by appearing in the advertisement and it will open a future career for them. Moreover, it is a major source of an income for several chat lines and also helps to generate money that is used in the production of television programs.

Finally, the advertisement is attractive interesting and entertaining. For

example, the scenes which appear on the T.V, it (no it) makes you happy and sometimes you may laugh. As a result, they provide viewers with a much-needed variety to break the boredom of.

In short, advertisements provide people the information they need about a product, they support entertainment industry and they provide entertainment.

1. Third original post

Can a small amount of money make a big change in poor people's lives?



Small drops of water make a big ocean. Our communities have developed step by step. Nowadays, there are lots of poor people around the world who need a small amount of money to begin a decent life. This essay discusses the effects of giving a small amount of money for a poor person and how it gives an opportunity to set up one's own business, to lead an independent and responsible life with self-esteem and how to become a useful person in the society.

First, the small amount of money gives a wonderful chance to start a small business. For example, when someone donates a small amount of money to a poor person to start a small shop or to buy and sell vegetables, that small amount becomes useful. It is like teaching a man how to fish than just giving him a fish for a day.

L. Albalushi
Student's original post

Secondly, when a poor man opens his own shop, he will become responsible. Besides, he gets enough money to lead an independent life. As a result, his life esteem will improve and he will use the money he makes in a proper way. Finally, since such people know the difficulties of life, they will try to help the people how to have the same type of financial problems. For instance, they help to improve the society by helping others with money and begging a role

model for others.

In short, the effects of giving a small amount of money for a poor person is beyond our imagination. It opens a new door in their lives whereby making them feel responsible, independent and useful in the society.

2. Received comments on the second post

pandaa JUNE 20, 2017 AT 7:05 PM .I love the way that you used in giving reasons and examples . I wish for you all the best.

qween . JUNE 23, 2017 AT 6:12 AM .I like your essay because you organized it in a good way and you support your essay with a nice examples and details. you can use more vocabulary words that make your essay wonderful and great..

L. Albalushi
Comments received

teacher JUNE 24, 2017 AT 11:50 PM Good work; like your way of writing your sentences. P.S: Could you please do the following; 1. Try to expand and modify the third point because it wasn't that clear; 2. Could you add examples to support your work. Will be waiting for your edited essay, good luck

L. Albalushi
Comments received

ashg .JUNE 25, 2017 AT 1:40 AM .My favourite part was the introduction. This essay made me wonder about the importance of donating to charity organisation. I hope that the writer could modify the previous point by writing some examples.

L. Albalushi
Comments received

faith JUNE 25, 2017 AT 7:52 AM . thank you

3. Third edited post

How can a small amount of money make a big difference? (edit)

Small drops of water **can** make a big ocean. Our communities have **been** developed step by step. Nowadays, there **are** lots of poor people around the world who need a small amount of money to begin a decent life. This essay discusses the effects of giving a small amount of money **to** a poor person and

<p>which will provide an opportunity to set up once own business, to lead an</p>	
<p>independent and responsible life with self-esteem and finally to be a useful person in the society.</p> <p>First, the small amount of money generates a great chance to start a small business. For example, when someone donates a small amount of money to a poor person in order to start a small shop or to buy and sell vegetables, that small amount become useful. It is like teaching a man how to fish than just giving him a fish for every a day.</p> <p>Secondly, when a poor man opens his own shop, he will become responsible. For instance, a poor man opens an apple shop he will take care of the shop. Besides, he will get enough money to live a decent life. As a result, his life self-esteem esteem will be improved and he will use the money he makes in a proper way.</p> <p>Finally, since such people know the life difficulties, they will try to help other people how to (are) having the same type of financial problems. For instance,</p>	<p>L. Albalushi Adding example</p>
<p>they help to improve the society by helping others with money and begging a role model for others. [This can be done by extending love and help; those people who were in need in the past, it's their turn to help others and offer not only the psychological support but also the financial one.]</p> <p>In short, the effects of giving a small amount of money for a poor person is beyond our imagination. It opens a new door in their lives whereby making them feel responsible, independent and useful in the society.</p>	<p>L. Albalushi Expanding an idea</p> <p>1 hour ago</p>

Appendix (N)

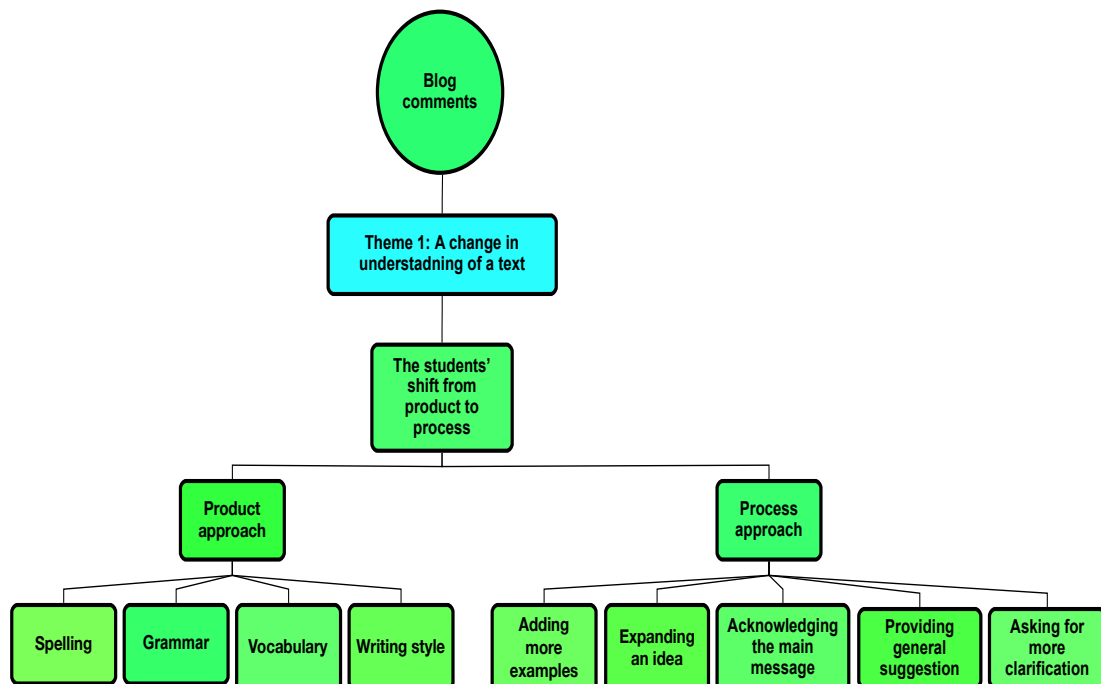
Students comments' type in terms of the shift from product--process:

Sample

Transcripts' key

- The words in **RED** are the comments that are based on the **PRODUCT APPROACH**
- The words in **BLUE** are the comments that are based on the **PROCESS APPROACH**
- The words that are highlighted in **GREEN** are the reseracher's **Analysis\Explanation**
- **NOTE:** The comments were related to different participants: **Ghost21**, **MNS98**, **Faith**, **Panda** and **Soma**

Emergent codes as the basis for a coding framework



Quotations from the comments	Codes	categories	Sub-categories	Themes
You could writ with out as one word like (without)	Spelling	Product approach	The student shift from product to process	A change in understanding of a text
Could you please check your vocabulary	Vocabulary	Product approach	The student shift from product to process	A change in understanding of a text
I think the part when you tell the truth always when you speak with her so that can make good impression should be changed to some way because it is not lovely to use so after when close, so you cam=n remove it	Writing style	Product approach	The student shift from product to process	A change in understanding of a text
I enjoyed reading your article, I liked all the tips that you proposed especially the one about not speaking loudly. I totally agree with you in that , keep it up	Acknowledging the main message of the post	Process approach	The student shift from product to process	A change in understanding of a text

أفكارك جميلة وتوضيحيه ولكن أتمنى لو اضفتي مثالا توضيحيا	Add more example	Process approach	The student shift from product to process	A change in understanding of a text
Nice writing, but I can't understand your sentence. Also, how can advertisement help the clients?	Asking for more clarification	Process approach	The student shift from product to process	A change in understanding of a text

Participants' first comments

1.

ghost21

MAY 6, 2017 AT 12:37 PM

I really like your essay, you organized it by good way, but I think the part (when you tell the truth always when you speak with her, so that can make good impression) should be changed by some way because it is not lovely to use (so) after when close, so you can remove it.

you should write (with out) as a one word like (without).
also, I think you should writ (on the other hand) instead of (In other hand).
I think you will be an excellent writer if you do all your best and follow the right steps.

Comment [Office1]: Writing style

Comment [Office2]: Spelling

Comment [Office3]: Spelling

Concentrating on the use of correct vocabulary, grammatical rules (Product/Form)

2.

mns98

MAY 5, 2017 AT 5:40 PM

The most important thing that I gained was the amazing tips that you provide I believe that you wanted to say that respect is the best way to have a good first impression with a teacher.

Could you please check your vocabulary.

Generally I liked your explanation.

good luck (:

Comment [Office4]: Vocabulary

Concentrating on the use of correct vocabulary, grammatical rules (Product/Form)

mns98

MAY 5, 2017 AT 5:27 PM

I enjoyed reading your article, I liked all the tips that you proposed especially the one about not speaking loudly I totally agree with you in that.
keep it up(

Comment [Office1]: acknowledging the main message of the post

3.

Faith

MAY 3, 2017 AT 6:38 AM

I like the essay especially the bright ideas which is easy to do. Check your spelling, please.
GOOD LUCK

Comment [Office2]: Spelling

MAY 3, 2017 AT 6:22 AM

I like the essay because it gives me some tips to make a good impression on my teachers.

Comment [Office3]: acknowledging the main message of the post

Participants' Second Comments

MAY 31, 2017 AT 6:21 PM

مقال جميل واسباب مقنعة لأعتبر الاعلانات مزعجة وغير مفيدة في كثير من الاحيان. اعتقد انه سيصبح اكثر تنظيما لو
كذلك اعتقد انه من الافضل مراجعة بعض الاخطاء اليملائية والنحوية بحسب الـ ثلاثة فقرات منفصلة.
في الحقيقة لقد استمتعت براءة هذا المقال. لكنه سيصبح اكثر متعة لو اضفتي بعض الالوان والصور المدعمة له
وفك الله

Comment [Office4]: Writing style

Comment [Office5]: Spelling

ghost21

MAY 31, 2017 AT 6:04 PM

سلمت يدك على مقالك الجميل. ارى ان لك مهارة جيدة في تنظيم الافكار وتدعيمها بامثلة مقنعة
بيمكك استخدام عبارات اكثر جاذبية في بداية تحدتك عن كل نقطة. مثلا يمكنك استخدام العبارة
(the first reason for my view is that.....)
بدلا من العبارة الاكثر شيوعا
(firstly.....).
اتمنى لك دوام التوفيق

Comment [Office6]: Add more examples

Comment [Office7]: Providing general suggestion

ghost21

.comment-author

MAY 31, 2017 AT 6:12 PM

.comment-metadata

.comment-meta

الحقيقة لقد افعتني سلمت يدك على مقالك الشيق. استمتعت به كثيرا. افكارك جميلة ومنظمة في
باسلوبك. اعجبت بامثلك المدعمة للموضوع. ولكن اتنى لو اضفتي مثلا توضيحا في اخر نقطة لبيدو اكثر وضوح
جزك الله خير. و ادام عليك التوفيق والتميز

Comment [Office8]: Acknowledging the main message of the post

Comment [Office9]: Add more examples

MAY 29, 2017 AT 5:16 PM

Nice writing, but I cant understand your last sentence.
Also, how can advertisement help the clients?
Keep the good work

Comment [Office1]: Asking for more clarification

Comment [Office2]: Asking for more clarification

Comment [Office3]: acknowledging the main message of the post

pandaa

.comment-author

MAY 29, 2017 AT 4:34 PM

.comment-metadata

.comment-meta

الأفكار جميلة ومرتبطة ، ولكن يجب أن تصحح الأخطاء الإملائية والنحوية

Comment [Office4]: Spelling

The students' comments concentrate on the following calrifications which should be applied within the writer's second draft: 1. Calrifying the last point, 2. Adding more examples, 3. To write from the customer's perspective as well 'How the use of the advertisements will benefit them?'. The previous comments are part of the (Process Approach) 4. The last comment advised the writer to take care of their spelling. (Product Approach)

Participants' Third Comments

1.

ghost21

June 23, 2017 at 9:41 pm

سيكون اكثر تشويقا لو اضفتي روية مستقبلية للعمل الذي قمتي به مع الصغيرة |عجبت بتنظيم مقالك وترتيب الافكار فيه |... الى الامام دائما

Comment [Office5]: Acknowledging the main message of the post

Comment [Office6]: Providing general suggestion

ghost21

JUNE 23, 2017 AT 9:34 PM

عجبت بمقالك جدا ، فقد كان فيها الكثير من القيم النفيسة ، لكن المزيد من الامثلة سيجعل المقالة اكثر وضوحا ومنعة

Comment [Office7]: Add more examples

ghost21

.comment-author

JUNE 23, 2017 AT 9:27 PM

.comment-metadata

.comment-meta

اعجبت بمقالتك جدا. لقد كان لها وقعاً حثيثاً في مخيلتي جعلتني ادرك معنى القدر الصغير من المال في ايدي الفقراء الطموحين ذوي الفكر الراجح

Comment [Office1]: Acknowledging the main message of the post

2.

mns98

JUNE 24, 2017 AT 4:50 PM

I have changed a lot of my thoughts after reading this essay. learned that a small amount might change a lot in the people life .

I recommend all people at young age who don't know the benefits of the money to read this essay.

Comment [Office2]: Acknowledging the main message of the post

mns98

JUNE 24, 2017 AT 4:56 PM

[This essay showed me the write [sic] way of spending a small amount of money and how it could grow to make a big difference.

Comment [Office3]: Acknowledging the main message of the post

3.

Soma

JUNE 28, 2017 AT 9:08 PM

عجبتني طرحك للموضوع اعلاه ، وبخاصه فكرة المشروع الذي قمتي به ، اتمنى ان تتسنى لي الفرصة لتطبيقه في المستقبل القريب

Comment [Office4]: Acknowledging the main message of the post

4.

FAITH

June 19, 2017 at 7:53 pm

It was a good post, but you need to add more examples to make your writing attractive[sic] and interesting.

good luck

Comment [Office5]: Add more examples

.comment-author

JUNE 19, 2017 AT 8:03 PM

I got the message of your essay, but I think you want to add more details and examples to support your ideas.

good luck

Comment [Office6]: Add more examples

The students' comment concentrated on the following: 1. Adding more examples; 2. Expanding the examples themselves, Acknowledging the delivered idea, 3. Acknowledging the writer's style of writing

1. Praising the writer's effort in choosing the interesting ideas. Asking them to add more examples which will clear the ideas and add more explanation (the students' comments were part of the Process Approach). It concentrates on the improving the main idea of the text

2.

MNS98

May 29, 2017 at 8:20 pm asking for more clarification

كلام رافي ومنمق اعجبت بطريقة اعدادك للموضوع وترتيبك له لكن اتمنى ان تنتهي لصياغة بعض الجمل لتوضح اكثر خصوصا في الجزئية الثانية من الموضوع واتمنى ايضا ان تعيد صياغة الخاتمه بوضوح اكثر وفق الله

Comment [Office1]: Providing general suggestion

Comment [Office2]: Asking for more clarification

MAY 29, 2017 AT 8:40 PM

أجمل ما في مقالك بساطته وعمقه في ذات الوقت ما أعجبنى أنك لم تتكفى في الصياغات واضفتي العديد من الصور ل جعل الموضوع أكثر تشويقا

المحلي عن طريق ربط المثال ليس فقط على المستوى تمنى القيام بتوضيح النقطة التي نتحدث عن أهمية الإعلانات لدينا بل المستوى العالمي بارك الله فيك ووفقك لما يحب ويرضى

Comment [Office3]: Asking for clarification

Comment [Office4]: Add more examples

The students' comments concentrated in asking the following; A. Clarifying the second point, B. To rewrite part of the conclusion because it wasn't clear enough. The aim of the student's comment was to improve the text in general, so the message will be delivered to the reader.

3.

soma

MAY 30, 2017 AT 7:42 PM

موضوع ممتع للغاية ، ابدعتي في طريقة طرحك للأفكار وتسلسلها
^^ بارك الله فيك

Comment [Office5]: acknowledging the main message of the post

MAY 30, 2017 AT 7:30 PM

أجنتي التعبير عن وجهة نظرك

ملاحظه: عنراً واجهت صعوبة في فهم النقطة الأخيرة بارك الله فيك

Comment [Office6]: Asking for more clarification

1. Praising the writer's effort in choosing the interesting ideas. Asking them to add more examples which will clear the ideas and add more explanation (the students' comments were part of the Process Approach). It concentrates on the improving the main idea of the text.

2.

MNS98

May 29, 2017 at 8:20 pm asking for more clarification

كلام راقى ومنمق اعجبت بطريقة اعدادك للموضوع وترتيبك له لكن اتمنى ان تنتهي لصياغة بعض الجمل لتوضح اكثر خصوصا في الجزئية الثانية من الموضوع واتمنى ايضا ان تعدي صياغة الخاتمه بوضوح اكثر وفقك الله

Commented [Office1]: Providing general suggestion

Commented [Office2]: Asking for more clarification

MAY 29, 2017 AT 8:40 PM

اجمل ما في مقالك بساطته وعمقه في ذات الوقت ما اعجبتني انك لم تتكلفي في الصياغات واضفتي العديد من الصور ل جعل الموضوع اكثر تشويقا

اتمنى القيام بتوضيح النقطه التي تتحدث عن اهمية الاعلانات ابدأ عن طريق ربط المثال ليس فقط على المستوى المحلي بل المستوى العالمي بارك الله فيك وفقك لما يجب ويرضى

Commented [Office3]: Asking for clarification

Commented [Office4]: Add more examples

The students' comments concentrated in asking the following: A. Clarifying the second point, B. To rewrite part of the conclusion because it wasn't clear enough. The aim of the student's comment was to improve the text in general, so the message will be delivered to the reader.

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soma

MAY 30, 2017 AT 7:42 PM

موضوعك ممتع للغاية ا ابدعتي في طريقة طرحك للأفكار وتسلسلها ٨٨ بارك الله فيك

Commented [Office5]: acknowledging the main message of the post

MAY 30, 2017 AT 7:30 PM

أجدي التعبير عن وجهة نظرك ملاحظه: عذراً واجبت صعوبة في فهم النقطة الأخيرة بارك الله فيك

Commented [Office6]: Asking for more clarification

soma

MAY 30, 2017 AT 7:16 PM

جميل جداً، قمتي بعمل رائع عند ربط كل فكره بمجموعة من الأسباب ملاحظه: إضافة أمثله للإعلانات التي ساعدتك في تكوين رأيك سيؤيد طرحك جمالاً بارك الله فيك

Commented [Office7]: Add more examples

MAY 29, 2017 AT 5:16 PM

Nice writing, but I cant understand your last sentence.

Also, how can advertisement help the clients?

Keep the good work

Comment [Office1]: Asking for more clarification

Comment [Office2]: Asking for more clarification

Comment [Office3]: acknowledging the main message of the post

pandaa

.comment-author

MAY 29, 2017 AT 4:34 PM

.comment-metadata

.comment-meta

الأفكار جميلة ومرتبّة ، ولكن يجب أن تصححي الأخطاء الإملائية والنحوية

Comment [Office4]: Spelling

The students' comments concentrate on the following calrifications which should be applied within the writer's second draft; 1. Calrifying the last point, 2. Adding more examples, 3. To write from the customer's perspective as well 'How the use of the advertisments will benefit them?'. The previous comments are part of the (Process Approach) . 4. The last comment advised the writer to take care of their spelling. (Product Approach)

Participants' Third Comments

1.

ghost21

June 23, 2017 at 9:41 pm

سيكون أكثر تشويقاً لو اضفتي رؤية مستقبلية للعمل الذي قمتي به مع الصغيرة اعجبت بتنظيم مقالك وترتيب الأفكار فيه... الى الامام دائما

Comment [Office5]: Acknowledging the main message of the post

Comment [Office6]: Providing general suggestion

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ghost21

.comment-author

JUNE 23, 2017 AT 9:27 PM

.comment-metadata

.comment-meta

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Comment [Office1]: Acknowledging the main message of the post

2.

mns98

JUNE 24, 2017 AT 4:50 PM

I have changed a lot of my thoughts after reading this essay. learned that a small amount might change a lot in the people life .

I recommend all people at young age who don't know the benefits of the money to read this essay.

Comment [Office2]: Acknowledging the main message of the post

mns98

JUNE 24, 2017 AT 4:56 PM

[This essay showed me the write [sic] way of spending a small amount of money and how it could grow to make a big difference.

Comment [Office3]: Acknowledging the main message of the post

3.

Soma

JUNE 28, 2017 AT 9:08 PM

اعجبتني طرحك للموضوع اعلاه ، وبخاصه فكرة المشروع الذي قمتي به ، اتمنى ان تنسني لي الفرصه لتطبيقه في المستقبل القريب

Comment [Office4]: Acknowledging the main message of the post

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good luck

Comment [Office5]: Add more examples

.comment-author

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I got the message of your essay, but I think you want to add more details and examples to support your ideas.

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The students' comment concentrated on the following: 1. Adding more examples; 2. Expanding the examples themselves. Acknowledging the delivered idea, 3. Acknowledging the writer's style of writing

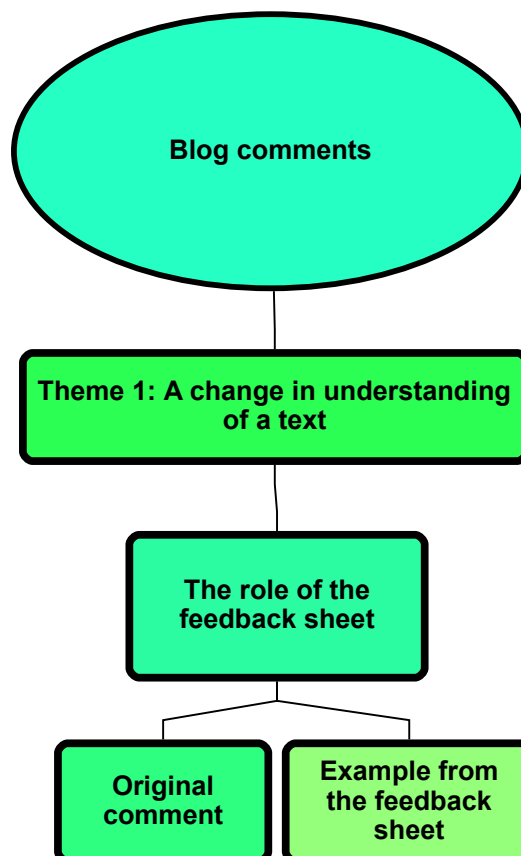
Appendix (O)

Analysis of the student comments' type in terms of the role of the feedback sheet: Sample

Transcripts' key

- The words in **BLUE** are **the students' original comments**
- The words in **GREEN** are the **Comments of the feedback sheet**
- Students' comments in their L1 (Arabic) will not be coded
- **NOTE:** The comments were related to different participants: **Ghost21, MNS98, Faith, Soma and Panda**

Emergent codes as the basis for a coding framework



Quotations from the comments	Codes	Categories	Themes
<p>Interesting, your thoughts are really beautiful. In fact, you convinced me. Your style, I like your supporting example of the topic, but I hope you add an illustrative example at the last point to make it more clear. You will always be successful.</p>	<p>Original comment</p>	<p>The role of the feedback sheet</p>	<p>A change in understanding of a text</p>
<p>The most important thing that I gained was the amazing tips that you provide. I believe that you wanted to say that respect is the best way to have a good first impression with a teacher.</p>	<p>Example from the feedback sheet</p>	<p>The role of the feedback sheet</p>	<p>A change in understanding of a text</p>

Participants' first comments

1.

ghost21

MAY 6, 2017 AT 12:37 PM

I really like your essay, you organized it by good way, but I think the part (when you tell the truth always when you speak with her, so that can make good impression) should be changed by some way because it is not lovely to use (so) after when close, so you can remove it.

you should write (with out) as a one word like (without).
also, I think you should write (bn the other hand) instead of (In other hand).
I think you will be an excellent writer if you do all your best and follow the right steps.

L. Albalushi
Example from the feedback sheet

L. Albalushi
Example from the feedback sheet

L. Albalushi
Original comment

L. Albalushi
Original comment

2.

mns98

MAY 5, 2017 AT 5:40 PM

The most important thing that I gained was the amazing tips that you provide I believe that you wanted to say that respect is the best way to have a good first impression with a teacher. Could you please check your vocabulary.
Generally I liked your explanation.
good luck (:

L. Albalushi
Example from the feedback sheet

mns98

MAY 5, 2017 AT 5:27 PM

I enjoyed reading your article, I liked all the tips that you proposed especially the one about not speaking loudly I totally agree with you in that.
keep it up(:

L. Albalushi
Example from the feedback sheet

3.

Faith

MAY 3, 2017 AT 6:38 AM

I like the essay especially the bright ideas which is easy to do.

L. Albalushi
Example from the feedback sheet

MAY 3, 2017 AT 6:22 AM

I like the essay because it gives me some tips to make a good impression on my teachers.

L. Albalushi
Example from the feedback sheet

MAY 31, 2017 AT 6:21 PM

مقال جميل واسباب مقنعة لأعتبر الاعلانات مزعجة وغير مفيدة في كثير من الاحيان, اعتقد انه سيصبح اكثر تنظيما لو قسم الى ثلاثة فقرات منفصلة , كذلك اعتقد انه من الافضل مراجعة بعض الاخطاء الاملانية والنحوية في الحقيقة لقد استمتعت بقراءة هذا المقال, لكنه سيصبح اكثر متعة لو اضفتي بعض الالوان والصور المدعمة له وفق الله

ghost21

MAY 31, 2017 AT 6:04 PM

سلمت يدك على مقالك الجميل, ارى ان لك مهارة جيدة في تنظيم الافكار وتدعيمها بأملئة مقنعة ييمكنك استخدام عبارات اكثر جاذبية في بداية تحدثك عن كل نقطة , مثلا يمكنك استخدام العبارة (the first reason for my view is that.....) بدلا من العبارة الاكثر شيوعا (firstly.....).
,,,,,اتمنى لك دوام التوفيق

ghost21

MAY 31, 2017 AT 6:04 PM

Interesting, your thoughts are really beautiful, in fact you convinced me.
Your style, I liked your supporting examples of the topic, but I hope you add an illustrative example at the last point to make it more clear.
you will always be successful

Comment [Office1]: Original comment

ghost21

.comment-author

MAY 31, 2017 AT 6:12 PM

.comment-metadata

.comment-meta

سلمت يدك على مقالك الشيق, استمتعت به كثيرا , افكارك جميلة ومنظمة في الحقيقة لقد اقعنتني بأسلوبك , أعجبت بأملئك المدعمة للموضوع , ولكن اتمنى لو اضفتي مآالا توضيحيا في اخر نقطة ليبدو اكثر وضوحا جزاك الله خير . و ادام عليك التوفيق والتميز

2.

MNS98

May 29, 2017 at 8:20 pm

كلام راقى ومنمق اعجبت بطريقة اعدادك للموضوع وترتيبك له لكن اتمنى ان تنتهي بصياغة بعض الجمل لتصبح اكثر خصوصا في الجزئية الثانية من الموضوع واتمنى ايضا ان تعيدي صياغة الخاتمه بوضوح اكثر وفق الله

MAY 29, 2017 AT 8:40 PM

The most beautiful thing about your article is its simplicity and depth at the same time. What I liked was that you did not bother with formulations and add many pictures to make the topic more interesting.

I hope to clarify the point that talks about the importance of advertising to us by linking the example not only at the local level, but on [sic] the global level.

Comment [Office2]: Original comment

MAY 29, 2017 AT 8:40 PM

أجمل ما في مقالك بساطته وعمقه في ذات الوقت ما أعجبنى أنك لم تتكلفني في الصياغات واضفتي العديد من الصور ل جعل الموضوع أكثر تشويقاً المني أن تركزي أكثر انشاء كتابتك للجمل وتعدي مراجعة القواعد اللغويه
بارك الله فيك ووفقك لما يحب ويرضى

3.

soma

MAY 30, 2017 AT 7:42 PM

So beautiful, you did a great job relating each idea to a host of reasons
Note: Adding examples of ads that helped you form your opinion will make your article more attractive

Comment [Office1]: Original comment

MAY 30, 2017 AT 7:30 PM

أجنتي التعبير عن وجهة نظرك
ملاحظه : عنراً واجهت صعوبة في فهم النقطة الأخيرة
بارك الله فيك

soma

MAY 30, 2017 AT 7:16 PM

جميل جداً، قمتي بعمل رائع عند ربط كل فكره بمجموعة من الأسباب
ملاحظه: إضافة أمثله للإعلانات التي ساعدتك في تكوين رأيك سيزيد طررك جمالاً
بارك الله ف

pandaa

.comment-author

MAY 29, 2017 AT 4:34 PM

.comment-metadata

.comment-meta

الأفكار جميلة ومرتببة ، ولكن يجب أن تصححي الأخطاء الإملائية والنحوية

Participants' Third Comments

1.

ghost21

June 23, 2017 at 9:41 pm

اعجبت بتنظيم مقالك وترتيب الافكار فيه سيكون اكثر تشويقاً لو اضفتي رؤية مستقبلية للعمل الذي قمتي به مع الصغيرة
انا... الى الامام دائماً

ghost21

June 23, 2017 at 9:41 pm

Interesting, your thoughts are really beautiful, in fact you convinced me.
Your style, I liked your supporting examples of the topic, but I hope you add an illustrative example at the last point to make it more clear.
you will always be successful

Comment [Office2]: Original comment

ghost21
JUNE 23, 2017 AT 9:34 PM
اعجبت بمقالتك جدا , فقد كان فيها الكثير من القيم النفيسة . لكن المزيد من الامثلة سيجعل المقالة اكثر وضوحا وممتعة

ghost21
.comment-author
JUNE 23, 2017 AT 9:27 PM
.comment-metadata
.comment-meta
اعجبت بمقالتك جدا , فلقد كان لها وقعا حثيثا في مخيلتي جعلتني ادرك معنى القدر الصغير من المال في ايدي الفقراء الطموحين ذوي الفكر الراجح

2.

mns98
JUNE 24, 2017 AT 4:50 PM
I have changed a lot of my thoughts after reading this essay. learned that a small amount might change a lot in the people life.
I recommend all people at young age who don't know the benefits of the money the have to read this essay.

Comment [Office1]: Original comment

mns98
JUNE 24, 2017 AT 4:56 PM

A sophisticated and flowery speech, I understand the way you prepared the topic and arranged it, but I hope that you pay attention to drafting some sentences become more clear, especially in the second part of the topic. I also hope that you will reformulate the conclusion more clearly

Comment [Office2]: Original comment

mns98

JUNE 24, 2017 AT 4:56 PM
This essay showed me the write way of spending a small amount of money and how it could grow to make a big difference in the outside community

Comment [Office3]: Original comment

3.
Soma

JUNE 28, 2017 AT 9:08 PM
أعجبنى طرحك للموضوع اعلاه ، وبخاصه فكرة المشروع الذي قمتي به ، أتمنى أن تتسنى لي الفرصة لتطبيقه في المستقبل القريب .

4.
FAITH

June 19, 2017 at 7:53 pm
It was a good post, but you need to add more examples to make your writing attractive[sic] and interesting.
good luck

Comment [Office1]: Original comment

.comment-author
JUNE 19, 2017 AT 8:03 PM
I got the message of your essay, but I think you want to add more details and examples to support your ideas.
good luck

Comment [Office2]: Original comment

Appendix (P)

Field note: Sample

1. Date	18 th of June 2017
2. Time	9 A.M
3. Place of Observation	Students' Classroom
4. Number of Observation	Three
5. Duration	Two hours
6. Number of Observers	14
7. Planned Agenda	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The general class atmosphere2. The role of the teacher; 'how is she dealing and interacting with the students?'3. How often do students interact with each other and which language do they use
8. Students' place	The students were at their classroom
9. Lesson flow	The class was active, interesting ideas were discussed. It wasn't a teacher-centered class, on the contrary, students' role was obvious in sharing ideas, suggesting new topics to be discussed and offering hand to other peers.
9. Overview	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The teacher started the lesson by announcing 'post of the week'; in which she nominated 3 posts and then studnets vote for the best one.

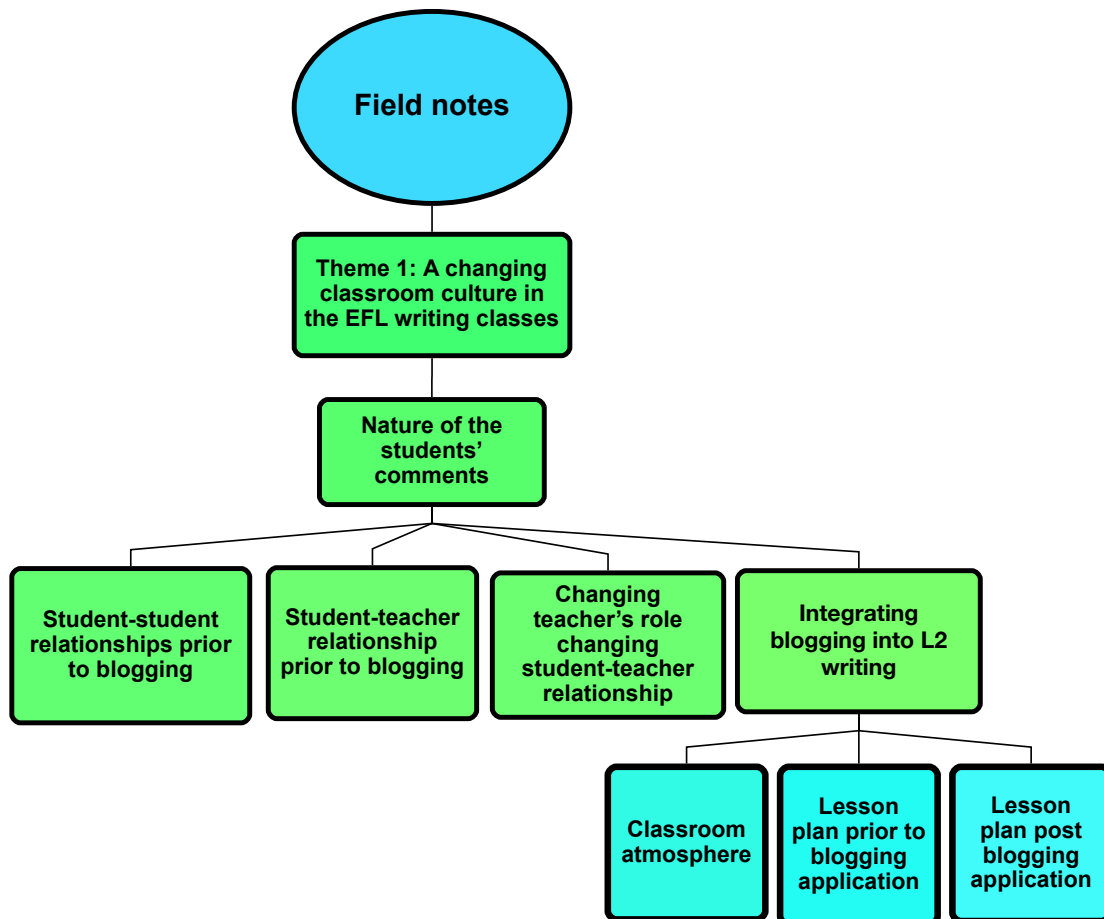
	<p>The whole class participated in the voting and justifying their choice.</p> <p>2. when the teacher introduced the task, she asked the students to work in groups. Students were given the opportunity to choose whom they would like to work with. Within the groups, students used mixed languages some of them Arabic, others English. Some mixed both of them in one sentences!</p> <p>3. I noticed that the teacher was trying to relate the writing text of the new unit to what the students will do while blogging. For example, 1. She asked them about the kind of 'audience' this essay may attract, 2. In general how can you satisfy you reader; 'how would you know that the readers like your post?' 3. Elicit as much supporting examples as possible, 4. Reminding them with the features at the blog that can used, 5. Reminding them with the competition that was updated at the blog when is the dead line. The whole lesson actually was going smoothly, the teacher was teaching the students and at the same time whenever its possible, she linked the point and moved to the blog.</p> <p>4. Next step, students were supposed to start writing the second draft of the third essay. The teacher reminded them that they can either use the computer lab at the institute or they can write back home and posted it.</p> <p>5. The teacher tone was much friendly and praised the students by using several words "Great Job, Nice work, Well Done ".</p>
10. Raw Notes	

11. Analytical Comments	<p>I felt that students have changed in a way that some of them became much bold in being part of the discussion in the class. The idea of blogging is to create a kind of community of learners where all the partners 'teachers and students' work together towards one main goal which is enhancing the learning environment and improving the teaching and the learning experience. This what I have seen today! Being part of this blog, having ownership over your work, connecting to authentic readers besides your teacher have helped, as well, in creating this kind of community.</p>

Appendix (Q)

Field note coded: Sample

Field note coding framework



Quotations from the fieldnote 'Fieldnote. 3'	Codes	Sub-codes	Themes
The students were at their classroom	Integrating blogging into L2 writing	Classroom atmosphere	A changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes
The class was active, interesting ideas were discussed. It wasn't a teacher-centered class, on the contrary, students' role was obvious in sharing ideas, suggesting new topics to be discussed and offering hand to other peers	Changing teacher's role changing student-teacher relationship		A changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes
<p>1. The teacher started the lesson by announcing 'post of the week'; in which she nominated 3 posts and then students vote for the best one. The whole class participated in the voting and justifying their choice.</p> <p>2. when the teacher introduced the task, she asked the students to work in groups. Students were given the opportunity to choose whom they would like to work with. Within the groups, students used mixed languages some of</p>	Lesson plan post blogging application		

them Arabic, others English. Some mixed both of them in one sentences!			
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1. Date	18 th of June 2017	
2. Time	9 A.M	
3. Place of Observation	Students' Classroom	
4. Number of Observation	Three	
5. Duration	Two hours	
6. Number of Observers	14	
7. Planned Agenda	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The general class atmosphere 2. The role of the teacher; 'how is she dealing and interacting with the students?' 3. How often do students interact with each other and which language do they use 	
8. Students' place	The students were at their classroom.	L. Albalushi Classroom atmosphere
9. Lesson flow	The class was active; interesting ideas were discussed. It wasn't a teacher centered class, on the contrary, students' role was obvious in sharing ideas, suggesting new topics to be discussed and offering hand to other peers.	L. Albalushi Changing teacher's role changing student-teacher relationship
10. Overview	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher started the lesson by announcing 'post of the week'; in which she nominated 3 posts and then studnets voted for the best one. The whole class participated in the voting and justified their choice. 	L. Albalushi August 25, 2021 Lesson plan post blogging application

	<p>2. When the teacher introduced the task, she asked the students to work in groups. Students were given the opportunity to choose whom they would like to work with. Within the groups, students used mixed languages some of them Arabic, others English. Some mixed both of them in one sentences!</p> <p>3. I noticed that the teacher was trying to relate the writing text of the new unit to what the students will do while blogging. For example, 1. She asked them about the kind of 'audience' this essay may attract, 2. In general how can you satisfy you reader; 'how would you know that the readers like your post?' 3. Elicit as much supporting examples as possible, 4. Reminding them with the features at the blog that can be used, 5. Reminding them with the competition that was updated at the blog when was the dead line. The whole lesson actually was going smoothly, the teacher was teaching the students and at the same time whenever its possible, she linked some of the points to the blog.</p> <p>4. Next step, students were supposed to start writing the second draft of the third essay. The teacher reminded them that they can either use the computer lab at the institute or they can write back home and posted it.</p> <p>5. The teacher tone was much friendly and praised the students by using several words "Great Job, Nice work, Well Done "</p>	<p>Commented [LA1]: Lesson plan post blogging application</p> <p>Commented [LA2]: Lesson plan post blogging application</p> <p>Commented [LA3]: Lesson plan post application</p> <p>Commented [LA4]: Changing teacher's role changing student-teacher relationship</p>
11. Raw Notes		
12. Analytical Comments	<p>I felt that students have changed in a way that some of them became much bold in initiating a discussion with their peers and trying to help them as much as possible.</p> <p>The idea of blogging is to create a kind of community of learners where all the partners 'teachers and students' work together towards one main goal which is enhancing the learning environment and improving the teaching and the learning experience. This was what I have seen today! Being part of this blog, having ownership over your work, connecting to authentic readers besides your teacher have helped, as well, in creating this kind of community.</p>	<p>L. Albalushi August 25, 2021 Changing student-student relationships</p> <p>L. Albalushi Changing teacher's role changing student-teacher relationship</p>

Appendix (R)

Student interviews: Sample

Transcript keys

- The words in **plain type** are the question asked by the interviewer
- The words in *italic* are the participant's responses

1. How did you do with blog, did you like it, why, give us example?

Yes, somehow, because it gives me the opportunity to be aware of the opinions of many people regard my writing.

2. How do you feel after posting your essay?

I feel comfortable and proud that I achieved or completed my required tasks. I also wait for comments from my colleagues and my teacher to edit my post.

3. Did you like using blogs? why?

Yes, Blogging has this affordance which allowed us to apply different writing strategies thinking of the main ideas, writing examples, drafting, writing the second drafts based on my friend's and EFL teacher comments. These strategies were totally different from the one that I used to.

4. What is your blog about? Give me an example

My blog contains three articles and a modified copy of each article. The first article was about how to make a good impression and the second article was about the advertisements' pros and cons. In the last topic, I talked about the changes that could be made by a small amount of money. I used the narrative approach while writing this article.

5. How is writing a blog is different from other experiences in writing in the classroom? Give me examples

There is a clear difference between the two types because writing in the classroom is supervised by the teacher only to give his point of view, but using blogging makes students read each other work and benefit from each other experiences.

6. How was your relationship with your friends at the beginning of the year?

It was good.

7. Do you think that your relationship with your friends has changed? In what way? Why is that?

It improved. The level of our discussion increased especially when we used to discuss the blogging topics, how that we were so enthusiastic to receive the comments and edited our work. This was because we did not know the person who sent the comment and we wanted to show the best of our work.

8. How was your relationship with your teacher? Do you think that over the year, it has changed? In what way? Why is that?

Good, yes it improved. Commenting through blog gave our teacher an opportunity to re-read what he wrote and the students to be aware of their errors without being embarrassed and thus improve the students' writing ability.

9. Pick out a blog of L2 writing which you think is a good writing.

A small amount of money can make a great difference (edited version).

1. Why do you think it is a good one?

Interrelated ideas, clear supported examples, clear voice while writing.

2. Did blogging help you to do so?

Yes, through blogging, I managed to rewrite many sentences to make them clear.

10. Pick up an example which you think is needed to be improved?

How to make a good first impression.

1. What would you do now to make it better writing? 2. Why did it work or not... giving examples.

Rewriting the main ideas, using other examples from my own experience, varifying the use of words.

11. Did you read your friends work? Did you leave comments on their posts?

Of course

12. What kind of comments do you usually like to post on their work?

Comments and tips about writing sentences, how they can be formed and enhanced.

13. Did you check your peers edited work? Did they use your comment in editing their work?

Yes, what I said in comments was clear in their edited posts\essays.

14. How do you feel about that?

Before the blogging experience, I was thinking that the idea of commenting or criticising what my peers write may be embarrassing, but I found that it is on the contrary, writing skills of both parties may develop. It was a nice feeling; My colleagues were interested in the comments which I have left on their work and that made me feel important and influential on their writing.

15. Did your peers comment on your blogs? What kind of comments do you usually receive?

Yes, positive one's; constructive criticism that helped to improve my writing skills in general.

16. Did you use their comments on editing your main work? How do you feel about receiving and posting comments on your peers' work?

Of course, a feeling of intimacy and brotherhood as each one of us helped the other.

17. Do you think it's a useful task which help to improve your writing? How is that?

Yes, because they provided different views regard my writing which will help to improve it

18. Before using blogging, whom did you write to, or who was reading your work and commenting on it?

My teacher.

19. How about using blogging, do you feel that you are writing for someone else? Whom? Does this change the way you deal with your writing?

Yes, my colleagues, of course.

20. How do you describe the differences between both situations?

To a teacher, writing only means writing just for getting grades, but writing to colleagues and teachers gives us the opportunity to share ideas and opinions and benefit from each other.

21. How is writing a blog is different from writing in any L2 experience \setting? How it helps with the writing in any L2?

Through blogging, I have a wide range of audience which makes me endeavour to satisfy them.

22. Which language did use when writing the comment? Why?

English language; this was because using English will get my friends to get used to use English language in their daily life and eventually their language will be improved.

23. Did you receive comments from your teacher? Do you think that they were useful ones? How is that?

Yes, because after reading various comments, I checked the strengths' sections of my writing and kept in improving them. I identified the weaknesses and modified them.

24. Do you remember one of your teacher's comments which you really like the most or not? What is it? Why do you like it or not?

Yes, 'I liked your style in writing and organising the ideas. You write with a smooth and interesting style.' I liked it because people usually described my writings as being complicated and hard to be understood. The teacher's comment meant means that my writing has improved.

25. Are there any negative sides in using blogging to teach writing skill?

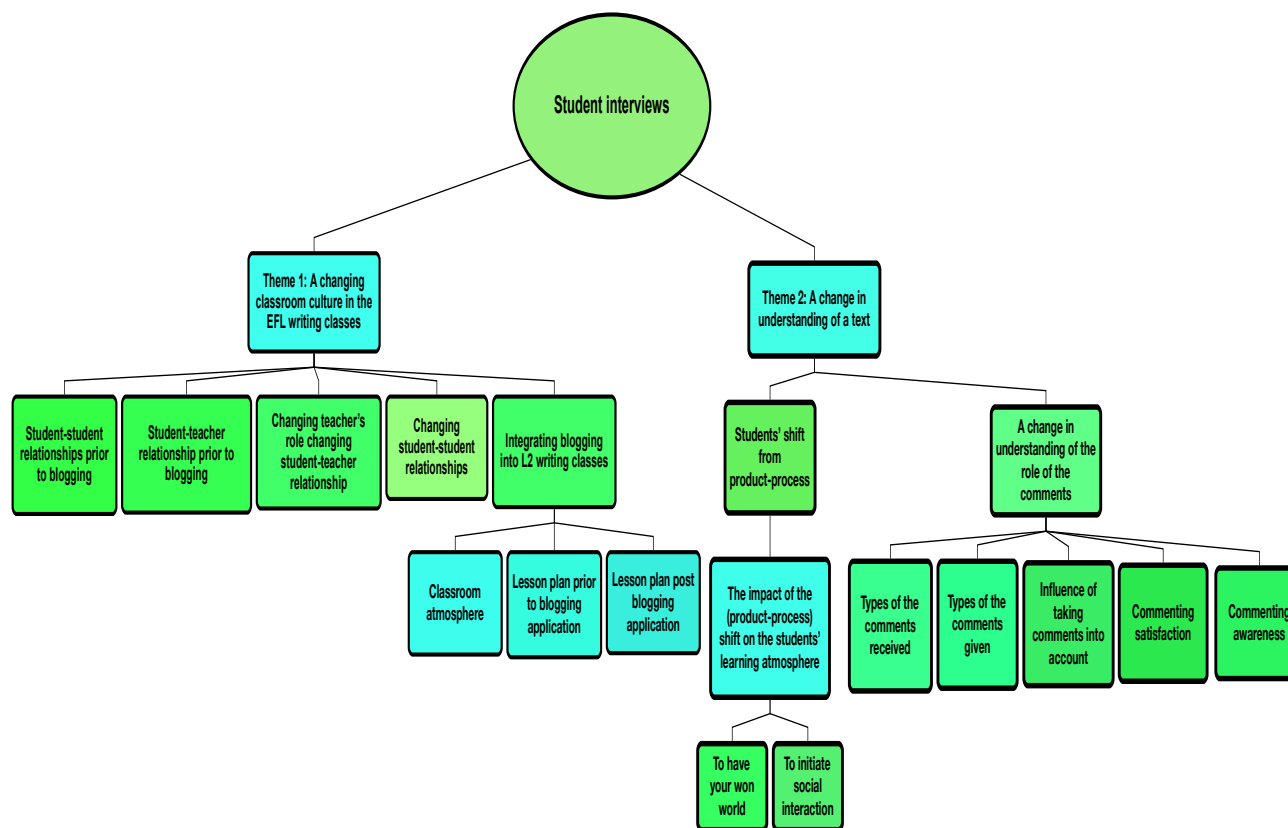
Yes, students may depend on grammatical correction links to correct grammar, words choice and sentence structure; this may affect negatively their general ability to enhance their English language.

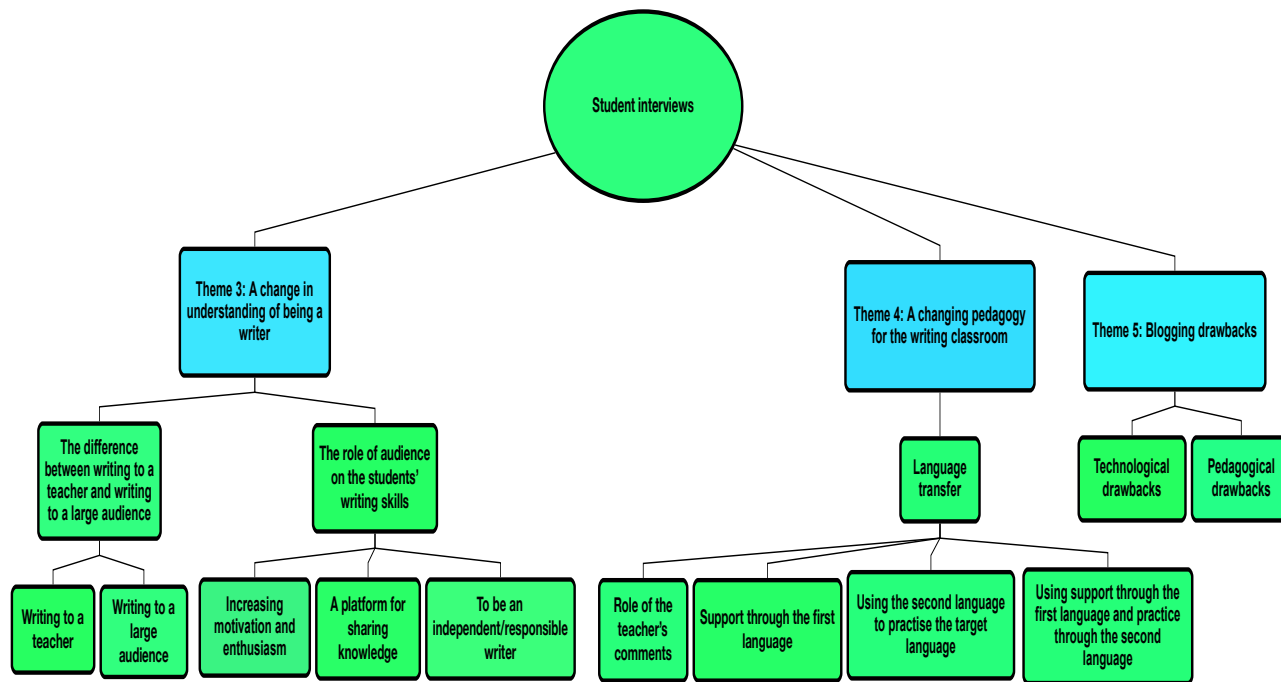
Appendix (S)

Student interviews coded: Sample

Note: The interview was related to: **MNS98**

Student interviews coding framework





Quotations from the interview	Codes	Categories	Sub-categories	Themes
<p>Blogging has this affordance which allowed us to apply different writing strategies thinking of the main ideas, writing examples, drafting, writing the second drafts based on my friend's and EFL teacher comments. These strategies were totally different from the one that I used to</p>	<p>To have your won world</p>	<p>The impact of the product-process shift on the students' learning atmosphere</p>	<p>The students' shift from product to process</p>	<p>A change in understanding of a text</p>
<p>it gives me the opportunity to be aware of the opinions of many people regard my writing</p>	<p>To initiate social interaction</p>	<p>The impact of the students' (product-process) shift on the students' learning atmosphere</p>	<p>The students' shift from product to process</p>	<p>A change in understanding of a text</p>

<p>It improved. The level of our discussion increased especially when we used to discuss the blogging topics, how that we were so enthusiastic to receive the comments and edited our work</p>	<p>Changing student-student relationships</p>			<p>A changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes</p>
<p>Yes it improved. Commenting through blog gave our teacher an opportunity to re-read what he wrote and the students to be aware of their errors without being embarrassed and thus improve the students' writing ability'</p>	<p>Changing teacher's role changing student-teacher relationship</p>			<p>A changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes</p>
<p>interrelated ideas clear supported examples, clear voice while writing</p>	<p>Commenting awareness</p>	<p>A change in understanding of the comments' role</p>		<p>A change in understanding of a text</p>
	<p>Influence of taking the</p>	<p>A change in understanding</p>		

through blogging, I managed to rewrite many sentences to make them clear'	comments into account	of the comments' role		A change in understanding of a text the comments role
Comments and tips about writing sentences, how they can be formed and enhanced'	Types of the comments given	A change in understanding of the comments' role		A change in understanding of a text
what I said in comments was clear in their edited posts	Commenting satisfaction	A change in understanding of the comments' role		A change in understanding of a text
Before the blogging experience, I was thinking that the idea of commenting or criticising what my peers write may be embarrassing, but I found that it is on the contrary, writing skills of both parties may develop'	Commenting awareness	A change in understanding of the comments' role		A change in understanding of a text
positive one's; constructive criticism that helped to improve my writing skills in general'	Types of the comments received	A change in understanding of the comments' role		A change in understanding of a text

My teacher	Writing to a teacher	The difference between writing to a teacher and to a large audience		A change understanding of being a writer
My colleagues at the class	Writing to the colleagues	The difference between writing to a teacher and to a large audience		A change understanding of being a writer
but writing to colleagues and teachers gives us the opportunity to share ideas and opinions and benefit from each other	A platform for sharing knowledge	The role of audience on the students' writing skills		A change understanding of being a writer
Through blogging, I have a wide range of audience, which makes me endeavour to satisfy them	Increasing motivation and enthusiasm	The role of audience on the students' writing skills		A change understanding of being a writer
Yes, because after reading various comments, I checked the strengths' sections of my	Role of the teacher's comments	Language transfer		A changing pedagogy for the writing classroom

writing and kept in improving them. I identified the weaknesses and modified them				
English language	Using the second language to support the target language	Language transfer		A changing pedagogy for the writing classroom
students may depend on grammatical correction links to correct grammar, words choice and sentence structure	Technological drawbacks			Blogging drawbacks

<p>1. How did you do with blog, did you like it, why, give us example? <i>Yes, somehow, because it gives me the opportunity to be aware of the opinions of many people regard my writing.</i></p>	<p>Microsoft Office User To initiate social interaction</p>
<p>2. How do you feel after posting your essay? <i>I feel comfortable and proud that I achieved or completed my required tasks.</i></p>	<p>Microsoft Office User Learning atmosphere</p>
<p>3. Did you like using blogs? why? <i>Yes, Blogging has this affordance which allowed us to apply different writing strategies thinking of the main ideas, writing examples, drafting, writing the second drafts based on my friend's and EFL teacher's comments. These strategies were totally different from the one that I used to.</i></p>	<p>Microsoft Office User To have your own world</p>
<p>4. What is your blog about? Give me an example <i>My blog contains three articles and a modified copy of each article. The first article was about how to make a good impression and the second article was about the advertisements' pros and cons. In the last topic, I talked about the changes that could be made by a small amount of money. I used the narrative approach while writing this article.</i></p>	<p>Microsoft Office User To have your own world</p>
<p>5. How is writing a blog is different from other experiences in writing in the classroom? Give me examples <i>There is a clear difference between the two types because writing in the classroom is supervised by the teacher only to give his point of view, but using blogging makes students read each other work and benefit from each other experiences.</i></p>	<p>Microsoft Office User To initiate social interaction</p>
<p>6. How was your relationship with your friends at the beginning of the year? <i>It was good.</i></p>	<p>Microsoft Office User Student-student relationships prior to blogging</p>
<p>7. Do you think that your relationship with your friends has changed? In what way? Why is that? <i>It improved. The level of our discussion increased especially when we used to discuss the blogging topics, how that we were so enthusiastic to receive the comments and edited our work. This was because we did not know the person who sent the comment and we wanted to show the best of our work.</i></p>	<p>Microsoft Office User Changing student-student relationships June 30, 2021</p>
<p>8. How was your relationship with your teacher? Do you think that over the year, it has changed? In what way? Why is that? <i>It was an ordinary one in which the teacher was the responsible of directing the whole lecture, the only source of knowledge and the only one who can read our writing texts.</i> <i>Yes it improved. Commenting through blog gave our teacher an opportunity to re-read what he wrote and the students to be aware of their errors without being embarrassed and thus improve the students' writing ability.</i></p>	<p>L. Albalushi Student-teacher relationship prior to blogging L. Albalushi Changing teacher's role changing student-teacher relationship</p>
<p>9. Pick out a blog of L2 writing which you think is a good writing. <i>A small amount of money can make a great difference (edited version).</i></p>	<p>Microsoft Office User Commenting awareness</p>
<p>1. Why do you think it is a good one? <i>Interrelated ideas clear supported examples, clear voice while writing.</i></p>	<p>Microsoft Office User Commenting awareness</p>
<p>2. Did blogging help you to do so? <i>Yes, through blogging, I managed to rewrite many sentences to make them clear.</i></p>	<p>Microsoft Office User Influence of taking the comments into account</p>
<p>10. Pick up an example which you think is needed to be improved? <i>How to make a good first impression</i></p>	<p>Microsoft Office User Commenting awareness</p>
<p>1. What would you do now to make it better writing? 2. Why did it work or not... giving examples. <i>Rewriting the main ideas, using other examples from my own experience, verifying the use of words.</i></p>	<p>Microsoft Office User Commenting awareness</p>
<p>11. Did you read your friends work? Did you leave comments on their posts? <i>Of course</i></p>	<p>Microsoft Office User Commenting awareness</p>
<p>12. What kind of comments do you usually like to post on their work? <i>Comments and tips about writing sentences, how they can be formed and enhanced.</i></p>	<p>Microsoft Office User Types of the comments given</p>

13. Did you check your peers edited work? Did they use your comment in editing their work?
Yes, what I said in comments was clear in their edited posts. **Commented [Office1]:** Commenting satisfaction

14. How do you feel about that?
Before the blogging experience, I was thinking that the idea of commenting or criticising what my peers write may be embarrassing, but I found that it is on the contrary, writing skills of both parties may develop. **Commented [Office2]:** Commenting awareness
It was a nice feeling; My colleagues were interested in the comments which I have left on their work and that made me feel important and influential on their writing. **Commented [Office3]:** Influence of taking the comments into account

15. Did your peers comment on your blogs? What kind of comments do you usually receive?
Yes, positive one's; constructive criticism that helped to improve my writing skill in general. **Commented [Office4]:** Types of the comments received

16. Did you use their comments on editing your main work? How do you feel about receiving and posting comments on your peers' work?
Of course, a feeling of intimacy and brotherhood as each one of us helped the other. **Commented [Office5]:** Influence of taking the comments into account

17. Do you think it's a useful task which help to improve your writing? How is that?
Yes, because they provided different views regard my writing which will help to improve it. **Commented [Office6]:** Influence of taking the comments into account

18. Before using blogging, whom did you write to, or who was reading your work and commenting on it?
My teacher. **Commented [Office7]:** Writing to a teacher

19. How about using blogging, do you feel that you are writing for someone else? Whom? Does this change the way you deal with your writing?
Yes, My colleagues at the class. **Commented [Office8]:** Writing to the colleagues

20. How do you describe the differences between both situations?
To a teacher, writing only means writing just for getting grades, but writing to colleagues and teachers gives us the opportunity to share ideas and opinions and benefit from each other. **Commented [Office9]:** Writing to a teacher

21. How is writing a blog is different from writing in any L2 experience \setting? How it helps with the writing in any L2?
Through blogging, I have a wide range of audience, which makes me endeavour to satisfy them. **Commented [Office1]:** Increasing motivation and enthusiasm

22. Which language did use when writing the comment? Why?
English language; this was because using English will get my friends to get used to use English language in their daily life and eventually their language will be improved. **Commented [Office2]:** Using the second language to support the target language

23. Did you receive comments from your teacher? Do you think that they were useful ones? How is that?
Yes, because after reading various comments, I checked the strengths' sections of my writing and kept in improving them. I identified the weaknesses and modified them. **Commented [Office3]:** Role of the teacher's comments

24. Do you remember one of your teacher's comments which you really like the most or not? What is it? Why do you like it or not?
Yes, 'I liked your style in writing and organising the ideas. You write with a smooth and interesting style.' I liked it because people usually described my writings as being complicated and hard to be understood. The teacher's comment meant means that my writing has improved. **Commented [Office4]:** Role of the teacher's comments

25. Are there any negative sides in using blogging to teach writing skill?
Yes, students may depend on grammatical correction links to correct grammar, words choice and sentence structure; this may affect negatively their general ability to enhance their English language. **Commented [Office5]:** Technological drawbacks

Appendix (T)

Teacher's comments in terms of
a changing in classroom culture:

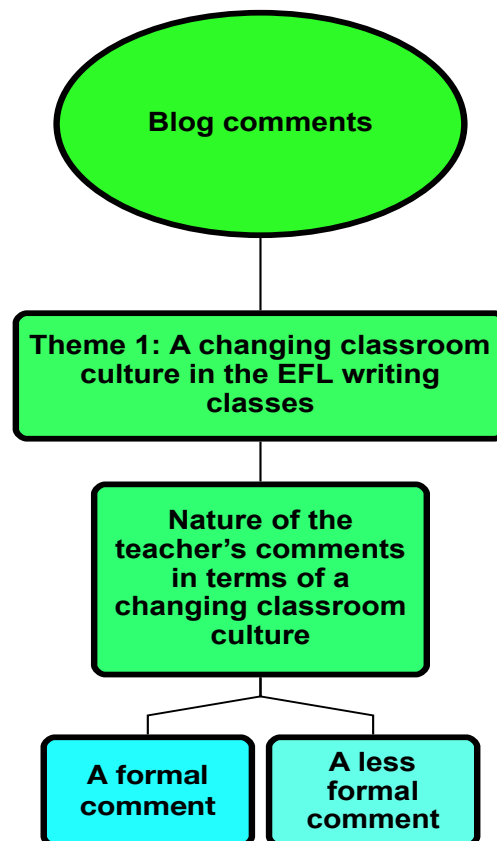
Sample

Transcripts' key

The words in **BLUE** are the **FORMAL** comments

The words in **RED** are the **LESS FORMAL** comments

Emergent codes as the basis for a coding framework



Quotations from the comments	codes	categories	themes
<p>I like your way of writing and demonstrating your ideas; you are writing in an easily and yet interesting style. P.s: I hope that your new version will contain the use of the other options at the posting section, will be waiting to read it. Good Luck</p>	<p>A formal comment</p>	<p>Nature of the teacher's comments in terms of a changing in the classroom culture</p>	<p>A changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes</p>
<p>Well done 😊</p>	<p>A less formal comment</p>	<p>Nature of the teacher's comments in terms of a changing in the classroom culture</p>	<p>A changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes</p>

teacher says: May 8, 2017 at 1:25 pm I like your way of writing and demonstrating your ideas; you are writing in an easily and yet interesting style. P.s: I hope that your new version will contain the use of the other options at the posting section, will be waiting to read it. Good Luck

Comment [Office1]: A formal comment

teacher

MAY 8, 2017 AT 12:27 PM

I do agree with the most of your ideas; smiling is one of the easiest ways to leave a quick good impression, so keep smiling.

P.S; Take care of your spelling and vocabulary choices. Looking forward to read your new version of your essay. Good Luck.

Comment [Office2]: A formal comment

Teacher MAY 9, 2017 AT 8:37 AM

It is really interesting that you have mentioned the kinds of actions which should avoided in order to leave a good impression, well done 😊

P.S: I hope that your edited version will contain some of the choices at the posting section, Good Luck

Comment [Office3]: A formal comment

Comment [Office4]: A less formal comment

teacher MAY 9, 2017 AT 8:56 AM

I enjoyed how you expressed your ideas and supported them with strong examples, well done. P.S: Hope your edited version will contain some of the choices at the posting option section, good luck

Comment [Office5]: A formal comment

teacher MAY 9, 2017 AT 9:02 AM Besides the lovely ideas at the body of your essay, I liked your conclusion. I do agree that making a good impression isn't an easy task to do, but at the same time it will be achieved if you adopt these good manners as a life style. P.S: hopefully, your new version of this essay will contain some of the choices at the posting section, good luck 😊

Comment [Office6]: A formal comment

Comment [Office7]: A less formal comment

teacher MAY 8, 2017 AT 12:54 PM

Love that you have mentioned the kind of actions that shouldn't be done when you are at the class and which may affect your relationship with your teacher. P.S: Try to be generous 😊 add more details when you write. Can't wait to read your second version of this essay. Good Luck 😊

Comment [Office8]: A less formal comment

Comment [Office9]: A formal comment

Comment [Office10]: A less formal comment

teacher says: May 27, 2017 at 11:03 pm .

I really love your writing style and how that you are against this industry.
P.S; Could you please talk about one of your personal experience that has an influence on your recent opinion regards the use of advertisement. Will be waiting to read your edited version. Good Luck 😊

Comment [Office1]: A formal comment
Comment [Office2]: A less formal comment

teacher
MAY 28, 2017 AT 12:03 AM

A lot of people do believe that advertisements have a negative influence on people. I enjoy reading your opinion essay especially when you talk about your personal experience :). P.S; Try to check the structure of your essay; think about each sentence before and while writing them. You may also use the attached link which will help you too. Good luck 😊

Comment [Office3]: A formal comment
Comment [Office4]: A less formal comment

teacher comment-author MAY 27, 2017 AT 10:40 PM .comment-metadata .comment-meta

Excellent way of supporting your opinion with good examples and explanations. P.s: I hope if you could just talk about one of the advertisement which you think include some of your previous discussion. In general Well done, keep it up 😊

Comment [Office5]: A formal comment
Comment [Office6]: A less formal comment

teacher MAY 27, 2017 AT 10:44 PM

Well done; I like your way of writing and how you stick to your opinion. P.S: I hope if you could add other justifications which support your opinion. Good luck |

Comment [Office7]: A formal comment

teacher . MAY 29, 2017 AT 10:25 AM

Like your style of writing in supporting your opinion. well done. P.S; Try to colour your essay by the use of real examples. You are talking about a live topic and we have lots of real examples which I think will be a great add to your work. Will be waiting for your edited version, good luck 😊

Comment [Office8]: A formal comment
Comment [Office9]: A less formal comment

teacher . MAY 27, 2017 AT 11:37 PM .

You are writing so smoothly that attracts the reader. P.s; AGAIN, be generous and try to add more details and examples. I am sure this will move your writing to another great level. Get out of your comfort zone and do it! Will be waiting for your edited version, good luck 😊

Comment [Office10]: A less formal comment
Comment [Office11]: A formal comment

Appendix (U)

Teacher's interview: Sample

Transcript keys

- The words in **plain type** are the question asked by the interviewer.
- The words in *italic* are the participant's responses

Warm-up questions (not for data collection)

1. Can you tell me about your teaching qualifications?

I have a master degree in English curriculum and teaching methods of English language.

2. How long have you been teaching English as a foreign language?

For the past 20 years

3. Did you use any kind of technology within your teaching? What are they?

Actually, not that much; usually, I am using a projector during my classes just to show the students their major mistakes and to play some games when I was teaching school students.

4. Have you ever used blogging within your teaching? If the answer is yes, can you give me any examples?

No, I haven't used it before.

5. As a teacher, how can you integrate blogs as part of the pedagogy in L2 writing?

Using blogging as part of teaching needs lots of preparation and practicing. At first, as a teacher you need to be aware of blogging idea itself; to get enough experience in how to use the features of blogging and get used to the blogging as another pedagogical platform within your class. It needed to make lots of changes on the teaching plans itself (sometimes while teaching, I have to refer to the blogs activities for example; reminding them to write constructive comments. 1.To have extensive workshops on the use of blogging; 2. To make a balance especially at the beginning between the lessons at the class

and the computer library because students have to go through three stages; 1. Writing their first draft; 2 Writing comments; 3. 3 Writing their second draft.

There is the psychological part that should be taken care of; having your work to be read and commented on by other students is not an easy step to be applied and accepted. As a teacher you need to keep an eye on the students' work, to keep motivating them, making them feel that it's a safe world working towards one main aim which is to enhance the students' English language.

6. Has using blogs in teaching L2writing added something more than your normal way of teaching L2? (TRADITIONAL WAY) How is that?

Yes, teaching became much more fun than usual. For example, my students and me have gone through a pleasant experience; we could contact each other easily and during the whole day instead of the teaching timing only at the class. Some of the features at the blog such as the correction link, has played role in letting the students to find their own mistakes which has helped me to skip the correction stage which I used to have with the students and spend much time in writing the feedback to the students and explaining to them how to improve the quality of their writing.

7. In term of teaching what will you do differently?

If there was time, I wish I could blend a whole unit within the blog. I mean students will not need to use their class book. To have a lesson which the students may go through within the blog and to start writing straightforward on their blogs, giving them feedback and writing their second draft on that same day. This will need more time, preparation between me as a teacher and the web programmer of the website.

8. If you design a new lesson with blog now, what might you do differently?

Blogging can be a great platform for self-learning, I could do one more task; in which I could divide the students into groups; asking them to choose their own kind of essay, going through the whole steps and watch them how will they handle it. My role will be only to observe and giving them the feedback on their first draft.

9. From integrating blogging to your teaching strategies, what did you hope that your students will learn from blogging? What you think your students get out of it?

Several things:

1. Learning to write English can be a fun process

2. *Learning writing in English can be much easier by asking others not only your teacher but even your colleagues who have a better language.*
3. *In order to have a good language, you need to be independent; learning a language needs a passion and to keep reading and writing not only in the class but also outside it which is much more important. We are now in a new era, in which technology can be used not only for fun, but also in improving your English language. Now, students can start their own blogs or participate in other languages' blogs*

10. Has the use of blogging within your teaching changed the class atmosphere? How is that?

Yes, the class's atmosphere has become much more friendly.

11. Did your relationship with the students have changed, in what way? How is that?

*Yes, I have noticed how was the relationship have changed not only between my students themselves, but also between me and my students. At first and due to the way we used which is the, teacher centered, our relationship was too formal. I mean we used only to talk about the exercises we go through and the teaching elements of the lesson. However, now it became stronger and much more friendly. Sometimes, when we discuss one of the blog activities, especially, the comments one, students talk about their favourite comments from both sides; their colleagues and me. Some of the students, who used to be shy, started to ask more questions and trying to *be involved*. We started to have a side talk beside the lesson itself.*

12. Do you think that the relationship between the students have changed? in what way? Yes, it became much stronger. This was obvious by using the comments; students were trying not only to encourage each other, but also to help improving each other work.

13. Has applying blogs as a pedagogical way affected your collaboration with the students in the Omani EFL context? How is that?

Yes, I can say that using blogging in teaching and learning English has created a kind of a busy network; between me as a teacher and my students and between the students themselves. Every lecture, we have a topic which is related to the blogging experience and which we need to talk about, comment on some of the students' progress and sometimes students help each other in understanding the work of some of the blog features. Which was a new dimension, I have discovered that students sometimes may benefit each other in a better way.

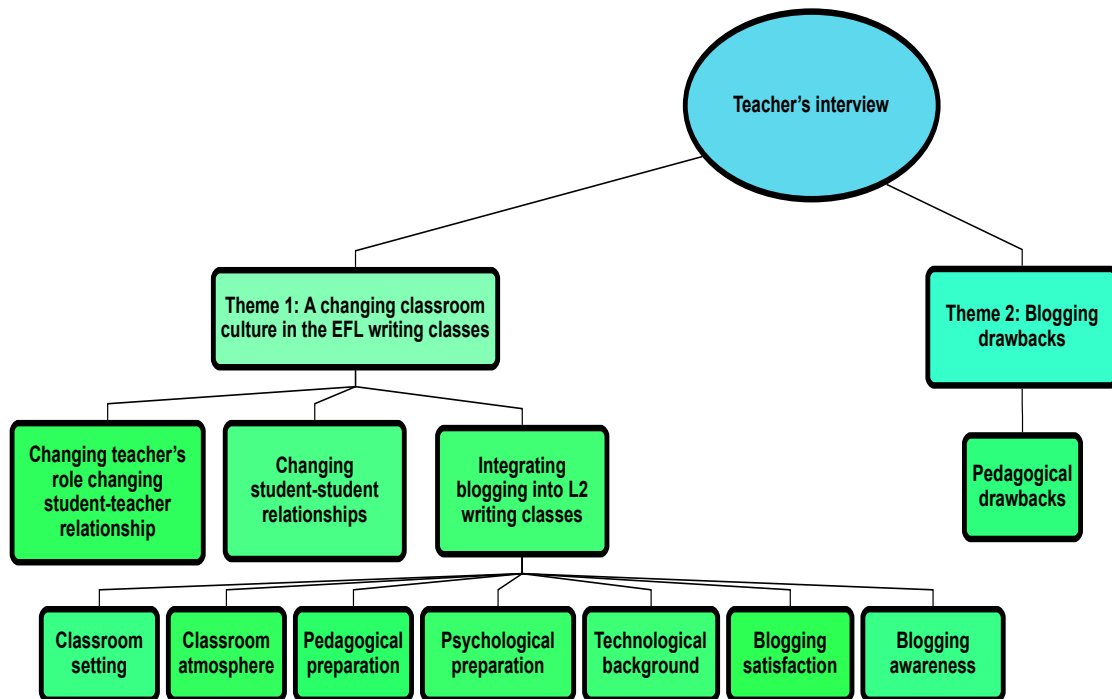
14. Are there any potential disadvantages for the use of blogging in teaching L2? If yes, what are they?

- 1. Integrating this kind of technology requires much more preparation and time which may take some time till things still down.*
- 2. Some of the students especially those who don't have that much experience need constant help in the use of blog and its features.*
- 3. Teachers need to deal with this kind of technology so carefully, there must be a kind of a contact between the teacher and the students inside the class. Otherwise, students may feel neglected and only contacting with their teacher via blogging*

Appendix (V)

Teacher's interview coded: Sample

Teacher's interview coding framework



Quotations from the interview	Codes	Sub-codes	Theme
Actually, not that much; usually, I am using a projector during my classes just to show the students their major mistakes	Integrating blogging into L2 writing	Technological Background	A changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes
At first, as a teacher you need to be aware of blogging idea itself; to get enough experience in how to use the features of blogging and get used to the blogging as another pedagogical platform within your class	Integrating blogging into L2 writing	Pedagogical Preparation	A changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes
There is the psychological part that should be taken care of; having your work to be read and commented on by other students is not an easy step to be applied and accepted	Integrating blogging into L2 writing	Psychological preparation	A changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes
Yes, teaching became much more fun than usual	Integrating blogging into L2 writing	Blogging satisfaction	A changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes

<p>If there was time, I wish I could blend a whole unit within the blog. I mean students will not need to use their class book</p>	<p>Integrating blogging into L2 writing</p>	<p>Blogging awareness</p>	<p>A changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes</p>
<p>Yes, the class's atmosphere has become much more friendly</p>	<p>Integrating blogging into L2 writing</p>	<p>Classroom atmosphere</p>	<p>A changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes</p>
<p>'At first and due to the way we used which is the, teacher centered, our relationship was too formal. I mean we used only to talk about the exercises we go through and the teaching elements of the lesson. However,</p>	<p>Student-teacher relationship prior to blogging</p>		<p>A changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes</p>
<p>now it became stronger and much more friendly'</p>	<p>Changing teacher's role changing student-teacher's Relationship</p>		<p>A changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes</p>
<p>'Yes, it became much stronger. This was obvious by using the comments; students were trying not only to encourage each other, but also to help improving each other work'</p>	<p>Changing student-student relationships</p>		<p>A changing classroom culture in the EFL writing classes</p>

<p>'Integrating this kind of technology requires much more preparation and time which may take some time till things still down'</p>	<p>Pedagogical drawbacks</p>		<p>Blogging drawbacks</p>
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Questions (1 & 2): Warm-up questions (not for data collection)

1. Can you tell me about your teaching qualifications? L
I have a master degree in English curriculum and teaching methods of English language.
2. How long have you been teaching English as a foreign language?
For the past 20 years
3. Did you use any kind of technology within your teaching? What are they?
Actually, not that much; usually, I am using a projector during my classes just to show the students their major mistakes and to play some games when I was teaching school students.
4. Have you ever used blogging within your teaching? If the answer is yes, can you give me any examples?
No, I haven't used it before.
5. As a teacher, how can you integrate blogs as part of the pedagogy in L2 writing?
Using blogging as part of teaching needs lots of preparation and practicing. *At first, as a teacher you need to be aware of blogging idea itself; to get enough experience in how to use the features of blogging and get used to the blogging as another pedagogical platform within your class. It needed to make lots of changes on the teaching plans itself (sometimes while teaching, I have to refer to the blogs activities for example; reminding them to write constructive comments. 1.To have extensive workshops on the use of blogging; 2. To make a balance especially at the beginning between the lessons at the class and the computer library because students have to go through three stages; 1. Writing their first draft; 2 Writing comments; 3. 3 Writing their second draft.*
6. Has using blogs in teaching L2writing added something more than your normal way of teaching L2? (TRADIONAL WAY) How is that?

Commented [Office1]: Technological Background

Commented [Office2]: Technological Background

Commented [Office3]: Pedagogical Preparation

Commented [Office4]: Psychological Preparation

Yes, teaching became much more fun than usual. For example, my students and me have gone through a pleasant experience; we could contact each other easily and during the whole day instead of the teaching timing only at the class. Some of the features at the blog such as the correction link, has played role in letting the students to find their own mistakes which has helped me to skip the correction stage which I used to have with the students and spend much time in writing the feedback to the students and explaining to them how to improve the quality of their writing.

Commented [Office1]: Blogging Satisfaction

7. In term of teaching what will you do differently?

If there was time, I wish I could blend a whole unit within the blog. I mean students will not need to use their class book. To have a lesson which the students may go through within the blog and to start writing straightforward on their blogs, giving them feedback and writing their second draft on that same day. This will need more time, preparation between me as a teacher and the web programmer of the website.

Commented [Office2]: Blogging awareness

8. If you design a new lesson with blog now, what might you do differently?

Blogging can be a great platform for self-learning, I could do one more task; in which I could divide the students into groups; asking them to choose their own kind of essay, going through the whole steps and watch them how will they handle it. My role will be only to observe and giving them the feedback on their first draft.

Commented [Office3]: Blogging awareness

9. From integrating blogging to your teaching strategies, what did you hope that your students will learn from blogging? What you think your students get out of it?

Several things:

1. *Learning to write English can be a fun process*
2. *Learning writing in English can be much easier by asking others not only your teacher but even your colleagues who have a better language.*
3. *In order to have a good language, you need to be independent; learning a language needs a passion and to keep reading and writing not only in the class but also outside it which is much more important.*
We are now in a new era, in which technology can be used not only for fun, but also in improving your English language. Now, students can start their own blogs or participate in other languages' blogs

Commented [Office4]: Blogging Satisfaction

10. Has the use of blogging within your teaching changed the class atmosphere? How is that?

Yes, the class's atmosphere has become much more friendly.

Commented [Office5]: Classroom Atmosphere

11. Did your relationship with the students have changed, in what way? How is that way?

Yes, I have noticed how was the relationship have changed not only between my students themselves, but also between me and my students. At first and due to the way we used which is the, teacher centered, our relationship was too formal. I mean we used only to talk about the exercises we go through and the teaching elements of the lesson. However, now it became stronger and much more friendly. Sometimes, when we discuss one of the blog activities, especially, the comments one, students talk about their favourite comments from both sides; their colleagues and me. Some of the students, who used to be shy, started to ask more questions and trying to be involved. We started to have a side talk beside the lesson itself.

L. Albalushi
Changing teacher's role changing student-teacher Relationship

L. Albalushi
Student-teacher relationship prior to blogging

L. Albalushi
Changing teacher's role changing student-teacher Relationship

12. Do you think that the relationship between the students have changed? in what way?

Yes, it became much stronger. This was obvious by using the comments; students were trying not only to encourage each other, but also to help improving each other work.

Microsoft Office User
Changing student-student relationships
May 10, 2020

13. Has applying blogs as a pedagogical way affected your interaction with the students in the Omani EFL context? How is that?

Yes, I can say that using blogging in teaching and learning English has created a kind of a busy network; between me as a teacher and my students and between the students themselves. Every lecture, we have a topic which is related to the blogging experience and which we need to talk about, comment on some of the students' progress and sometimes students help each other in understanding the work of some of the blog features. Which was a new dimension, I have discovered that students sometimes may benefit each other in a better way.

Microsoft Office User
Changing teacher's role changing student-teacher Relationship

14. Are there any potential disadvantages for the use of blogging in teaching L2

? If yes, what are they?

1. *Integrating this kind of technology requires much more preparation and time which may take some time till things still down.*
2. *Some of the students especially those who don't have that much experience need constant help in the use of blog and its features.*
3. *Teachers need to deal with this kind of technology so carefully, there must be a kind of a contact between the teacher and the students inside the class. Otherwise, students may feel neglected and only contacting with their teacher via blogging.*

Microsoft Office User
Pedagogical Drawbacks

Appendix (W)

Arabic version of the students' interview

تجربة التدوين

١. كيف تعاملت مع التدوين؟ هل أحببته؟ لماذا؟ اعطى مثالا
٢. كيف تشعر بعد إرسال مقالتك؟
٣. هل أحببت استعمال المدونات؟ لماذا؟
٤. ما هو مضمون مدونتك؟ اعطن مثالا؟ (تكلمي بشكل عام عن المواضيع التي قمتي بكتابتها)
٥. اختر مدونة من الكتابة والتي تعتقد أنها كتابة جيدة؟
 ١. لم تعتقد أنها جيدة؟
 ٢. هل ساعدك التدوين للقيام بذلك؟
٦. اختاري مثالا تعتقد أنه بحاجة للتطوير، كيف يمكنك القيام ذلك؟ لماذا؟
٧. كيف تختلف كتابة المدونات عن أية تجارب كتابيه في الصف؟ كيف يساعد هذا في الكتابة في أية لغة ثانيه؟ اعط أمثلة؟
٨. هل أضاف استعمال المدونات للكتابة في اللغة الثانية شيئا مختلفا في تجربتك التعليمية عن تجاربك الأخرى في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية؟ أن كان الجواب نعم، هل بالإمكان إعطائي بعض الأمثلة؟ (هل تعلمت أكثر؟ هل تستمتع بالتعلم؟ هل يساعد هذا في إنجاز ما يطلبه منك المعلم؟) أن كان الجواب لا، هل بالإمكان شرح سبب ذلك؟
٩. أيهما تفضل؟ لماذا؟
١٠. كيف كانت علاقتك مع زملائك في بداية السنة الدراسية؟
١١. هل تعتقد أن علاقتك مع زملائك قد تغيرت على نحو ما؟ لماذا؟

١٢. كيف كانت علاقتك مع معلمك / معلمتك؟ هل تعتقد أنها تغيرت خلال السنة؟ كيف؟ ولماذا؟
١٣. هل قرأت عمل أصدقائك؟ هل تركت تعليقات حول مقالاتهم؟
١٤. ما نوع التعليقات التي تكتبها عادة حول عملهم؟
١٥. هل دقت عمل أقرانك المحرر؟ هل لجأوا إلى تعليقاتك في تحرير عملهم؟
١٦. كيف تشعر بهذا الخصوص؟
١٧. هل علق أقرانك على مدوناتك؟ ما نوع التعليقات التي تتلقاها عادة؟
١٨. هل لجأت إلى تعليقاتهم أثناء تحرير عملك الرئيسي؟ كيف تشعر بتلقي وإرسال تعليقات حول عمل أقرانك؟
١٩. هل ترى أن هذا واجب مهم يساعدك لتحسين كتابتك؟ كيف هو ذلك؟
٢٠. قبل استخدام التدوين لمن كنت تكتب؟ من كان يقرأ عملك أو يعلق عليه؟
٢١. ماذا عن استخدام التدوين هل تشعر وكأنك تكتب لشخص آخر؟ من هو؟ هل يغير هذا من طريقة تعاملك مع كتابتك؟
٢٢. كيف تصف الاختلافات بين كلا الحالتين؟
٢٣. كيف تكون تجربة التدوين مختلفة عن التجارب التعليمية الأخرى لممارسة مهارة الكتابة؟ اعط أمثلة
٢٤. عند قراءة مقالات زملائك بأي لغة تفضل كتابه التعليقات، باللغة الأولى (اللغة العربية) أو الثانية (English) ولماذا؟
٢٥. هل تلقيت تعليقات من معلمك/ معلمتك؟
٢٦. هل تعتقد أن هذه التعليقات كانت مفيدة؟ كيف هي مفيدة؟
٢٧. هل تتذكر أم لا أية من تعليقات معلمك / معلمتك والتي تحبها أكثر من البقية؟ ما هو التعليق؟ لماذا تحبه أو لا تحبه؟
٢٨. بشكل عام هل تنصح باستعمال التدوين في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية؟ لم ذلك؟
٢٩. هل هناك جوانب سلبية لاستخدام التدوين في تعليم الكتابة

Appendix (X)

Certificate of ethical approval



GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

St Luke's Campus
Heavitree Road
Exeter UK EX1 2LU

<http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/education/>

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

Title of Project: Blogs in Language Learning; Enhancing Students' Writing Through Blogs

Researcher(s) name: Laila Almas Al Balushi

Supervisor(s): Susan Jones
Judith Kleine Staarman

This project has been approved for the period

From: 01/04/2017
To: 01/07/2017

Ethics Committee approval reference:

D/16/17/24

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Durrant'.

Signature: (Dr Philip Durrant, Chair, Graduate School of Education Ethics Committee) Date: 08/01/2017

References list

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