

# **Applying Blended Learning through WhatsApp group chat to improve students' achievement in writing analytical exposition text at SMA Negeri 1 Terbanggi Besar**

**Nurul Fadhillah<sup>1</sup>Patuan Raja<sup>2</sup>Gede Eka Putrawan<sup>3</sup>**

FKIP Universitas Lampung, Jl. Prof. Dr. Soemantri Brojonegoro No. 1, Bandar Lampung<sup>1,2,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence e-mail: [nurulfadhillah139@gmail.com](mailto:nurulfadhillah139@gmail.com)

*Abstract:* The objectives of this research were to find out whether there was any improvement on students' analytical exposition text writing achievement, and their perceptions after the implementation of blended learning through WhatsApp group chat. This research was a quantitative research which was conducted through a one group pre-test and post-test design. The subjects of this research were thirty-five students in SMA Negeri 1 Terbanggi Besar. The data were collected through pre- and post-tests in the forms of analytical exposition text and a questionnaire. The data were analyzed by using Paired Samples T-Test and descriptive statistics. The students' writing achievement were compared between the pre and the post test. The result showed that there was statistically significant improvement of the students' writing achievement after they were taught through blended learning by WhatsApp group chat. It could be seen from the computation of Paired Samples T-Test where the T-value (8.628) was higher than t-table (2.032) with the significance level of 0.00. Therefore, their perceptions toward blended learning through WhatsApp group chat in terms of five aspects of writing were also positive. Then this research proved that blended learning is effective to be implemented in developing and improving students' writing achievement.

**Keywords:** blended learning, WhatsApp group chat, analytical exposition text, perception.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Writing, which is a significant part of communication, is the expression of feelings, thoughts, desires and plans in black and white (Akkaya and Kirmiz, 2013). In a teaching and learning process at schools, it is assumed as the most complex among four major skills, which include listening, speaking, reading and writing (Richard and Renandya, 2002). Jahin and Idrees (2012) also believe that both native and non-native students consider it difficult since every learner should have a balance among various aspects in his/her writing in terms of organization, content, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Along the same line of thought, Salma (2015) also stated that writing is considered as a difficult skill, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts where students face many challenges in it. Dealing with writing for EFL students, Richard and Renandya (2002) stated that writing is regarded as a language skill that is not easy to master. Idrus (2003) also stated that although English has been learnt for many years, senior high school graduates still find it difficult to understand and use English well both in oral and written forms.

Going on with the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we can notice not only is the education system developing rapidly, but also technology has invaded our life. Everyone processes smartphone these days, using WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram, etc (Hamad, 2017). He added that no one can deny that this generation we teach nowadays is the generation of technology, whatever we do we cannot stop them from using technology, mobile phones, ipad, etc. For that reason, using technology turns out to be well-aligned with strategic educational goals such as improving student retention and achievement, supporting differentiation of learning needs, and reaching learners who would not otherwise have the opportunity to participate in education (Kukulska-Hulme, 2009). Related to the use of mobile technology, WhatsApp has been chosen to be one of the most popular among the researchers to investigate the effect of using it (Ayuningtyas, 2018). WhatsApp is preferably used for many reasons. Hamad (2017) said that WhatsApp is the most common chatting application to use among the students, students do not need to have a computer, it is attainable and it does not cost much. Moreover, Ashiyan & Salehi (2016) also stated that WhatsApp is a tool that can be used for different educational purposes. WhatsApp can make the instructional process more interesting. Students do not only follow the teaching and learning activity inside the classroom, but they can also follow the teaching and learning activity outside the classroom by joining WhatsApp group chat. Blended learning as its simplest is defined as the type of learning that combines traditional face-to-face model with e-learning model, thus benefiting from both methods, creating a richer learning experience (Usta, 2007). Adas and Shmais (2011) see blended learning as a method that creates a suitable educational environment for students. Lim, Morris and Kupritz (2007) also mentioned that it is a learning method that has more than one way to enhance learning outcomes with a low cost associated.

There are some previous studies with respect to blended learning in teaching and learning process. They proved that blended learning is effective to improve English vocabulary level (Djiwandono, 2013), and it is also suitable to improve students' writing skill (Awada, 2016). Justina (2016) stated that WhatsApp can motivate the students to improve their writing skill though it is considered the most difficult of the four language skills. She added that learners also give positive response when technology, especially when Internet involved in their language learning. Thus, there are some factors that influenced the improvement of students' achievement in writing. Accessible of the media, broad availability of the teacher to the students, the opportunity for students to help one another, and the opportunity for more in-depth acquaintance with the students on the educational and personal levels made students enjoy and could be motivated to follow the teaching and learning process. According to Richards & Lockhart (1996), learners' belief systems cover a wide range of issues and can influence learners' motivation to learn, their expectations about language learning, their perceptions about what is easy or difficult about a language, as well as the kind of learning strategies they favor. Centra and Gaubatz (2005) also added that apart from teaching effectiveness that gives impact on student achievement, students' perceptions are seen to have some relation with their achievement. Then, indirectly their positive perception can support the improvement of student writing. This is in line with Barhoumi (2015) stated that the improvement of students' achievement is caused by the improvement students' motivation and interest. Then, It could be assumed that students' improvement in writing relates positively to their perception.

That is why this research is urgent to conduct in order to find out whether blended learning

through WhatsApp mobile application is also suitable for improving high school students' writing achievement in English as a foreign language.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This research is a quantitative research to find out the improvement of students' writing achievement through blended learning and to find out students' perception towards blended learning by using WhatsApp group. The population of the research was the whole eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Terbanggi Besar which consisted of 390 students. Thirty five students in XI IPA 1 were chosen as the sample. The data were collected by pre- and post-test to see the improvement of students' analytical exposition text writing. Then, to get the data of students' perceptions, the researcher used questionnaire. The data of the tests were analyzed using Paired Samples T-Test and descriptive statistic for the questionnaire.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

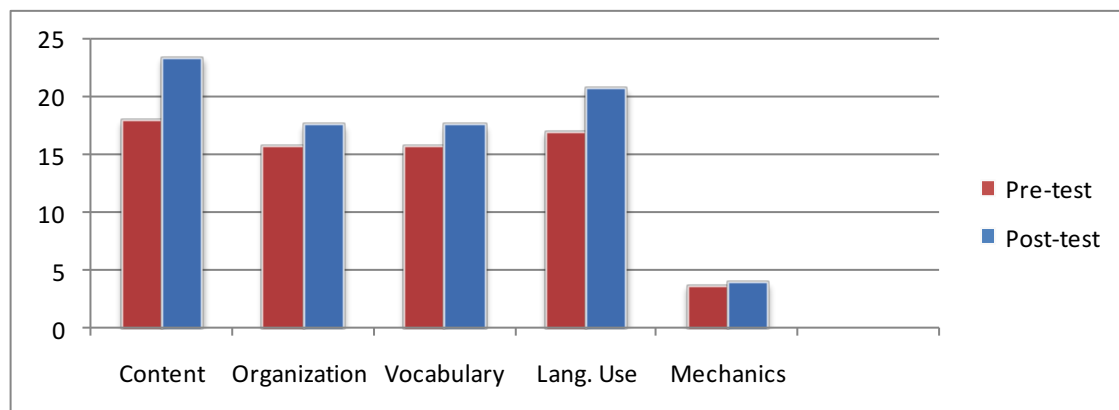
### Results

This section presents the result of data analysis. For the test result, the improvement in each aspects can be seen from the following table:

**Table 4.1 The improvement of the students' achievement in analytical exposition text writing**

Aspects of Writing	Mean score of		Gain score	Percentage	T-Value	Sig.
	Pre-test	Post-test				
Content	18.03	23.43	5.40	18%	8.481	.000
Organization	15.69	17.63	1.94	9.7%	5.511	.000
Vocabulary	15.69	17.60	1.91	9.55%	5.973	.000
Language Use	17.06	20.71	3.65	14.6%	8.547	.000
Mechanics	3.77	4.00	0.23	4.6%	2.758	.009

According to the table 4.1 above, it presents the means, the gain, maximum score, then the percentage and T-Value of each writing aspect. It can be clearly seen for the highest gain score of each aspect is content with (5.40), followed by language use (3.65) in the percentage of (18%) and (14.6%) respectively. Then, the percentage of the organization, vocabulary, and mechanics are (9.7%), (9.55%) and (4.6%) with gain scores (1.94), (1.91) and (0.23). Therefore, we can see the improvement of the mean scores of the aspects of writing in the graph below.



**Figure 4.1. The improvement of each aspects of writing**

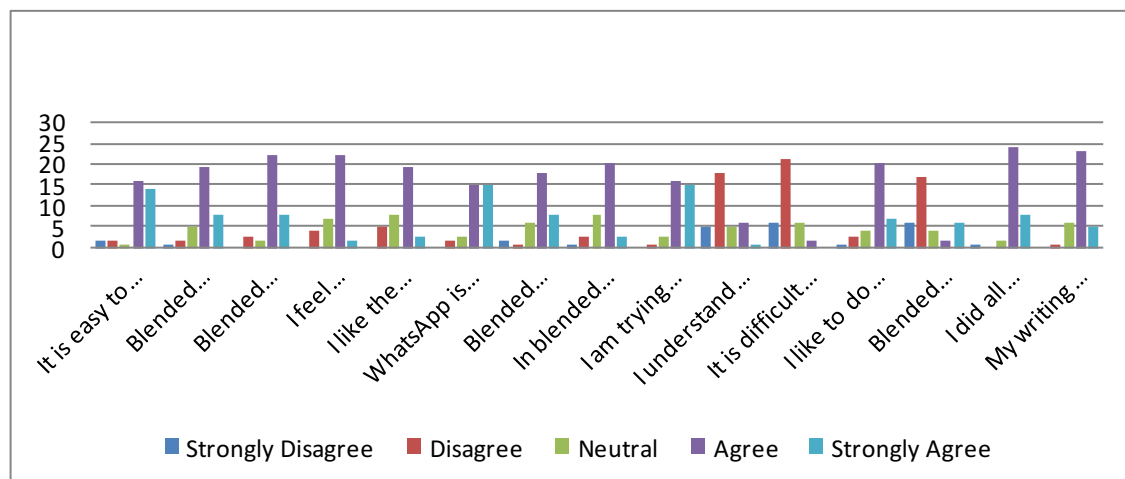
Then, the table below shows the result of Paired Samples T-Test.

**Table 4.2 Paired Samples T-Test**

		Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	POSTTEST - PRETEST	13.53	9.227	1.560	10.288	16.627	8.628	34	.000

Table 4.2 provides the result of the writing test. For the gain of the pre-test and post-test score obtained values of 13.53. The standard deviation of the difference scores is 9.227. Then, standard error mean is 1.560. The degree of freedom for this test is 34. It also provides evidence that the results of the computation of the value of two tailed significance is 0.00. It means that  $H_a$  is accepted because  $0.00 < 0.05$ . It proves that there is improvement on students' writing achievement in analytical exposition text from pre-test to post-test after the implementation of blended learning by using WhatsApp group chat. Then, if the t-value (8.628) compared with t-table (2.032), it can be seen that the students' writing improves since t-value  $>$  t-table. As a final point, according to the results above, it can be concluded that the use of blended learning by using WhatsApp group chat can significantly improve the students' writing skill which in this case is analytical exposition text.

Besides improvement, this research is also conducted to examine the students' perception of blended learning by using WhatsApp group chat which is based on 5 aspects (difficulty, degree of stress, interest in task content, motivation, and confidence) adapted from Robinson (2001). The researcher made an online questionnaire using a survey administration application, Google form. The graph below is the result of the questionnaire:

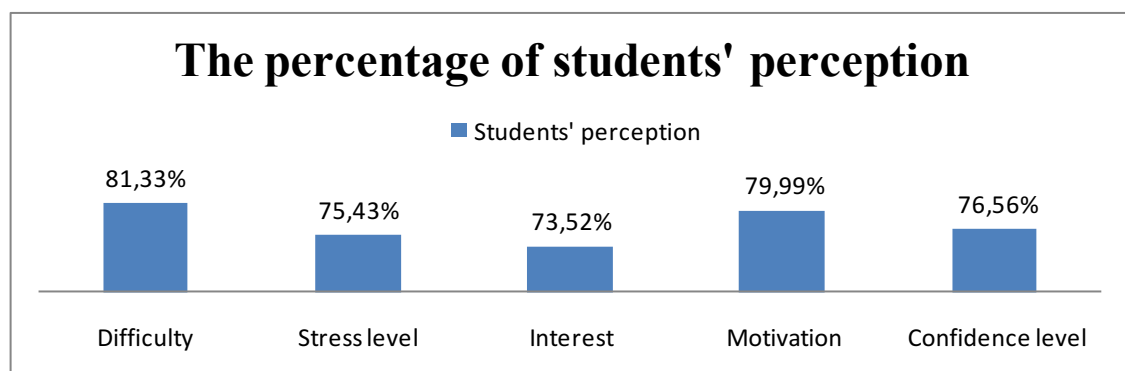


**Figure 4.2 Result of the Questionnaire**

The researcher used percentage in each statement and calculated the mean score to analyze the result of the questionnaire (see on Appendix). Then, the table 4.3 and figure 4.3 below are the mean and percentage of all aspects in the questionnaire:

**Table 4.5 Result of Students' Perception**

Total	
Mean	77.368
Median	77.71
Standard Deviation	5.128047
Range	17.14
Minimum	68.57
Maximum	85.71



**Figure 4.3 The percentage of students' perception**

Table 4.3 and figure 4.3 above present the mean and the percentage for each statement in questionnaire which related to five aspects of students' perception. Based on the data obtained from the questionnaire, it was found that the majority of students had positive perception and agree to use blended learning through WhatsApp group chat to be implemented in writing, especially analytical exposition text writing.

## **Discussions**

### **Students' achievement in writing analytical exposition text**

The research findings showed that the implementation of blended learning through WhatsApp group chat had given a positive effect of the students' achievement in analytical exposition text writing. In other words, WhatsApp group chat could increase students' achievement in analytical exposition text writing. It can be seen from the comparison of students' pre- and post test's mean score. The mean score of pre-test was 69.84 which improved to 83.37 in the post-test. This study also analyzed the improvement of each aspects of writing, they were content (18%), organization (9.7%), vocabulary (9.55%), language use (14.6%), and mechanics (4.6%).

The data of the research revealed that the aspect which improved the most was content. The finding of this research supports the previous findings from Fattah (2015) and Dumanauw (2016) which stated that WhatsApp could improve students' writing achievement, especially for content aspect. The content became the most improved aspect because they stated that WhatsApp technology can enhance students' active participation in the EFL classroom. They were gathered in one group to discuss what they were going to write. If some students had no idea, their friends in a group could trigger the others to give their arguments. This in line with La Hanisi, Risdiany, Dwi Utami, and Sulisworo (2018) which stated that WhatsApp can provide students to get a comprehensible input with an opportunity for practicing the language for free, a more personal and comprehensive relationship between students and teachers, a chance for students not to be more sociable only, but also to learn better, and an opportunity for students to synchronize their opinions with others.

When the researcher gave the treatments, it could be seen that students had enthusiasm in learning especially when they had discussion to decide whether they were support or against the issue that had given from the teacher in the second treatment. This in line with Mona (2017) which stated that "WhatsApp helps to facilitate students in discussion, and helps students to overcome their fear of using the language".

Therefore, students felt excited and enjoyed the writing activity because that was the first time they had online activities. They worked and learnt together as teammates in a group. Most of the students were worried when the writer asked them to write their draft in the group. But when it started, students were actively participated in the discussion although they still made mistakes especially with the grammar, as Mistar and Embi (2016), stated the usefulness of WhatsApp could improve students' confidence in using the language, being active in the language activities and really help students in learning the language better. Thus, this is also in line with Mhandeni and Mwakapina (2016) that stated "students are always worried of making mistakes as they learn, but WhatsApp makes them feel relaxed among friends. For that case, they are much likely to participate and learn more, especially because it does not require face to face interactions". As a teammate, students helped each other in correcting the mistakes that their teammates made, instead of making fun of it.

### **Students' perception of the implementation of blended learning through WhatsApp**

This study was not only to investigate students' improvement in writing analytical exposition

text writing, but also wanted to know students' perception after the implementation of blended learning through WhatsApp group chat. It was found that students' perception was positive towards the implementation of blended learning by using WhatsApp group chat in the class. It can be seen from the result, 77.36% students had a positive perception about the implementation of blended learning through WhatsApp group chat since the percentage is more than 70%. After conducting the research and analyzing the data, the obtained result was 81.33% students agreed that this media is accessible to share contents and discuss with group or peers. Majority of students who filled out the form stated that they loved when blended learning through WhatsApp group chat was applied in the class because it could ease them to search material, share, then discuss it with peers or group without being noisy. This is in line with Rambe and Chipunza (2013) which claimed that WhatsApp could enhance accessibility, encourages cooperation, and intensifies motivation to take an active part in academic assignments. This also supported by Fifty six percent participants in a study of Bansal and Joshi (2014) who agreed that learning through WhatsApp has educational benefits like immediate feedback to the problem; learning on move; deeper clarity on issues; revision of previously learned topics; learning from others problems; healthy discussions; and availability of learning material all the time.

Blended learning through WhatsApp group chat was not only accessible, but also gained the interests of the students since it is paperless. It can be seen that the obtained result was 73.52% students agreed that this media could improve their interest in learning. They just need to type and revise their draft in WhatsApp group chat after that re-send it to the WhatsApp group. This finding supports the previous research which was conducted by (Linda & Ri'aeni, 2018). The result showed WhatsApp Messenger attracts the students' interest and also the students have positive responses towards the use of WhatsApp Messenger.

It is observed that the most important factor that students refer as negative in relation to sending of information messages via WhatsApp application is the timing of the messages. Though in limited numbers, some statements of the students, particularly about the untimely messages that may cause distraction, shows that special care must be taken in the timing of the messages. Other negativity in the process of implementation is the messages within the group. Although the students were informed about the purpose of the group, there were unnecessary and disturbing messages; however, this was resolved within the group without the interference of the researcher. This shows that there is self-control within the group and students can overcome such situations between each other. In their research on the use of WhatsApp, Bouhnik and Deshen (2014) stated similar problems, but unlike this study, the students' solution was silencing the group. At this point, in research on social networks and the use of mobile devices, it was mentioned that students' untimely and unnecessary messages may cause distraction among students and their study process could get negative effects (Bouhnik and Deshen, 2014).

This chapter has explained the result of the research that was conducted by the researcher. There are the result of pre-test and post-test, the improvement of students' analytical exposition text writing and the result of hypothesis test. It also provides discussion of the findings and perception of the students after the implementation of blended learning through WhatsApp group chat.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

##### Conclusions

The objectives of this research were to find out whether there is an improvement of students' analytical exposition text writing and to investigate students' perception in the second grade of SMA N 1 Terbanggi Besar after the implementation of blended learning by using WhatsApp group chat. From this research which has been conducted, it can be concluded: First, the implementation of blended learning through WhatsApp group chat significantly improved students' achievement in writing analytical exposition text. It could be seen from the computation of the value of two tailed significance is 0.00. It means that  $H_a$  is accepted because  $0.00 < 0.05$ . It proves that there is improvement on students' writing achievement in analytical exposition text from pre-test to post-test after the implementation of blended learning by using WhatsApp group chat. Then, the mean score improved from 69.84 in pre-test to 83.37 in post-test, which meant that they have passed the school's criterion of minimum competencies score ( $83.37 > 75$ ). So it can be concluded that the treatments using WhatsApp as the teaching media were done successfully. Second, all students had positive perception after the implementation of blended learning through WhatsApp group chat. It can be seen from the mean of the students' response. Most of the respondents did not feel any difficulties, stressed or frustated when the media applied in the class. They were also interested and motivated whether this media is applied in further study. It can be concluded that the students loved when WhatsApp was applied in the class as a teaching media.

##### Suggestions

After doing this research, there are some suggestions for the English teacher who wants to implement blended learning through WhatsApp group chat in teaching and learning process. First, the study has shown that it is highly essential for language teachers to identify what their learners enjoy doing and utilize WhatsApp group chat to engage them in language development, especially in writing which is the complex skill and slow learners find it difficult to do in a conventional way. The researcher suggests that English teachers can use WhatsApp as an alternative way in teaching writing especially analytical exposition text. Second, the learning process should be done effectively by considering the time to use WhatsApp in teaching writing because the teacher needs to prepare the learning tools such as smartphone, charger, laptop and projector to show the WhatsApp web before the class starts. Third, the researcher suggests that English teachers can make some appointments of scores' subtraction regarding to the late submission of the students' works. Students who are not fixed to the agreed time and they send their works out from the agreed time, the teacher will subtract their score.

Additionally, the researcher found some things that need to be considered for further researcher. It is suggested that if the further researchers want to use questionnaire to collect the data, the researcher suggest that neutral scale can be omitted because it can makes the data bias. Second, for choosing the sample of the research, the researcher suggests that further researchers can implement this media to the medium or low class, which is not in a class consisted of clever sudents. Therefore, further researcher can focus to give treatments to the



students which are in a low category. Last, this study was conducted in a senior high school level. Therefore, further researchers can try to find out the effect of blended learning through WhatsApp group chat in different levels of school: junior high school or university level.

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