

## **Blogging in Action: Teaching English within the project-Based Learning Approach**

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### **Abstract**

In recent years, information and communication technologies have become relevant in both language learning and language education. This paper shows how online tools are applied in EFL vocational training at a state school in Valencia, Spain. We present a technology-focused project carried out in the academic year 2017-2018 with students on the course “Business English.” This project aimed to help these learners improve written competence through blogging. This experiment was carried out within the project-based learning approach. Our main purpose is to shed light on blogging within the PBL approach in the English for specific purposes course by answering this question: Can technology improve foreign language learning in both formal and face-to-face education in vocational training? Our final objective, based on the outcomes of this experiment, is to offer ideas for future best teaching practices so that other teaching professionals can also implement blogging in their classrooms; not only in their face-to-face training courses but also in distance education as well as blended education. For this purpose, we propose paying special attention to the following features: collaborative learning and team learning.

*Keywords:* Blogging; English for specific purposes; ICT; project-based language learning; Web 2.0

### **Introduction**

This paper aims to research the use of blogging to enhance written competence in English for Specific Purposes (henceforth, ESP) classroom within the project-based learning approach. To analyse whether blogging was useful to promote ESP written skills according to the postulates of the project-based learning approach, the experiment carried out at this research took place in a state-integrated vocational training school. This project was conducted on the face-to-face course “Business English” within the educational context of vocational training related to the Business and Commerce degree. Much empirical research on blogging in the ESP classroom a university setting has been published. However, not many studies on blogging in the ESP classroom and, in particular, within the approach of project-based learning (Montaner-Villalba, 2019) at post-secondary and, thus, non-university education has been published. Montaner-Villalba (2019) focused on blogging as a tool to enhance ESP written skills at vocational training within the context of online learning. This study aims at researching blogging to promote ESP written competence at vocational training within the face-to-face context. Both types

of research were conducted within the Spanish educational system. This makes this research worthwhile and significant in this field.

## **Literature Review**

### **Blogging in EFL**

There are various empirical publications (Özdemir & Aydin, 2015; Thomas, 2017) that explore blogging as a tool to enhance EFL written expression in university educational contexts. Özdemir & Aydin (2015) researched the effects of blogging in the Turkish EFL context. The results indicated that writing as a process produced beneficial outcomes in both the traditional context as well as blogging. Thomas (2017) conducted qualitative research, the outcome of which showed that collaborative learning was satisfactorily achieved. Lastly, Giménez López, Litzler & García Laborda (2018) explored blogging within the field of primary school teacher education in Spain. The results highlighted that blogging could be useful and motivating for future teachers of English in primary education.

There is scarcely any empirical research on blogging in teaching English in non-university settings in Spain within the field of project-based learning, hence this paper aims to address the lack of research. As for blogging applied within PBL, Montaner-Villalba (2019) focused on blogging on an online English for specific purposes (henceforth, ESP) course. Results showed that ESP written competence improved notably at the end of the experiment. Montaner-Villalba (2018) also explored blogging in an EFL course in the first academic year at A-level. Outcomes demonstrated that EFL written skills improved notably with the treatment group, while they did not change much in the case of the control group. Montaner-Villalba (2017) showed that blogging helped EFL learners in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of secondary education to improve their written competence through PBL.

### **Project-Based Language Learning**

In this paper, the project on blogging in English language learning took place through project-based learning (PBL). Most of the literature review related to PBL applies to its practical application as well as its daily use in the classroom (Carrión I Ribas, et al., 2015; Vergara, 2016). In line with PBL in general education, project-based language learning (PBL) should include additional considerations focused on both second language studies and second language education (Beckett & Slater, 2019). Interestingly, Beckett (1999) claimed that PBL was introduced to second language acquisition pedagogy as a way to eliminate the teacher-centred approach (Beckett & Slater, 2018). It is therefore important to clarify what PBL is, as opposed to what it is not.

Several empirical studies on project-based learning within the realm of English instruction have been published. Bas & Beyhan (2010) researched the effects of approaches adopting multiple intelligences in English through PBL. Outcomes suggested that the various tasks in EFL, according to the multiple intelligences approach, helped learners from the treatment group develop an enthusiastic attitude towards English,

whereas learners from the control group did not attain a higher motivation level. Adams (2018) conducted qualitative and quantitative research to examine both educators' and learners' perceptions on PBL through a 4-week EFL course. The results showed that PBL was positive for both the teacher and the students. More recently, Wang (2020) offered a literature review on PBL research studies published between 2002 and 2017 in an EFL context in China. Many PBL studies in China are more focused on a practice-oriented approach since research on PBL in China is still in its early stages of development.

Regarding information and communication technologies (ICT) within PBL, Thomas (2017) offered a literature review focused on qualitative research in Japan. The author discussed the outcomes obtained from the Podcast Project (chapter 5) as well as from the Virtual World Project (chapter 6). In chapter 5, the author presented the students' perceptions of the Podcast project arising from semi-structured interview data, field notes, and video data while chapter 6, *The Virtual World Project*, showed findings arising from the previous project, using interviews with learners, classroom observation, document analysis, video recordings, and classroom ethnography. In both chapters, the author used qualitative research. Anzai (2017), in her case study research, explored PBL with massive online open courses (MOOCs) and virtual international exchange. Results showed how ICT offered students the chance to learn English in authentic contexts through interaction, which is a key aspect of language learning. Lastly, Santhi, Suherdi & Musthafa (2019) offered EFL qualitative research in an Indonesian context, where the outcomes demonstrated that this experiment was enriching since it helped learners increase their creativity.

To evaluate this experiment on blogging as a tool to enhance ESP written competence in vocational training, the following research question was established:

Did blogging help to improve ESP written competence in post-compulsory secondary education, according to the postulates of project-based learning?

## **Methodology**

Since the author of this paper fulfils the double role of teacher and researcher, the action-research model was used to analyse quantitative data in this research.

### **Context and Sample**

This experiment was conducted in a state-integrated vocational training school in the Valencian region. At this school, learners study post-compulsory education, which includes both vocational training as well as in-company training (vocational training for workers) and vocational training for the unemployed. This state school offers diverse educational programmes, such as plurilingual programmes, European programmes (educational programmes, such as e-Twinning, Erasmus+, among others, which are organized through various countries within the European Union), and active educational approaches (service learning, cooperative learning approach, project-based learning approach) with the inclusion of information and communication technologies (ICT). This school also offers online courses in addition to face-to-face instruction. Regarding the sample, 28 ESP learners, in the first year of a lower grade of vocational training (in

Spanish, *Ciclo Formativo de Grado Medio, CFGM*) participated in this experiment, which took place throughout the academic year 2017-2018. The students were studying business and commerce in a vocational training context and, thus, they had to learn specialized English in these fields. Learners were aged between 19 and 21 and were chosen randomly. Their level of English was B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). In this experiment on blogging in vocational training, 14 learners participated in a treatment group (T-group) and 14 learners participated in a control group (C-group). This ESP course was face-to-face. It must be mentioned that the sample was rather reduced since this current project on blogging within the project-based learning approach to enhance EFL written competence was in its initial stage when it was implemented at the vocational training school mentioned above.

### Research Tools

The quantitative data for this research comprised three digital written production tasks by the treatment group (T-group) and three by the control group (C-group). Therefore, there were a total of six tasks.

T-group tasks were submitted via WordPress and comprised...

1<sup>st</sup> Term → 1<sup>st</sup> Online Written Task → First Draft of Business plan  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Term → 2<sup>nd</sup> Online Written Task → Second Draft of Business plan  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Term → 3<sup>rd</sup> Online Written Task → Final version of Business plan

C-group tasks were submitted via Google Docs and comprised...

1<sup>st</sup> Term → 1<sup>st</sup> Digital Written Task → First Draft of Business plan  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Term → 2<sup>nd</sup> Digital Written Task → Second Draft of Business plan  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Term → 3<sup>rd</sup> Digital Written Task → Final version of Business plan

Every writing task from either group took place at different moments, coinciding with the corresponding terms throughout the 2017-18 academic year. The first online production task took place in the first term, the second task in the second term, and the third online written production activity was completed in the third and final term of the academic year.

In both the T-group as well as in the C-group, students were required to write their business plan according to a template produced by a business content expert. At this point it must be mentioned that these participating students had previously been trained on how to write a business plan, first using their mother tongue to later write their business plans in the English language. The content of the business plans did not vary significantly

between the T-group and the C-group since the participants were only asked to write their original English documents, previously written in their native. It should be taken into account that, despite their B1 level of English according to the CEFR, this was the first time that the students tried to complete their EFL written tasks digitally.

The quantitative outcomes of this research, in terms of scores, were obtained partly from the diverse written tasks while blogging in the T-group and partly from the various EFL written activities through Google Docs, in the case of the C-group, within the project-based learning approach. This was done, bearing in mind that the ultimate purpose was to verify whether learners improved their quality and level of English language through blogging in the T-group and/or via Google Docs in the C-group. For this reason, we needed to obtain quantitative data in the form of scores to analyse learners' performance throughout the experiment.

### **Variables**

The dependent variables are the marks from the written production tasks, while the independent variables are classified into 1) writing process; and 2) final product. In this research, we emphasized the final product. We should distinguish within the final product (Shehadeh, 2011) the following variables: 1) content of the text; 2) organization and structure of the text; 3) grammar or language use; 4) vocabulary; 5) spelling.

Regarding the content, both the T-group learners as well as the C-group were required to write their business plan as a previous step to create their businesses. This business plan had to be written on the designated blogs with correct cohesion and coherence. Both the T-group and C-group learners were asked to use suitable grammar and vocabulary related to business while creating their business plans digitally. As for spelling, they were required to check that they had not made spelling mistakes while blogging, which is indeed relevant since the spelling is part of vocabulary learning.

Students were asked to write between 100 and 120 words in the first draft of the business plan which took place in the first term. Then, after teacher correction, they were required to make adequate changes related to the second draft which was developed during the second term. Lastly, after a second correction by the instructor, students completed their final version of their business plan either in the format of a blog (T-group) or using Google Docs (C-group). Thus, the WordPress blog tasks (T-group) did not differ at all in comparison with the Google Docs tasks (C-group).

### **Marking Procedure**

It is here necessary to describe the marking process. We will start with the marking criteria and then briefly explain the rubric. To evaluate the EFL written competence and, particularly, the five variables, mentioned above, we utilized the ANOVA model of two factors with repeated measures to analyze how the different outcomes evolved, in terms of the *time* effect, as well as the *group* effect, and the interaction between *time* and *group*, throughout the whole experiment. These variables were graded using traditional marking from the Spanish education system, and by the teacher-researcher. Grade A varies between 9 and 10, grade B is between 7 and 8, grade C is 6, grade D is 5 and, finally, less than 5 is a fail, which means that learners will not

pass either their various subjects within the official curriculum or the different variables of this current experiment.

The rubric utilized in this research corresponds to the five variables mentioned above. The elements of the rubric were: (1) presentation and text adequacy; (2) cohesion and coherence; (3) grammar competence; (4) lexical richness and (5) spelling.

## Research Procedure

In Table 2.5 the different procedures, as well as their corresponding descriptions and time of execution, can be observed:

**Table 1**

*Procedure, Moment, Group, and Description*

PROCEDURE	TIME	GROUP	DESCRIPTION
Presenting the experiment	Beginning of 1 <sup>st</sup> Term	T & C-groups	The teacher presents experiment, explains aims, methodology and timing. Tasks are distributed.
Beginning the experiment	3 <sup>rd</sup> week of September	T & C-groups	Two face-to-face sessions take place to explain to the learners from the T-group how to use Word Press, and to the learners from the C-group how to use Google Docs.
Development of tasks	Academic Year 2017-18	T & C-groups	Tasks are completed at home in the first term. Students and teachers interact virtually through e-mail. During the second and the third term, the experiment takes place in the school's computer room. Although learning takes place face-to-face, learners and teachers can also interact either via email or through the forum of the blog with both the T-group and the C-group learners since many students are participating in the computer room, which makes communication easy.

## Data Analysis

In the current paper, the outcomes of the various ESP written tasks are analyzed. These tasks were done by learners in the academic year, 2017-2018. The quantitative data from the T-group, as well as the C-group, were analyzed with the main purpose of determining whether learners improved their ESP written production through blogging within a project-based learning approach. The ultimate purpose is to compare outcomes between learners from the treatment group and learners from the control group. In this research, the ANOVA model of two factors with repeated measures was utilized to determine how the ESP learners evolved throughout this current experiment. In this experiment, we aimed, as mentioned above, at comparing means between the T-group as well as the C-group learners to determine whether blogging helped the T-group learners improve their ESP written skills, or whether Google Docs helped the C-group learners improve their ESP written competence.

## Outcomes

In Table 2, below, the results from the ANOVA tests of two factors with repeated measures are shown to determine the effect of the project-based learning methodology towards the evolution of the different grades related to the variables of ESP written competence through blogging in the case of the T-group learners and, regarding the C-group, with the aid of Google Docs. Bearing this in mind, we analysed the *time* effect (grading of the different terms) as an intra-subject factor, the *group* effect (control and treatment) as an inter-subject factor, and the interaction between these factors (Group x Time).

**Table 2**

*MLG: Means (SD) and statistical contrasts between groups in the variables of ESP written competence.*

	Measure			Intra subject Effects <sup>†</sup>	
	TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3	Time	Group*Time
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	F(g.l.); p-valour (eta <sup>2</sup> )	F(g.l.); p-valour (eta <sup>2</sup> )
<b>CONTENT</b>				F(1,5;33,6) = 0,34; p = 0,657 (0,015)	F(1,5;33,6) = 0,34; p = 0,657 (0,015)
Control	10,00 (0,0)	10,00 (0,0)	10,00 (0,0)		
Treatment	9,57 (1,3)	9,57 (1,6)	9,64 (1,3)		
Total	9,75 (1,0)	9,75 (1,2)	9,79 (1,0)		
<b>ORG</b>				F(1,8;39,9) = 2,42; p = 0,128 (0,105)	F(1,8;39,9) = 0,02; p = 0,972 (0,001)
Control	9,16 (1,3)	9,52 (0,8)	10,00 (0,0)		
Treatment	8,15 (2,1)	8,65 (2,0)	9,07 (1,9)		
Total	8,57 (1,8)	9,01 (1,7)	9,46 (1,5)		
<b>GRAM</b>				F(1,6;34,9) = 3,12; p = 0,067 (0,124)	F(1,6;34,9) = 0,43; p = 0,611 (0,019)
Control	9,40 (1,0)	9,23 (0,9)	8,98 (1,2)		
Treatment	9,30 (1,5)	9,25 (2,1)	8,57 (2,1)		
Total	9,34 (1,3)	9,24 (1,7)	8,74 (1,7)		
<b>VOCAB</b>				F(1,7;37,7) = 2,23; p = 0,144 (0,098)	F(1,7;37,7) = 0,02; p = 0,968 (0,001)
Control	9,64 (0,7)	9,33 (0,9)	9,00 (0,9)		
Treatment	9,57 (1,6)	9,33 (1,9)	8,98 (1,7)		
Total	9,60 (1,3)	9,33 (1,5)	8,99 (1,4)		
<b>SPELL</b>				F(1,3;28,9) = 0,06; p = 0,871 (0,003)	F(1,3;28,9) = 0,09; p = 0,831 (0,004)
Control	9,98 (0,1)	9,90 (0,2)	9,85 (0,5)		

Treatment	9,36 (2,1)	9,35 (1,6)	9,38 (1,1)
Total	9,62 (1,6)	9,58 (1,2)	9,57 (0,9)
<b>MEAN</b>			
			F(1,9;42,1) = 0,19; F(1,9;42,1) = 0,07; p = 0,822 (0,008) p = 0,926 (0,003)
Control	9,63 (0,5)	9,59 (0,4)	9,57 (0,4)
Treatment	9,19 (1,6)	9,23 (1,8)	9,13 (1,5)
Total	9,37 (1,2)	9,38 (1,4)	9,31 (1,2)

d.f.: degrees of freedom.  $\eta^2$ : partial square eta (effect size). <sup>†</sup>Estimate of Greenhouse-Geisser.

In this table, we can observe the following issue: The *time* effect was not significant in statistical terms, indicating that the different marks in the corresponding variables did not change significantly within either group during the different terms. Likewise, the interaction between group and time was not statistically significant, suggesting that the grades in the corresponding variables did not change notably between the treatment and control groups.

Next, we will explain each variable and, at the same time, compare the outcomes of both the treatment group and the control group to verify whether there was an improvement by one of the groups at the end of the experiment. Regarding the *content* variable, we can see that the mark (10) did not change at all throughout the different terms in the control group whereas, on the other hand, in the treatment group, the mark was the same in the first and second term (9.57), increasing slightly in the third term (9.64). There are slight differences between the treatment group and the control group; with the mark of the control group being higher. This was not initially expected before beginning the experiment.

As for the *organization* variable, the grades in the control group changed slightly throughout the academic year, from 9.16 in the first term, 9.52 in the second term and, finally, there was a slight increase to 10 in the third term. It can thus be observed that the learners from the control group improved slightly regarding this variable at the end of the year. Next, we can see that the marks in the treatment group increased slightly between the first term (8.15) and the third term (9.07) implying, thus, that learners from the treatment group improved slightly at the end of the experiment with this variable. When comparing the outcomes between the control group and the treatment group, we can see again that the marks of the control group are slightly higher than the treatment group, which was not initially expected.

Related to the *grammar* variable, the marks of the control group, in contrast to the previous variables, decreased slightly as the *time* factor passed since the mark of the first term (9.40) decreased to 9.23 in the second term and, lastly, this mark decreased to 8.98 in the third term. A similar dynamic occurred in the treatment group, for which the mark decreased slightly between the first term (9.30) and the third term (8.57). If we compare the outcomes between the control group and the treatment group, we can observe that the mark for the control group in the third term (8.98) was slightly higher than the grades of the treatment group in this third term (8.57). Again, this was not initially expected.

Regarding the *vocabulary* variable, in the control group, the marks differ slightly between the first term (9.64) and the third term (9.00). The mark for the second term was 9.33. Similar to the *grammar* variable and, unlike the *content* and *organization* variable,

the *vocabulary* variable decreased slightly at the end of the experiment. Next, as for the treatment group, the marks for this variable decreased again slightly between the first term (9.57) and the third term (8.98). When comparing outcomes between the control group and the treatment group, it can be seen that the mark for the control group in the third term (9.00) was slightly higher than the mark for the treatment group in the third term (8.98). This implies, therefore, that there were no significant changes in statistical terms. At this point, it should be noted that, again, the outcomes of the experiment were not the marks that were expected before beginning the experiment.

Next, as for the *spelling* variable, the marks of the control group decreased slightly from the first term (9.98) to the third term (9.85), which implies that there was no improvement at the end of the term. Unlike both the *vocabulary* variable and the *grammar* variable and, similar to the *content* and the *organization* variables, there was a slight improvement in the third term (9.38) in comparison with the first term (9.36). If we compare the results between the control group and the treatment group, we can observe again that the marks of the control group in the third term (9.85) were slightly higher than the marks of the treatment group in the same term (9.38). Again, we can observe that the outcomes related to the *spelling* variable were not initially expected before the experiment commenced.

Finally, we can observe the mean of both the control group and the treatment group. If we observe how the marks of the control group evolved, they changed slightly from the first term (9.63) to the third term (9.57), which implies that there was a slight worsening at the end of the experiment and, thus, this is not significant. Moreover, the grades of the treatment group did not vary significantly in statistical terms from the first term (9.19) to the third term (9.13). When comparing both the control group as well as the treatment group, we can again see that the marks of the control group were slightly higher than the marks of the treatment group. The same dynamic occurs here. This means that all the outcomes were not initially expected before beginning the experiment since we believed that learners from the treatment group would probably have better results than learners from the control group.

## Discussion

Here, we aim to justify the outcomes of this current experiment with the main purpose of verifying whether learners improved their written competence and discussing which group of learners performed higher, and why.

In Table 2, the outcomes of the analysis of the intra-subject factors regarding the analysed variables are shown. The results of this table suggest that the time factor was not significant since the marks of the corresponding variables did not change significantly in statistical terms for either the control group or the treatment group. Moreover, the outcomes show that the interaction between group and time was not significant, which implies that time was not relevant for the learners, either for the control group or the treatment group. It can be observed that the marks, in the control group, changed only slightly throughout the whole experiment thus implying that there was no significant difference between the three corresponding terms. The marks of the treatment group also varied slightly in statistical terms implying, therefore, that there was no significant

difference between the three terms. It has been observed that the marks for the control group were slightly higher than for the treatment group.

Next, the outcomes of the different variables are justified, offering a comparative approach between the control group and the treatment group. Regarding the variable *content*, the grading of the control group did not vary at all throughout the experiment whereas, in the treatment group, the marks differed slightly from the first and second term (9.57) to the third term (9.64). Thus, there were no significant changes in statistical terms. It seems that learners from the control group managed very well with the content of their corresponding digital written tasks through Google Docs, whereas learners from the treatment group did not manage as was initially expected. However, there were no significant changes for either group, as explained previously.

As for the *organization* variable, the marks for the control group changed slightly from 9.16 in the first term to 10 in the third term. This implies that learners from the control group understood well how to proceed with the structure of paragraphs when completing their written tasks through Google Docs. On the other hand, regarding learners from the treatment group; although their mark increased slightly from the first term (8.15) to the third term (9.07), their written work was not well-structured enough to achieve an excellent grade. This was possibly due to the lack of a few connectors when they completed their online written tasks.

Related to the *grammar* variable, the grades for the control group changed slightly from the first term (9.40) to the third term (8.98). In addition, the marks for the treatment group varied from 9.30 in the first term to 8.57 in the third term. In both cases, there were no significant changes in statistical terms regarding the *grammar* variable. This slight decrease at the end of the experiment from both the control group and the treatment group was due to the incorrect use of verb tenses in the third term and, therefore, at the end of the experiment.

Regarding the variable *vocabulary*, the marks for the control group decreased slightly if comparing outcomes between the first term (9.64) and the third term (9.00), which implied, as mentioned above, that there was no significant change. The same occurs with learners from the treatment group, whose grades decrease slightly from the first term (9.57) to the third term (8.58). Both groups had a slight decrease in their marks regarding the *vocabulary* variable because they failed to make adequate use of specific vocabulary related to the field of advertising and commerce. However, this incorrect use of specialized vocabulary when completing their corresponding written tasks was not relevant as it has been noted in the outcomes of both groups.

Finally, as for the *spelling* variable, the grades for the control group decreased from the first term (9.98) to the third term (9.85) implying, thus, as already mentioned, that no significant change in statistical terms occurred with learners from the control group. In contrast, the marks for the treatment group increased slightly if we compare the outcomes between the first term (9.36) and the third term (9.38). Again, there is no significant change. Learners from the control group had a slight decrease in their marks since they failed with the spelling of specific vocabulary in the field of advertising, whereas learners from the treatment group, even though their marks slightly improved, only made a few spelling mistakes, which were not necessarily related to specialised vocabulary.

Having discussed concisely the outcomes of this research, we will next compare this research with the findings from other research. While, on the one hand, in this work, we aim at determining whether ESP learners at Vocational Training in Spain improved

their writing skills with the aid of blogging in the context of face-to-face education within the PBL approach, Montaner-Villalba (2019) focused on ESP written competence through blogging within the online education context, according to the PBL method. In this research on blogging to promote ESP writing skills via face-to-face education, both a treatment and a control group were analysed whereas Montaner-Villalba (2019) reveals findings only from a control group. The outcomes from this article showed that participants from the control group did not differ significantly in comparison with the students from the treatment group. However, the outcomes from Montaner-Villalba (2019) suggested that the participants from the control group obtained positive outcomes at the end of the experiment, gaining significant learning experience, taking into account the PBL approach.

Whereas this current research and Montaner-Villalba (2019) explore the use of blogging to promote ESP written competence, Montaner-Villalba (2018) focused on the use of blogs to enhance EFL writing skills at A-level, and Montaner-Villalba (2017) dealt with blogging as a tool to promote EFL written competence at Secondary education. These environments were face-to-face. While, on the one hand, Montaner-Villalba (2018) showed that participants from the treatment group, in contrast to this current research, notably improved their EFL writing skills in comparison with participants from the control group. In addition to this, Montaner-Villalba (2017) showed that participants from only the control group, similarly to Montaner-Villalba (2019) gained positive findings.

On the other hand, while the outcomes of this research do not show significant statistical differences between the T-group and the C-group, Özdemir & Aydin (2015) proved that the results indicate, in terms of writing achievement, that blogging in itself did not offer better performance and, at the same time, the process-based writing instruction positively affected their achievement in both traditional as well in blog environments and, therefore, similar to this research, the authors did not find significant statistical differences between the treatment group (blogging) and the control one (traditional).

In line with this research, Sa'diyah & Cahyono (2019) explored how project-based learning with the aid of blogging affected EFL writing skills across self-efficiency levels. In contrast with this quantitative research, which is the object of study of this paper, Sa'diyah & Cahyono (2019) showed that the students from the experimental group achieved better performance in EFL writing through blogging than learners from the conventional group. According to these authors, students' EFL writing skills through blogging within the PBL approach were not affected by learners' self-efficiency levels. This is different from the ideas exposed on self-efficiency as a key factor in students' competence, cognition, action, and behaviours (Pintrich, 1999; Usher & Pajares, 2008). Nevertheless, this study did not report findings related to self-efficiency focused on writing skills through blogging within the PBL approach.

What is more, in line with this action-research work, Marwan (2015) proved that twenty-five students from a vocational higher institution gained positive findings when they had completed the three projects and, particularly, the first project focused on writing an email within the project-based learning approach having obtained significant outcomes while the findings of this current research, as it has been previously mentioned, did not differ significantly when comparing outcomes between the treatment and the control group. However, it should be mentioned that Marwan (2015) did not mention explicitly whether the participating students were the treatment group or control group.

As it has been explained above in this section, findings from this research do not differ much between the treatment group and the control since the outcomes of this experiment vary only slightly throughout the experiment. For this reason, the findings of this current research might not be very useful to the concerns of Language Teaching stakeholders. The outcomes of this research might suggest that more detailed work on the use of blogging to enhance ESP writing skill within the approach of Project-Based Learning at this Business and Commerce Vocational Training degree need to be done to help learners to improve their written competence with the aid of the ICT.

### **Implication and Recommendations**

This study explores the use of blogging and/or Google Docs to enhance ESP written competence within the face-to-face context at vocational training degree. The findings of data analysis obtained from participants through various digital written tasks demonstrated that students, either from the treatment group or the control group, did not significantly improve their written skills in the ESP classroom because they had to deal with utilizing specific and technical English related to the field of business. Previously, they were accustomed to creating short written texts, such as writing about routines, free-time activities, short stories, etc., since a large number of these participating students had recently finished their studies in Secondary Education. With the transition from Secondary Education to Vocational Training, the difficulties faced by these students range from language level, such as the use of specific vocabulary and specialized language structure in the field of business; and hard skills problems such as the use of ICT in foreign language learning since this was their first experience. Moreover, the outcomes obtained in this research might be because the blogging (T-group) and the Google Docs (C-group) tasks, as has been said above, did not differ at all.

Based on the results obtained from this research as well as its discussion in this paper, it can be inferred that no relationship between the findings and blogging within the project-based learning approach has been found. Some reasons for not finding correlations in this experiment might be related to the small sample size since, as said above, a reduced group of 28 ESP learners participated in this experiment. It is also possible that the small sample size, in this initial stage of this project, caused ill-defined groups leading to non-statistically significant correlations at this experiment. Therefore, more research in the study of ESP writing skills through blogging within the project-based learning approach at Vocational Training with a larger *N* is needed and, in coherence with this, better-defined groups might help to establish statistically significant findings. However, although the results of this research might mean that there is little to no effect statistical significant outcome, there may be an effect in this experiment that has not been found. The outcomes obtained in this experiment do not necessarily mean that neither ESP teachers nor learners should abandon the use of, in general terms, the ICT and, in particular, blogging for all ESP courses to enhance students' written competence. Moreover, they should encourage students to increase their exposure to the language with the aid of online tools. What is more, these ESP teachers should encourage their students to participate in the forums of their corresponding blogs not only to practice language but also to enhance collaborative learning through online interaction between students, students, and teachers, which might broaden the knowledge of students with a wider

sample size with the ultimate purpose of achieving statistically significant difference between the treatment group and the control group.

## Conclusion

In answer to the research question on whether blogging can improve ESP written competence according to the project-based learning approach; from the data obtained in this experiment, it can be confirmed that there were no significant differences between learners from the control group and learners from the treatment group. This implied that there was not a significant difference in the improvement of ESP written competence either through blogging in the case of the treatment group or via Google Docs in the case of learners from the control group. Therefore, the use of blogging did not necessarily help learners improve their ESP written skills much more than learners from the control group, who utilized Google Docs to complete their online writing tasks.

To conclude, considering that the existing references (Montaner-Villalba, 2017, 2018, 2019) related to blogging in teaching English, according to the postulates of PBL in secondary education and vocational training are rare, this research offers worthwhile and significant value within the field of technology-enhanced language learning applied to English for specific purposes in non-university education through the use of project-based learning. This paper could thus be an invitation to future researchers and academics to further investigate the use of ICT and, particularly, blogging with the inclusion of project-based language learning (PBL) in vocational training within the Spanish educational system, not only to promote writing skills, but also other linguistic skills such as reading or listening in the learning of ESP.

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