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**BLOG-ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING
FOR COLLABORATIVE LEARNING IN A SECOND
LANGUAGE EXTENSIVE READING PROGRAM**

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Abstrak

Pelajar kursus Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa Kedua umumnya mengelak daripada menggunakan bahasa Inggeris ketika berinteraksi secara bersemuka. Perbincangan dalam kelas pula tidak menyediakan peluang sama rata kerana sesi perbincangan lazimnya didominasi oleh pelajar yang aktif dan kompeten. Dalam program pembacaan ekstensif, pelajar menggunakan jurnal untuk menulis refleksi dan audiennya hanyalah guru mereka. Walau bagaimanapun, sorotan literatur mendapati kurangnya kajian tentang penggunaan blog yang berfungsi sebagai jurnal berkumpulan dalam program pembacaan ekstensif Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua. Justeru, kajian ini menggunakan blog sebagai platform bagi pelajar berkolaborasi, berbincang dan berkongsi pengetahuan mereka tentang topik tertentu. Objektif kajian adalah untuk meneroka sifat interaksi pelajar dan corak interaksi mereka apabila mereka menggunakan blog semasa penyeliaan secara bersemuka dan maya. Peserta kajian terdiri daripada 20 orang pelajar sekolah menengah daripada sebuah sekolah pinggir bandar di Kelantan, Malaysia. Pelajar membaca bahan, berbincang dalam kumpulan masing-masing dan memberi komen dalam blog kumpulan. Pelajar telah memilih bahan bacaan daripada perpustakaan kelas emasa interaksi secara bersemuka. Manakala semasa dalam penyeliaan maya, mereka mencari bahan bacaan sendiri dan daripada blog dari luar sekolah. Blog pelajar dianalisis dengan menggunakan *Florida State University Online Assessment Tool* dan *Bales Interaction Process Analysis* pada tahun 2002. Tinjauan menggunakan soal selidik dan temu bual dilaksanakan untuk mendapatkan maklum balas pelajar tentang penggunaan blog dalam program pembacaan ekstensif. Hasil kajian menunjukkan penglibatan pelajar adalah lebih kerap semasa penyeliaan secara maya berbanding penyeliaan secara bersemuka. Walau bagaimanapun, pelajar mudah tersasar daripada tajuk perbincangan semasa penyeliaan secara maya. Penggunaan blog telah menggalakkan pelajar untuk berinteraksi dalam bahasa Inggeris. Kajian ini juga mendapati personaliti pelajar mempengaruhi penglibatan mereka dalam perbincangan blog. Kajian ini juga menunjukkan evidens penglibatan pelajar dalam memilih bahan bacaan dan penggunaan blog sebagai platform untuk berkolaborasi, telah mewujudkan peluang kepada pelajar menggunakan Bahasa Inggeris untuk berkongsi idea secara bebas. Dapatan kajian ini memberi implikasi terhadap penggunaan blog dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua.

Kata kunci: Pembelajaran kolaboratif, Blog sebagai alat bantu mengajar Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua, Pembacaan ekstensif, Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua

Abstract

Generally, English as a second language (ESL) students avoid using English during face-to-face interaction. In-class discussions often do not provide equal opportunity for them to participate as these discussions are dominated by active and competent students. In extensive reading program, students use journals to write reflection and the audience is merely their teacher. However, the literature shows that there are limited studies on the use of blogs as a group journal in L2 extensive reading program. Thus, this study used blogs as a platform for students to collaborate, discuss and share their knowledge on a given topic. The objectives of this study are to explore the nature of students' interaction and their interactional patterns in their blogs when they were supervised face-to-face and virtually. The participants consisted of 20 secondary school students from a suburban school in Kelantan, Malaysia. They read the reading materials, held group discussions and posted comments in their respective group blogs. The students chose the reading materials from the library during face-to-face interaction whereas during virtual interaction, they searched for their own materials and from the blogs outside the school. The students' blog posts were analyzed using Florida State University Online Assessment Tool and Bales Interaction Process Analysis in 2002. A survey and interviews were administered to elicit the students' responses on the use of blogs in an extensive reading program. The findings indicated that the students participated more during virtual supervision compared to face-to-face supervision. However, they easily diverged from the task during virtual supervision. The use of blog encouraged the students to interact in English. The findings also indicated that students' personalities influenced their participation in blog discussion. This study provided evidence that students' involvement in choosing their own reading materials and the use of blogs as a platform to learn collaboratively created opportunity for them to share ideas in English freely. These findings have pedagogical implications on the use of blog for teaching and learning English as a second language.

Keywords: Collaborative learning, Blog-assisted language learning, Extensive reading, English as a second language

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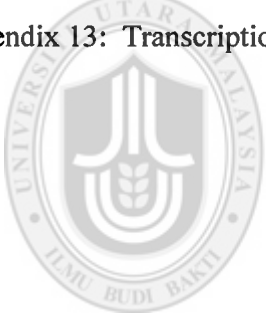
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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Reading extensively in a second language learning process can be a very painful experience to some students who may not have adequate motivation, vocabulary and interest in reading. However, when the reading program is carried out collaboratively, in which a few students are assigned to read articles and even search for their own reading materials, and later discuss in their own group may find the exercise rewarding and exciting. Unlike face-to-face meetings among the group members to discuss the reading materials, blog or weblog would allow the members to communicate with another faster and more frequent, share their opinion and their reading materials faster as they are not bound by time and space. Therefore, teachers need to manipulate the existing technologies to enable students to get the optimum impact from the learning process.

Technologies are developing fast and new tools to aid teaching and learning keep being introduced. As educators, teachers need to be able to adapt and adopt these tools to help them in their teaching and learning process as to gain the optimum benefits to students. These technologies that are presently used in teaching and learning were not designed to function as pedagogical tools, yet, the introduction of these into an educational setting helps students to become more active in their learning and gives more chances to collaborate with peers and also develop their higher order cognitive skills (Wilkinson, 2011). Apart from that, teachers have to prepare students to be “responsible for their own learning inside and outside the

classroom because this will make them life-long and efficient learners” (Pinkman, 2005: 12).

In the 90s, the internet started to become much more mainstream, and people used their dial up connection to send e-mails, chat with friends or do research for a school project. As the internet has expanded, it evolved into a much more social and interactive tools as opposed to being static. With Web 2.0 we do not merely use the internet but we interact with it. The keywords to describe Web 2.0 are community, collaboration and user-driven (msjosay.hubpages.com, 2009). The way Web 1.0 was used was typically very linear. The internet was seen as a tool for business and utility. Webmasters created websites and users visited and viewed them. Communication was between webmaster and client. Webpages were static. On the other hand, Web 2.0 sites allow users to interact not only with the site and webmaster but with other people who access the site. Web 2.0 is about web applications that users can interact with and control. Users are now involved in creating their own internet experience.

The advent of World Wide Web or known as Web 2.0 has attracted educators to manipulate the learning technology to make learning interesting. Wiki is recognized as a Web 2.0 tool that has huge potentials “to complement, enhance and add new collaborative dimensions to the classroom” (Parker & Chao, 2007; 57). It offers language learner a wide range of leaning resources which allow for “the availability of tools that can potentially be used in a variety of different ways to blend with regular classroom practice” (Motteram & Sharma, 2009; 84). Other studies also indicate that online platforms might trigger students to write and

communicate (Kabilan, Mohd Jafre & Norlida, 2010; Kitsis, 2008) and they may also become better writers (Yancey, 2009). Furthermore, almost all students seemed to have their own computer and most schools have built computer labs with internet connections. The availability of the required technology would make the plan for blogging program practical.

In addition, blogs that are easy to create and maintain can be a platform for students to collaborate with each other and also with their teachers outside their formal language classes. Blogger.com is one of the servers which offers free, simple to set-up and convenient to use blogs (Ray, 2005; Kukana, 2005). Students can set up their own blogs on one of these free web spaces. They can then upload pictures and music and also their personal writing which is known as a blog “post” and receive comments from readers regarding the post made. Students cum bloggers can post their writing from any internet –connected computer. Apart from that, they can also access, read and comment their classmates’ posts. All these activities can be carried out at the students’ free time. This provides a broad “scope for interactivity” (William & Jacobs, 2004; pg 235).

Blogs enable learners to interact among themselves. Blogs are electronic journals that allow users to keep record of their writing on a website (Johnson, 2004). Godwin (2003) defines blogs as a web-based space for writing where all the writing and editing of information is managed through a web browser and is immediately and publicly available on the Internet. Therefore, the use of blogs as one of the ways to facilitate English contributes to the students’ competency in English and help to improve their skills in ICT. Blogs have been used in a variety of ways in education.

Some have been successful, some not. The success of the technology in the educational environment is dependent on the appropriate use and integration of that technology into the learning experience (Cooke, 2008). The application of blogs in second language classes can lead to “collaborative and participative learning, learner-centeredness cognitively and technically driven writing tasks, social presence, interactivity, creativity and mutual support” (Widodo & Novawan, 2012: 8). Blogs also have been the craze for an authentic and constructive learning tool, especially in classrooms (Seitzinger, 2006).

Blogs serve as a platform for collaborative learning for teachers and students without having to have a special computer or programming knowledge. There are several well-known and free blogging sites presently available to use such as Blogger, Live Journal and WordPress. Blogger can be accessed by using website address <http://www.blogger.com>. It is owned by Google. Blogs are geared toward every age group and it is a simple web-based interface through Blogger.com site or via a mobile phone. Whereas Live Journal can be accessed through <http://www.livejournal.com>. It functions as a social networking with teen oriented. It is more like a diary format and the users write entries or receive updates via the web, mobile phone, instant messaging or email. While Wordpress can be accessed via <http://www.wordpress.org> and it is an open source. It focuses mainly on businesses and technology oriented individuals. Limited hosting is available, but the software is mainly downloaded and hosted on the blogger’s server (Bloom, 2008; 5)

Therefore, in this study, the researcher has chosen Blogger as the blog site because from the survey conducted among the students, they are more familiar with Blogger compared to the other two blogging sites.

Blogs provide a venue for learners to write, comment, reflect and interact among themselves and also with their teachers (Shu & Wang, 2011; Ratnawati & Ismail, 2003; Armstrong & Retterer, 2008). Shu and Wang (2011) highlight that blogs distinguishing features such as blog entries which can be set to private or open to public and blog entries can also be assessed after the class is finished. Furthermore, the use of blogs “enhances social interaction, providing a channel to build a sense of community, to strengthen communication skills, and to write for a real audience” (Shu and Wang, 2011:71). Blogs are sometimes manipulated as a form of learners communication to create engagement and to prompt more communication and reflection. Blogs are considered as a product of convenience because they encourage interaction, sharing of knowledge, exchanging opinions and comments (Armstrong and Retterer, 2008; William and Jacobs, 2004). Writing blogs also encourages learners to be responsible with their opinions and also be critical and analytical of their own opinions as others will interpret and reflect on these (Armstrong and Retterer, 2008).

Though there are already existing studies and reviews on the use of blogs as an educational tool (Pinkman, 2005; Yih-Rueh,2006; Nadzrah Abu Bakar & Kemboja Ismail, 2009; Ina, Nili & Tami, 2009; 2006; Zaini Amir et. al., 2011; Zhang et. al., 2014), further studies still need to be done with respect to the use of blogs in assisting the second language students to collaborate in an extensive reading

program. This is due to fact that most of the previous studies focus on the effectiveness of using blogs to improve students' writing ability. Therefore, the use of blogs as a teaching and learning tool covering all four language skills is relatively new and it has only of late been gaining popularity (Pinkman, 2005).

Most of the studies done on the use of blogs in language teaching applied quantitative approach to measure certain language skills (Di zhang, 2009; Nadzrah, 2009; Yih Rue Juan, 2008). Di Zhang (2009) carried out a study on the influences of using blog for students in English writing and also discussed how to engage students' reflective learning in English writing through blogs. Nadzrah (2009) on the other hand examines the impact of interactions in e-learning environment towards language learning and language literacy among undergraduate learners. Yih-Rue Juang (2008) proposed a new strategy to enhance the performance of a knowledge-building classroom through the use of blog as the warm-up of a lesson before class to prepare students for in-class discussion. In addition, the majority of the existing blog studies have focused on evaluation of individual student blogs rather than group blogs or collaborative blogs in which students publish their blog posts and manage their blog together as a small group (Nakatsukase, 2009). Therefore, the present study is designed to investigate the students' experiences when the use of collaborative blogs is integrated in an extensive reading program and also to examine their nature of blog posts and pattern of interaction when they blog from two different settings; face-to-face and virtually.

1.2 Extensive Reading Program for Second Language Learners in Malaysia

An extensive reading approach refers to “read for general comprehension large quantities of texts” (Aebersold & Field, 1997: 43). Extensive reading program which is a way to prompt learners to read a lot in the target language is widely researched and proven to be beneficial to second language and foreign language learners in many aspects such as reading speed (Sheu, 2004), reading fluency (Barfield, 2000) and promote a positive attitude toward reading (Yin Leung, 2002). Extensive reading is one of the ways for students to acquire the targeted language.

In Malaysia, students study English as their second language. In order to excel in second language learning, students must spend a long time to learn it (Gass & Selinker, 2001). Ministry of Education has implemented a lot of programs to encourage extensive reading among the students. Among the programs were English Language Program (1976), Class Reader Program (1981) and tested literature-in-English component to the English language syllabus for secondary schools (MOE, 2000). One of the main goals of the KBSM and Revised Curriculum is to ensure that learners are able to read factual prose and fiction for information and enjoyment at the end of the secondary education as reading is one of the four language skills that is proven to be a significant tool for learners to improve their competency and performance in the second language learning (Powell, 2005). The inculcation of the literary elements in the curriculum was another effort to “enable learners to engage in wider reading of good works for enjoyment and for self-development” (PPK, 2000: 1).

The history of inculcating extensive reading in Malaysian curriculum started in 1976, with the launch of a program known as English Language Reading Programme (ELRP). Unfortunately, only about one third of the schools participated in this program (Mukundan, 1998). This is because books are purchased using school funds, instead of sponsored by the Ministry. Then, in 1981, the Ministry started with class reader program (CRP) in which every primary school in Malaysia was provided with a set of class reader books for its classes at lower primary level (Year 1 - 3) following the introduction of the New Primary English Syllabus. Meanwhile, in secondary schools, beginning from the 1989 academic year, one of the five forty-minute class periods allocated to English is to be used for class reader work.

Unfortunately, the Class Reader Program (CRP) was not being properly implemented in our education system (Mukundan, 1998). Many, including teachers, also seemed to be unfamiliar of the role of extensive reading in improving learners' language competency (Mukundan, 1998). This is due to the fact that extensive reading was not one of the elements included in Malaysia English teaching syllabi although in 1989, the class reader program (CRP) was implemented in secondary schools. The main concern of the program was to increase the reading habits of Malaysian students who were not motivated to read anything apart from textbooks (Mukundan, 1998; p231). Mukundan (2000) argues that the lack of recognition of extensive reading program among English teachers and English teaching circles failed the program (p 53). It was to the disadvantage on the learners' part because most of them heavily relied on teachers for their language input and by not having extensive reading slot, the learners were not exposed and motivated to read English materials excessively.

In addition, The National Report (1996:8) cited that the readers provided to schools did not cater for varying interest and needs of students and some books were too difficult whereas some were too simple (as cited in Mukundan, 2000; 53). Thus, this fails to adhere to the principle of extensive reading in which students get to choose what they want to read and read for pleasure (Day & Bamford, 2002).

The Ministry of Education has also embarked in another reading program known as NILAM in 1998 as part of the national agenda. The aim of this program is to encourage learners to read outside the classroom. Reading for fun aims to prepare learners for life-long reading and reading for information is to prepare them for life-long learning. The main aim is to produce avid readers who will make reading as their habit. Besides, NILAM also aims to encourage schools to create creative and innovative ideas to inculcate reading habits (Bahagian Teknologi Pendidikan, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1998: 4). NILAM is divided into 2 levels. The first level is known as JAUHARI which focuses on individual reading skills and reading habits. The second level which is RAKAN PEMBACA focuses on students' reading skills through activities such as story-telling, book talk and others. A study carried out by Wan Zah et.al. (2005: 49) showed that the objective of NILAM to instill reading habits among the students was still not fully achieved because teachers thought that schools were still lacking staffs for resource centers and also space to carry out activities for NILAM specifically for the level of RAKAN PEMBACA.

The various reading programs mentioned earlier indicate how serious the Ministry is to instill the reading habits among our learners with the hope to develop positive reading habit. The Curriculum Specifications for English Language Form 4 states that “learners should be able to obtain information from various sources and read and respond to stories” (MOE, 2003: 3). For reading to be meaningful, it is important that students cultivate reading behavior for lifelong learning.

There are many methods to teach reading and to motivate learners to read. One of the ways is through collaborative learning. Collaborative learning is a method of teaching and learning that requires students to work together on structured activities (Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1991; Abdullah & Abbas, 2006) which can maximize their own learning as well as their group members’ learning. This approach is practical to be applied in a reading program in order to encourage students to read extensively in the same language since the whole group shares the same reading objectives and goals. Even in the Curriculum Specifications for English Language Form 4 highlights that students should be able to interact with people and develop skills in forming and maintaining friendship by expressing care and concern and willingness to help and creating a sense of togetherness. This together with the aim of KBSM Revised Curriculum which is to encourage students to read more L2 materials and collaboration may be one of the ways to prompt students to read together and share their reading experiences and materials.

It is worth trying to use blogs in an extensive reading program to find out how students play their roles to encourage each other to read more. The next section explains about the use of ICT in the Malaysian English Language Curriculum.

1.3 The Role of ICT in the Malaysian English Language Classrooms

Malaysia has realized the potential in ICT transformation in education and even the research done by UNESCO showed that Malaysia is the first country in the world to have a strategic ICT plan for education. The aim to use ICT in teaching and learning process is to assist students for higher order thinking skills (Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia, 2012: 142). Unfortunately, the research done by UNESCO indicated that

“although ICT is used during teaching process, in most cases the use is not more than Power Point presentation as a teaching tool. There is yet an evidence to show that ICT is used to encourage skills such as creativity, problem solution and critical thinking and communication among the students.”

“walaupun ICT digunakan semasa pengajaran, dalam kebanyakan kes penggunaannya masih belum menjangkau penggunaan aplikasi persembahan Power Point sebagai alat pengajaran. Tidak terdapat sebarang bukti yang menunjukkan bahawa ICT ini digunakan untuk menggalakkan kemahiran seperti kreativiti, penyelesaian masalah, dan pemikiran kritis dan komunikasi dalam kalangan murid.” (as cited in Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia, 2012: 142)

The findings by UNESCO show that the use of ICT is yet to be fully manipulated by teachers to give optimum impact on students' language learning. The use of ICT has been introduced in the Malaysian curriculum and incorporated in the learning outcomes in line with globalization and the ICT age but there is no evidence that it has been used to enhance creativity, critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills. It has also been specified by the Curriculum Specification that English for ICT will enable students to access knowledge on the internet and network to share the information and knowledge in joint activities and to develop their interpersonal skills (Huraian Sukatan Pelajaran, 2003). The ICT skills include

the utilization of computer related activities such as e-mail activities, networking and interacting with electronic courseware. Yet, the practice in Malaysian schools does not provide evidence that it is done effectively.

One of the objectives of the English language syllabus is to “extend students’ English language proficiency to meet their needs for English in everyday life, for knowledge acquisition, and for future workplace needs”. (Huraian Sukatan Pelajaran, 2003: 1). The other objectives of English language syllabus are to enable learners to build up relationship through conversation and correspondence, and use information from various audio visual and print sources as well as to listen to, view, read and respond to different texts (Huraian Sukatan Pelajaran, 2003: 1)

The English Language Program, as part of the Integrated Secondary School Curriculum, aims to provide some opportunity for learners for their self-expression and creativity. Therefore, the Ministry hopes that the introduction of literary materials such as short stories, novels, fables and poems should not only encourage learners to read but also to develop their interest in learning. (MOE, 2003). The English Language Curriculum focuses on a shift from dependent learners to be independent and autonomous learners. The National Curriculum aims to

produce student who are balanced, enduring, high-spirited, curious, with principle, knowledgeable and patriotic, as well as have thinking skills, can communicate and work as a team.

(Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia 2013-2025, 2012: 140)

The use of ICT in English teaching and learning process promotes independent online learning (Parker and Chao, 2007). Students learn the second language without

being closely guided by teachers. The learning process can take place regardless of time and space. In addition, the national blueprint also stated that online learning enables direct interaction to take place between teachers and students and students can get access to good quality teachers worldwide.

In addition, the use of ICT has been introduced in the curriculum and incorporated in the learning outcomes in line with globalization and the ICT age. English for ICT enables students not only to access knowledge on the internet and network but also allows them to share the information and knowledge in joint activities and develop their interpersonal skills (MOE, 2003). The ICT skills include the utilization of computer related activities such as e-mail activities, networking and interacting with electronic courseware. Internet has also been one of the tools to activate collaboration.

MOE also takes initiatives in English language teaching and learning by implementing various programs to support the English curriculum at the school level such as extensive reading and contemporary literature. This was introduced in 2001 and this program “is crucially linked to the critical and creative thinking skills (CCTS)” (MELTA, 2012: 2).

This present research aims to look at the integration of collaborative blogs with collaborative learning approach in a second language extensive reading program. Thus, this study attempts to understand the phenomenon that takes place when the students collaborate with their peers and teachers online, through the use of blogs as

well as when the students collaborate during in-class activities that lead them to become motivated and independent readers.

1.4. Problem Statement

Mokatsi (2005) stated that reading is the basic tool of education. Ögeyik & Akyay (2009) also stated that helping students to gain reading habits in learning process is important to fulfil their needs. Students who have good development in reading habits show positive impact on their academic performance (Dent, 2005). However, Agee (2005) mentioned that today's society does not nurture reading as it has in the past.

Tella (2007) pointed out that reading for pleasure mirrors lifelong learning. Therefore, language teachers need to put the efforts to ensure students enjoy reading. One of the ways is by using collaborative reading that has been found to benefit teachers and students in several previous studies (Shegar, 2009; Mak, Coniam & Chan, 2008). Griffin (2002) added that they have been found to demonstrate co-operation and leadership. Topping (1989) stated that by reading together helps the students to acquire positive attitudes towards reading.

Hence, the researcher is interested to find out the pattern of interaction exist when the students practiced collaborative reading through the use of blogs in two different settings. This study used blogs as a platform for the students to keep in touch with their friends both in and outside of the formal classroom. Instead of other websites, blogs are chosen to be the platform for students to collaborate because of the features available such as trackbacks and commenting. These features can provide support for collaborative learning (Birney, 2006). Blogging also offers a useful learning

environment that gives the students a chance to create a strong sense of community in which they can participate actively while learning (Nadzrah & Kemboja, 2009:53).

Even though many studies have been carried out on collaborative learning among learners via the use of blogs mostly focused on the learners' other skills such as writing skills (Johnson, 2004; Blackstone, Spiri and Naganuma, 2007; Nadzrah & Kemboja, 2009; Sullivan & Longnecker, 2014; Zhang et.al., 2014) and very few focused on reading skills particularly in an L2 extensive reading program. Johnson (2004) for example, guided teachers how to set up a course using blogs at "Blogger" and discussed the advantages of blogs for both teachers and students in which the students could observe how their writing changed over time and teachers could give the collective feedback when a recurring mistake is found by adding entries to a "Writing Feedback" class blog as well as gave individual feedback to individual student blogs.

The other studies of using blogs for collaborative learning among learners focused on the other skill which is peer-interaction skills. Glogoff (2005) stated that blogging provided opportunities for students to interact in meaningful ways that extend instruction in the virtual classroom. He utilized blogs for class assignments, reflections, and journal entries. At the end of his study, he found out that the most introverted students fully participated in online forum discussions. His study focused only on the interaction exists among the students without looking at the process that the students went through during the lessons. Harris and Sandor (2007) supported the findings by Glogoff after finding out that the discussion board was a great tool to keep the students interacting and learning.

Meanwhile, Zain & Koo (2009) focused more on the speech patterns employed by students via blogging. They looked at three particular aspects of interaction which are turn-taking, politeness strategies and code switching. They found out that turn-taking strategies were used by the participants to communicate meaning and were important in establishing kinship bonds between the blog writer and the readers (Zain & Koo, 2009:23). This kinship bonds formed between the participants showed a vital impact on the formation of virtual communities. In relation to that, Mardziah & Tan (2008) found out that online forum could stimulate communication and generate much discussion among ESL learners because the online domain allowed more prolonged contact and frequent dialogue among the learners since they could access to the discussion at any time and from anywhere.

All the studies cited above focused on collaboration among the students while blogging but they did not examine the processes that the second language learners go through while blogging. In addition, it is important to identify the process of interaction exists among the second language learners when they blog because it will help language teachers to be more prepared in planning for their lessons using blogs. Very few of the earlier studies compared the posts made by the students from two different settings which are done face-to-face with the teacher's supervision and virtually without the teacher's presence. The findings will help to determine if the presence of a teacher is significant during the blogging activities. It is hoped that the findings of the present study will provide a better understanding of the processes involved during blogging activities among second language learners. Understanding the process the students go through helps teachers to have a better plan to get the optimum impact of the use of blogs in their teaching and learning process.

Apart from that, most of the studies applied quantitative approach by looking at the effects of using individual blog in teaching (Johnson, 2004; Glogoff, 2005; Nakatsukasa, 2009; Maryam, Nooreen and Mohd Suhandri, 2013; Zhang et.al., 2014) and very few researchers used qualitative approach in their studies (Mardziah& Tan, 2008; Zain & Koo, 2009).

Even though some of the researchers used qualitative approach, they used individual blog or class blog and not collaborative blogs. Thus, the present study will fill the gap by integrating blogs in collaborative learning in a secondary school extensive reading program. It attempts to examine the interaction patterns as well as the nature of blog posts when students used collaborative blogs in two different settings. Collaborative blogs refer to a blog shared by a small group and members are responsible to manage it.

In addition, in the earlier studies conducted on reading program, students write down their responses in journals (Susser and Robb, 1990; Bell, 1998; Gallo and Jacobs, 2002; Trejos, 2008; Soo-Ok Kweon & Kim, 2008) which are personally read and responded by teachers only. In contrast to the earlier studies, this present study requires learners to use blogs to write comments on their reading materials, the reading activities as well as to respond to their friends' blog posts. This provides a space for learners to communicate among themselves and also to encourage each other to read extensively. Meanwhile, teachers will also facilitate the learners' in-class reading activities and also students' collaboration in their group blogs.

In short, the present study seeks to examine the nature of students' blogs during face-to-face and virtual supervisions. It also intends to discover ESL secondary students' readiness and willingness to share their reading through online journals known as blogs since they are known to be passive second language learners because of cultural bound. Thus, this study will examine how the students collaborate when they use blogs in an extensive reading program. It is hoped that the findings will help teachers to be aware of the kind of interaction and relationship that exist among the students as well as with the teacher when they collaborate in class and online. It is important to look at the differences in the students' blog posts in these two kinds of supervisions in order to see whether the students can be independent language learners or heavily rely on the teachers during the learning process. The findings of the study can help the other researchers to understand the process that students experience, the obstacles they encounter and the ways taken to solve the problems when they collaborate via blogs rather than merely looking at the effects of using blogs on students' language learning.

1.5 Aims and Scope of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the nature and also patterns of interaction exist when the use of blogs is integrated in L2 extensive reading classes in a secondary school by analyzing the students' blog posts using 2 online assessment tools which are Florida State University: Assessing Effectiveness of Students' Participation in Online Discussion or known as FSU Online Assessment (2002) and Bales' Interaction Process Analysis "Revised and Expanded" (2002). It will make full use of one of the branches of social media, "*blogs*", as a tool for learners to express themselves regarding their reading and feelings towards the reading articles

they read, motivate their group members to read, provide opinion about the issues rose in their reading or even discuss the characters they read and also present their views regarding the program as a whole.

The present study will focus on one ESL class of upper secondary level. The participants were from 4 students and they were 16 years old. The focus will be given on the students' nature of interaction during face-to-face and virtual supervisions. This is to find out if there is any difference in students' interactional patterns with the presence of the teacher when they use blogs in an extensive reading program.

In this study, the students used collaborative blogs in which they shared the blog with their group members. All the group members were responsible for their blog and the comparison of their blog posts and comments was made between the five collaborative blogs. The collaborative blog creates more opportunity for them to encourage each other in reading and also indirectly increase their confidence to express themselves using the target language.

The study also focused on the comments given by the group members in order to identify the themes and the problems that might exist in the blog discussion. Thus, the students do not merely rely on teachers to give comments on their journals. Instead, the sense of collaboration among them can be developed through this program.

This study did not focus on the analysis of individual blog posts and comments. The analysis focused more on the collaboration that exist in their blogs and to examine whether or not the same pattern of collaboration took place in two different settings, face-to-face and virtual.

1.6 Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the students' collaboration when they used blogs in two different settings in an extensive reading program. They used blogs at school and also at their own places. It is anticipated that through a better understanding of the process involved during blogging such as the nature of their blog posts and the patterns of interaction, language teachers will be able to manipulate the use of technology in their teaching and learning process to make the teaching more interesting. Therefore, the objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the similarities and the differences in the nature of the students' blog posts during face-to-face supervision and virtual supervision.
2. To investigate the interactional patterns of the students' blog posts in the two settings.

1.7 Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. How is the nature of the students' blog posts similar and different during face-to-face and virtual supervisions?
2. What are the interactional patterns of the students' blog posts in the two settings?

1.8 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework for Social Network to Support Collaborative Learning (SSCL) believed that learning depends on students. The knowledge construction takes place due to the students' ability to connect the new experience to their prior knowledge. The conceptual chosen chosen for the present study was taken from Yampinij, Sangsuwan and Chuathong (2012) who designed a conceptual framework for social network to support collaborative learning (SSCL) for enhancing students' knowledge construction. It was designed based on social constructivist theory as a tools for enhancing knowledge construction of the students. There were interaction between learners, teachers and more experienced experts in the process. In the study, social network was also the main function in supporting the knowledge construction accomplishment of the students. Figure 1.1 shows the conceptual framework designed by the researchers.

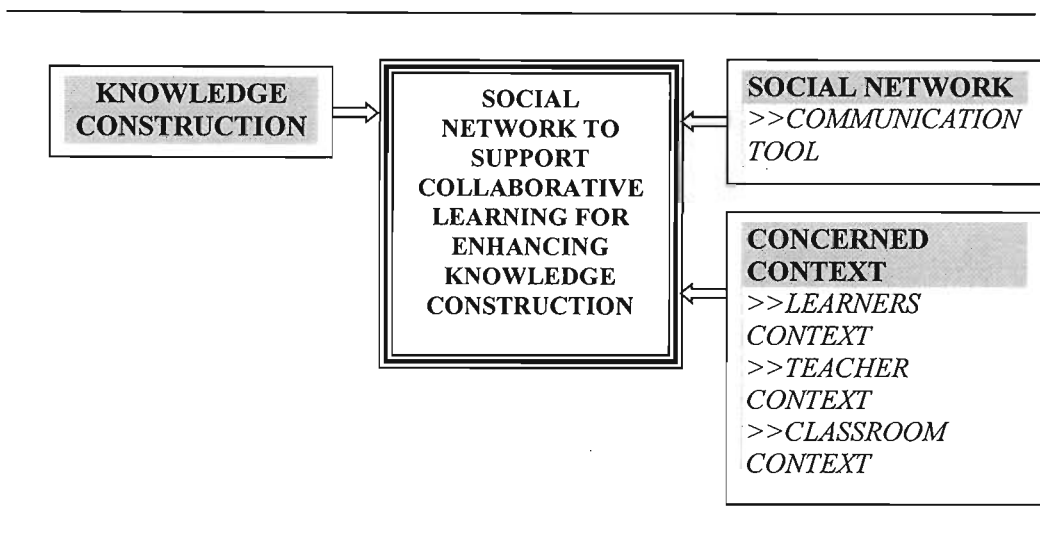


Figure 1.1. Conceptual Framework (Yampinij, Sangsuwan and Chuathong (2012)

The knowledge construction takes place when the students' new experience is connected to their prior knowledge. The use of blogs in language learning supported the students to construct the knowledge as the theory of social constructivist of Vygotsky (1978) that believe in social interaction and the context of sharing knowledge or discuss with others in order to gain knowledge construction. Students can share the knowledge with friends, teachers or experts. The social constructivist and social network are both used in designing the lessons that integrate the use of blogs. During the blogs discussion, the students share knowledge and interact with their friends by posting entries, questions and leaving comments.

The theory of social constructivist mentioned that there is a potential of cognitive development by using social interaction and knowledge sharing with others. Blogs are used as a tool for communication between learners and teachers. The communication takes place in two settings; during face-to-face sessions and virtually. Blogs are used to support multiple ideas sharing.

The concerned context consists of learner context, teacher context and real context in the workplace. Teachers should analyse basic characteristics of the students to use in sharing learning experience on blogs. The teacher acts as a coach. When the students encounter any difficulty or are in the lower zone of proximal development, teachers need advice and guide them. Teaching and learning experience via blogs and also face-to-face support the students' learning process.

The real context is in the classroom. The use of blogs in teaching and learning process connect the students' learning experience with the real life of learning. The knowledge sharing among students and with teachers enable students to compare their prior knowledge with present experiences that can be transferred and applied to solve the problem in the future.

1.9 Operational Definitions

- i. *Blogs* refers to personal online diaries or journals that allow one to share one's thoughts and ideas. One can add videos, thoughts and ideas. One can also read comments visitors leave on one's blogs (Mc Intosh, 2005).
- ii. *Blog posts* refer to what students post in their respective group blogs and also the comments they make on the other group members' posts (Moore, 2014).
- iii. *Collaborative blogs* refer to blogs in which students publish their blogs together as a small group (Nakatsukase, 2009)
- iv. *Collaborative Learning* refers to an instruction method in which students at various performance levels work together in small groups toward a common goal.

The learners are responsible for one another's learning as well as their own. The success of one learner helps other students to be successful (Smith, 1992).

v. *Extensive Reading* refers to an approach to the teaching and learning of reading in which students read large quantities of materials that is within their linguistic competence (Grabe & Stoller, 2002 as cited by Juan Pino-Silva, 2006).

vi. *Supervisions* refer to the way teacher monitors students' progress, during face-to-face sessions and also during virtual sessions. During face-to-face supervisions, teacher was together with the students, helping them in the discussion of the reading materials and assisting them during the blogging process. Meanwhile, during virtual supervisions, students would do the blogging activities on their own and the teacher just monitored their blogs virtually.

vii. *Upper Secondary school* refers to students of Form 4 and Form 5, at the age of age 16 until 17. After two years of upper secondary education, students sit for the public common examination Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia, SPM (also known as the Malaysian Certificate of Education which is equivalent to the GCE 'O' level). The secondary school education aims to increase the level of proficiency in Bahasa Melayu and English Language; promote the general development of students by helping them acquire knowledge and stay competent; develop a broader base of intellectual capacity, self-confidence and skills in order to cope with new areas of knowledge and technological knowledge; and inculcate values based on the National Philosophy of Education. The medium of instruction in secondary school is Bahasa Melayu while English is taught as a second language in all schools (Schools of Malaysia Directory 3rd Ed, 2006).

1.10 Summary

The importance of extensive reading is undeniably in helping students to improve their language competency and proficiency. Thus, teachers need to be fully aware of the students' potential in reading and manipulate the strengths of collaborative learning to increase students' interest to read L2 materials as the group members are sharing the same objectives in their language learning. Although teachers can initiate their students to read by providing interesting materials, the students need to be guided and encouraged to find their own reading materials to be shared with their peers because they know the topics, issues and genres that appeal to their interests. Thus, collaborative learning gives the students ample opportunity to help each other to read extensively in the target language. Instead of merely sharing their thoughts and responses with teachers through traditional journal writing, they can share them with their peers through blogs. The students do not have to wait only for the language class to share their feelings towards reading. Instead, they can be online anywhere and at any time they wish to. Thus, the present study examines what students actually wrote in their blogs and the nature of interaction that took place among the group members in their blogs when they were supervised face-to-face and also virtually.

In this chapter, the study was introduced in its educational context and the reasons why this study needs to be carried out was outlined. In chapter 2, the review of the literature related to learning theories, online assessment tools, extensive reading and the use of blogs in language teaching and learning processes, specifically in L2 lessons will be discussed. Next, in Chapter 3, the methodology used for this study which includes the pilot study, research design, setting and participations will be

outlined. In addition, the issues of validity and reliability as well as epistemology of qualitative study will also be discussed. Next, in Chapter 4, the analysis of the findings gathered will be discussed in details and finally, in Chapter 5, the focus will be the discussion on the analysis of the findings by relating them to the previous literature.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the theoretical as well as the conceptual framework of the study. It also reviews past studies related to the use of web logs in L2 classes, collaborative learning approach in L2 lessons and extensive reading among L2 students. It starts with the discussion on the theoretical framework followed by related studies on online learning particularly on blogging activities, L2 extensive reading and ends with the framework of analysis for online discussion.

Practice is in fact a polishing agent. The more one practices, the better one gets at it. Similarly, the more one reads, the better reader one becomes (Prince-Cohen, 2005). By reading extensively, students will become willing and able readers in the target language (Sheu, 2004).

The integration of ICT in teaching and learning L2 is seen as one of the efforts that teachers can take in order to enhance students' ability to learn collaboratively in and outside classrooms (MOE, 2004) and the students need to focus on reading in order to get the optimum input to make them more competent in their L2 learning (MOE, 2004). This is the key that triggers the researcher to carry out the present research because learners need to be able to collaborate effectively to be motivated to read to make them better readers. Thus, by understanding the nature of L2 classes when the use of blogs is integrated in collaborative learning specifically in reading programs

hopefully it will help the researcher to comprehend the situation and also identify the problems encountered and suggest some possible solutions.

This study is an attempt to understand and analyze the secondary school students' learning experience as well as their perceptions of their own learning gained via collaborative learning using blogs in their extensive reading programs.

2.2 Theoretical Framework of the Research

The theoretical framework of the study entails three significant aspects. Firstly, it will cover the related theory of the use of web logs in L2 classes; secondly, it will touch on the use of technology in the classroom by focusing on blogging practices and finally, it will describe collaborative learning in L2 classes.

2.2.1 Social Constructivist Theory and the Use of Blogs for Collaborative Learning in L2 Classes

The theoretical framework for collaborative reading of this study is based on Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory. Vygotsky (1978), believes that students are capable of performing at higher intellectual levels when asked to work in collaborative situations than when asked to work individually. He hypothesized that the social interaction extended students' zone of proximal development, the difference between a student's understanding and potential to understand more difficult concepts. This theory asserts three major aspects; social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development, the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This present research adapts and adopts Vygotsky's theory in which ESL learners are believed to be

motivated in reading second language materials extensively if they manage to create a bond among their peers (interpsychological) and only later, on the individual level (intrapsychological).

From the social constructivist's perspective, knowledge is the process by which students construct meaning from past experiences in a social context. In a classroom environment, students create their own meanings and develop ideas through interaction with peers and teachers. This learning concept reflects what a social constructivist classroom is all about. Using blogs, especially group blogging, as a writing activity in the English classroom can create a learning environment that encourages students to work collaboratively in a social context.

Social constructivists emphasize on a need to transform language learning process from teacher-centered to an approach in which learners are actively involved in the construction of knowledge. They believe that humans learn by social and communal activities whereby meaning is shaped and knowledge is constructed through discussion with peers and teachers, and through reflection (Higgs and McCarthy, 2005). The collaborative nature of social software means that they enable knowledge building with and for others, with the focus is on the community rather than on the individual learner.

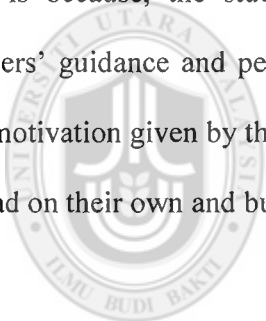
Social interactions are especially relevant to building learning communities in which participants engage in critical thinking under the scaffolding provided through peer interactions and from teachers (Vygotsky, 1978). The Constructivist approach to learning emphasizes authentic, challenging projects that include students, teachers and experts in the learning community. When learners work collaboratively in an

authentic activity, they bring their own framework and perspectives to the activity. They can see a problem from different perspectives and are able to negotiate and generate meanings and solutions through shared understanding.

Vygotsky's theory (1978) is one of the foundations of social constructivism. It asserts three major principles. Firstly, social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development. In contrast to Jean Piaget's understanding of child development (in which development necessarily precedes learning), Vygotsky felt that social learning precedes development. According to him, child's cultural development appears on the social level and on the individual level or known as "interpsychological" which refers to the development between people or social level and "intrapsychological" that means at the individual level or inside the individual himself (Vygotsky, 1978 as cited in Andrews, 2012). Social constructivism places great emphasis on everyday interactions between people and how they use language to construct their reality.

Secondly, the More Knowledgeable Others (MKO) that refers to anyone who has a better understanding or a higher ability level than the learner, with respect to a particular task, process, or concept. The MKO is normally thought of as being a teacher, coach, or older adult, but the MKO could also be peers, a younger person, or even computers. By having collaborative reading through the use of blogs, ESL learners are able to interact with each other about their reading activities. Thus, it activates their desire to read to be able to contribute to the members who are involved in the similar activities as they are.

The final part of this theory is ZPD. It focuses on students' ability to perform a task collaboratively and their ability to solve the problems independently. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which is the distance between a student's ability to perform a task under adult guidance and/or with peer collaboration and the student's ability solving the problem independently. Vygotsky claims that learning occurred in this zone. According to this theory, children can do more with the help and guidance of an adult or a more experienced person than they can do by themselves. The Zone of Proximal Development defines skills and abilities that are in the process of developing. The ZPD is the range of tasks that one cannot yet perform independently, but can accomplish with the help of a more competent individual. This is because, the students can develop their skills and abilities better with teachers' guidance and peer collaboration compared to study alone. The feedback and motivation given by their peers then act as an encouraging "tool" for the students to read on their own and build up their interest in reading.



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Vygotsky (1978) suggested that meaning making develops through the social process of learning language over time. The effect of this process is noticeable when students in this study are starting to produce, share and publish their ideas on their personal blogs. As compared to traditional face-to-face classroom environment, the learning process via blog is personalized and many of them expressed that they have benefited from it when the learning process takes place in a social context. In particular, blogs are chosen to facilitate the learning and reflective processes in the current study. By publishing, learning, and sharing ideas, students deepen their thinking and receive direct feedback from peers, experts, and other teachers.

Many schools have traditionally held a transmissionist or instructionist model in which a teacher or lecturer ‘transmits’ information to students. In contrast, Vygotsky’s theory promotes learning contexts in which students play an active role in learning. The roles of the teacher and students are therefore shifted, as a teacher should collaborate with his or her students in order to help facilitate meaning construction in students. Learning therefore becomes a reciprocal experience for the students and the teacher.

Thus, in the integration of the use of computer in language teaching and learning, constructivists recommend learner guidance and assistance (scaffolding) which is based on ZPD, learner control or autonomy, learner social interaction and the use of authentic information and materials (Doolittle 2001). The lessons must allow for some flexibility and also rich in content so that students can draw on many stimuli to construct knowledge.

The use of blog in the classroom in this present study can be said to fulfill the philosophy of social constructivism whereby the learners acquire new knowledge of the subject matter through discussions, and further expand this newly-acquired knowledge by applying it in different situations (Ozkan, 2011). These processes allow the learners to become active participants in developing their own understanding of important concepts and achieve their learning goals (Peters, Cornu, & Collins, 2003). In addition, social constructivists emphasize that the most important part of learning involves the learners having the confidence in their language ability and being able to use the language to express themselves, to explain, to negotiate and to compromise with peers during the learning activities.

In this study, blogs support a constructivist way of learning as learners are encouraged to construct their own contexts. Learners seem to comprehend implicit and explicit knowledge if learning is embedded in rich situations, and also if the tasks are meaningful and they see the reasons to collaborate by having something in common. They need to know the structure they are engaged to (Wilkinson, 2011). Ferdig and Trammell (2004) assess the educational nature of blogging based on educational theories of Vygotsky. They suggest that the use of blogs encourage knowledge construction as the nature of blogging system that allows immediate feedback and comments. The blogging interface encourages analysis, reflection, revisiting and re-learning of information. These obviously create enriching learning experience for learners. The interactivity that blogs promote leads to active learning, higher order thinking, provide equal opportunities for active learning and improve flexibility in teaching and learning (Winer, 2004). Based on Vygotsky's social constructivist theory (1978), knowledge construction is relational and conversational in nature. Learners need to have genuine opportunities to publish their knowledge. This will make the learning materials accessible for analysis and reflection. In addition, learners are able to revisit and revise their learning and this will enrich their learning experience. The opportunity to get feedback scaffolds learners in their quest for knowledge construction.

2.3 Related Literature on the On-line Learning

Many studies have been carried out on the use of on-line learning in teaching and learning process. A review of literature proposes the effectiveness which includes learning achievement and also the outcomes that covers satisfaction of e-learning to be equivocal. While Piccoli et al. (2001) and Johnson et al. (2000) found out that

there was no significant difference in learning performance between students supported by e- learning and those who were using the conventional face-to-face classroom method, Ladyshewsky (2004) and Andrewartha and Wilmot (2001) observed considerable improvements in learning achievement and satisfaction due to the use of e-learning method.

In Malaysia, previous studies on the on-line learning focused on students' attitudes towards the use of ICT (Nadzrah & Mickan, 2003; Mohamed A. Embi, 2004), the effects of using ICT on students' writing skills (Nadzrah & Kemboja, 2009; Ratnawati & Ismail, 2003; Zaini & Koo, 2009) and the impact of interactions in e-learning environment towards language learning and language literacy (Nadzrah, 2009; Kabilan et al., 2012). Realizing the importance of creating autonomous learners, Malaysian Ministry of Education has implemented the SMART School Education Program which integrates teaching and learning with ICT applications. Mohamed A. Embi (2004) designed an online ESL course which is targeted for Malaysia secondary school students which is called E-Learn. He proceeded to test it on 15 ESL school teachers and 80 ESL form 4 students studying in 6 Smart Schools in the state of Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. The study looks at the subjects' perceptions regarding the course's reliability, user-friendliness, interactivity, attractiveness, usefulness, suitability and content. The results, which indicated a favorable reaction towards the E-Learn, were obtained from the self-report questionnaire consisting of Likert items, with a descriptive statistic using frequency count and mean score taken for the data analysis. The findings from the study showed that the students viewed E-Learn as reliable (mean=1.82), user-friendly (mean=2.00), useful (mean=2.00), suitable (mean=2.06) and attractive (mean=2.43).

Nadzrah (2009) carried out another study to investigate the impact of interactions in e-learning environment towards language learning and language literacy among undergraduate students using blogs. Blog activity was a section of an integrated learning activity that combines both face-to-face environment and online learning environment. The purpose of integrated activities was to give learners more usage of English language in different learning environment. Her finding supported Mohamed Amin Embi (2004) when she found out that there were different learning activities taken place during blogging that encouraged learners to interact with each other using different language learning skills and language patterns.

In relation to that, Nadzrah and Kemboja (2009) carried out a study to assess the usefulness of blogs in developing students' ability to write constructively. The sample of this study was 41 first- and second-year students who were taking an English for Social Sciences course. They collected data through questionnaires that requested students' feedback on their attitudes and perspectives pertaining to the integrated blog project and how the project motivated them and helped them increase their interest in writing in English. The sample indicated that when writing blogs, they could write effectively (97%) and be creative (80%) though their English language skills were limited (82%). They realized that when writing online, the Web site was open for everyone to read, and they tried their best to write using correct grammar and sentence structure.

In addition, Nadzrah and Mickan (2003) did some classrooms observations and interviews on Form Two students' in one of the SMART schools in Malaysia to

discover their perceptions of the use of ICT. They found that generally, the students favoured the use of computers in the classroom and believed that it helped to enhance their English proficiency, particularly if the lessons were extended to include other interesting activities such as discussions, role-plays and presentations. However, they strongly felt that teachers should be around to guide and facilitate them especially in the areas of the lessons that needed proper explanation.

The present study focuses more on the understanding of the real phenomenon in a naturalistic setting by examining the process and the problems that the students and teachers encounter when the use of blogs is integrated with collaborative learning in extensive reading lessons, instead of measuring the effects of using blogs in teaching and learning process.

2.4 The Use of Blogs in Language Teaching and Learning

Learning by using blogs is flexible in relation of content sharing and social networking (Kabilan, Keong Too & Widodo, 2012). Blogs is a web communication and collaboration tool that can be used to engage students in learning with others (Parker and Chao, 2007). In addition, blogs is a collaborative web site whose content can be edited by visitors to the site, allowing users to create and edit the pages collaboratively (Chao, 2007). Warschauer (1996) researched how learners showed their motivation when using computers. He surveyed 167 ESL and EFL students in academic writing classes within twelve universities in the U.S., Hong Kong, and Taiwan. To survey the motivational factor, teachers asked students to answer a questionnaire during one normal class period. The questionnaire was about the students' feelings concerning the use of computers in language learning, the use of a

word processor, or computer mediated interpersonal communication. This section also asked about their general feelings concerning computer use for language learning. In the analysis, several elements were assessed: students' responses towards computers, the categorization of questions, effect of personal background, and students' different perspectives on the use of blogs based on background and the classes they attended. Warschauer (1996) gave three conclusions. Firstly, students showed positive attitudes towards using computers in writing and communication, regardless of their background (including computer skills), within both ESL/EFL classes. Secondly, the factors that influenced students' motivation positively were their beliefs in the communicative advantages, control of learning context, and learning effectiveness. Thirdly, teachers could increase students' motivation using computers – especially when they carefully plan the activities and the aims of courses.

Blogging is one of the “important branches of computer mediated communication as it possesses the ability to bring together participants of an ‘invisible’ world to partake in discourse via the reading and writing of texts” (Zain & Koo, 2009; p 1). Blogging often combines visual and textual elements to create meaning-making among students who participate in this mode of communication. The advantages of blogging in language classes comprise instant publishing online, awareness of having a readership, extra reading practice, and creating an online portfolio of student written work (Galina, Liliya & Viktorija, 2006).

Web technologies including blogs are known as “social software” because they connect and allow users to develop web content collaboratively and open it to public

(Alexander, 2006). Social software also allows everyone to participate (Schaffert, Gruber & Westenthaler, 2006). Most of the students prefer blogging interaction to face-to-face interaction because it is a more comfortable learning environment for them. Some students may feel very comfortable with the blogging interaction because they do not like interacting face-to-face with their classmates (Di Zhang, 2009).

There are numerous reasons for using blogs in education, such as to provide a real audience for student writing, to provide extra reading practice for students, to increase the sense of community in a class, to encourage students to participate, to create an online portfolio of student written work (Stanley, 2005). There are various ways that can be implemented by teachers in order to make sure that learners are really indulged in the reading texts provided. Since writing blogs is a new approach in teaching extensive reading, it is necessary to look at how responses were written by the students in their book journals. For example, teachers can ask students to answer comprehension questions (which are normally done in intensive reading), oral questions and even writing journals. Oral or written summaries give the students chances to show that they are doing their reading (Susser & Robb, 1990). This also serves as an indication whether they comprehend the reading materials or not. Journals provided a space for students to take charge of their own learning process by “reflecting upon it on a regular basis by assessing their own progress over time” (Trejos, 2008: 1).

When journals are used in language teaching and learning, most educators specify the tasks to be fulfilled (Barfield, 1995; Bell, 1998; Gallo and Jacobs, 2002;

Ratnawati and Ismail, 2003; Yamashita, 2004; Kweon and Kim, 2008; Ozkan, 2011). As blogs function as journals to be read by wider audience, Ozkan (2011) who used blogging with his 130 pre-service teachers required them to enter comments to their friends' blogs until 5 pm on Sunday of the week. By giving them guidelines of when and what to comment in their friends' blogs, the use of blogs was perceived positively by the students as it improves their writing and reflective learning.

On the other hand, Kweon and Kim (2008) carried out a study on 12 Korean university students and they required the students to jot down the new vocabulary they encountered in the reading texts in their journals. Similar to Bell(1998) who also required learners to write comments on books read but learners need to list down the new vocabulary encountered while reading, record the questions that they wanted to post to teachers and also write down the summary of the stories.

The other scholars insisted on self-report data and most of them focused on the summary of a book read (Jacobs, 2002, Ratnawati and Ismail, 2003; Yamashita, 2004). Ratnawati and Ismail (2003) carried out a study on Form 1 and Form 3 students for 4 months required the students to write a book report once a week and Yamashita (2004) who wanted to find the relationship between students first and second language reading attitudes and their performance in the second language extensive reading also asked the students to write a short book report on books read. While Gallo and Jacobs (2002) wanted the 415 fourth graded students to write a book review and answer the questions provided by their teachers as their journal report. In addition, Barfield (1995) redesigned the learners' journals by using double entries reading journal. The first part of the journal is for learners to jot down

interesting quotes and the second part is for their own reflection. Learners are also required to share their journals with their partners weekly. The above studies show that journals act as an instrument for learners to keep a record of the reading materials and the aspects that they have learned or dealt with.

Journal writing also provides a ground for learners to describe and share their personal experiences, views and others (Trejos, 2008). Journals can also be tangible source of information for both parties; learners and teachers to monitor the learners' progress in reading. Journals provided valuable insights regarding various aspects of language learning including learners' anxiety, learning strategies, impact of classroom interaction (Yin Leung, 2002). Yin Leung carried out a study on an adult Chinese trying to learn Japanese as his second language within 20 weeks. The subject was asked to write a diary about his learning experience and also the materials read. From there, the teacher would identify the anxiety and problems faced by him.

Journals are also tools for teachers to provide feedback and suggestions to guide and improve the students (Trejos, 2008). Teachers need to provide feedback in the students' learning journals to make them understand that their journals are taken into account along with their learning process. Despite the benefits of journal writing as mentioned above, the journals are written for the teachers only, not for the other students to read. Thus, the use of blogs which are on-line journals provides a space for students to share their reading experience with a larger audience instead of writing merely for their language teachers. This enables students to share their reading and reflection with other students, not only with their language teacher.

Instead of using traditional journals which meant for language teachers to read, blogs as online journals provide a good platform to share their reading materials and reading experience with their peers. Thus, the present study will fill the gap by using blogs as the students' journals so that the audience will not be limited to teachers. In this program, their friends also could also access to the online journals and give their comments. This will make the process of reading extensively more interesting. Their nature of blog posts and interaction helped educators to understand how students used L2 as their medium of interaction to collaborate via blogs.

Blogs are easy-to-create and easy-to-maintain websites. Although it has been introduced for over 10 years, it becomes popular among internet users since hosting websites such as Blogger.com activates its functions in 1999. For blog users, or bloggers, blogs provide a practice environment where they can think, reflect and create language for a real-life audience (Pinkman, 2000: p15). Blogs have several unique criteria such as do not require sophisticated software or knowledge of computer programming. Furthermore blogs are written by only one author and visitors cannot make posts or edit posts, but they can add comments to an existing post. Still, some blogs are community blogs, where all members of the community can make posts (Di Zhang, 2009:66).

2.4.1 Blogs as a Platform for Autonomous Collaborative Learning among Students.

According to Brown and Adler (2008), social learning happens when learners interact with each other about contents, problems or actions. One of the features of a blog that is essential to learning is that it can be used as a collaborative tool (Yih-Ruey Juang, 2008; Ina, Nili & Tami, 2009; Nadzrah, Hafizah & Azizah, 2010; Zaini Amir et. al., 2011; Maryam, Noreen & Mohd Suhandri, 2013; Sullivan & Longnecker, 2014; Zhang et. al., 2014). As students write and express their views on specified topics, they also learn from their peers and themselves. This promotes self-learning. Self-learning indicates students' ability to be independent and shoulder the responsibility of their own learning. The use of blogs in language teaching and learning also focuses on the elements of collaborative that it offers. Ina, Nili and Tami (2009) carried out a study on 25 graduate students in order to explore interpersonal and group interactions using blogs. They made a comparison between the use of blogs and multi-authored wikis. They found out that while educational blogs promoted communication among the course students, wiki interactions were affected by student offline former acquaintance and social contact.

The similar findings were gathered by Nadzrah, Hafizah & Azizah (2010) who carried out a study on 197 tertiary level students to probe the effectiveness of using blogs in improving the students' abilities in important areas such as reading, writing, critical thinking and discussion skills. 95.8 % of the subjects agreed that blogging promotes collaborative learning. The finding also agreed with what Zaini Amir et. al. (2011) found in their study with 80 university students. According to the students, blogs provided them with motivating learning environment in which they have a

sense of ownership and readership. Blogs made them be more interested, motivated and confident to use English. According to the researchers, the students wrote more freely as “they are engaged in fluency work rather than in accuracy work” (p 541).

One of the social constructivist principles is to give learners control over their own learning. They can also choose their own sequence of learning and reflect on their learning as well as to internalise the information. The use of blogs enables learners to collaborate and engage with other learners and they help each other to prompt reflection. Working with their peers gives real life experience, allowing them to practice the language. Blogs often likened to online personal journals. They are unedited, published voice of people (Winer, 2003). Blogs give learners full control and ownership over the content. Maryam, Noreen and Mohd Suhandri (2013) conducted a study with 30 undergraduate Universiti Putra Malaysia for 14 weeks. The students were required to write at least 20 entries within the given time and they also had to comment and revise their friends’ blogs. They were given the freedom to write about any topic of their interest in their respective blogs. At the end of the study, students expressed their excitement to write because they got the feedback from their peers and they could write what they liked, instead of being given topics by their teachers.

This resembles the finding from the study conducted by Zhang et. al. (2014) revealed that the participants had positive perceptions of the role of blogs in L2 writing. They believed that they were better motivated (mean=4.174, SD=.499) and more collaborative (mean=3.661, SD=.701) in the course of writing activities. From the interview conducted, the participants stated that blog mediated peer feedback allows

them to accomplish the learning goal together as “the feedback is viewed as a bridge that connects and cements relationship of the peers” (p 9).

Yih-Ruey Juang (2008) carried out a study on 80 university students for 18 weeks on the use of blog-based learning tool, called *Learning Blogs*, which can be adopted by students to summarize the materials and ask questions after the warm-up, and review a lesson after class. This experiment was designed to find out whether learning by blogging can help teachers efficiently manage the classroom activities for knowledge building and also whether learning by blogging can help enhance the learning performance and facilitate collaborative learning among students. The researcher found out that the students' learning performance was enhanced, and the collaborative learning among students also improves.

Nadzrah and Kemboja (2009) carried out a study on 41 first- and second-year students who were taking an English for Social Sciences course. Their level of proficiency in English was intermediate with some basic knowledge of computer skills, as all of them had taken a basic computer course at the university. This study incorporates a blog project into the class project to find out students' attitude and perspective about using blogs as an online writing platform, to determine the usefulness of using blogs and to encourage students to use the English language and to investigate how blogging affects students' level of language learning. They found out that blogging gives more benefits to students in terms of sharing their writing in an interactive social environment.

In addition, Sullivan and Longnecker (2014) used for classes of university students who were required to participate on weekly basis for in their blogs. The students were added as author to the class blog page that gave them power to write and publish their own posts. The researchers used wordpress.com for this study. 94% of the students felt motivated knowing others would read their posts. The researchers also found out that it was important for teachers to “set class time aside for students to discuss and negotiate their reading” (p 10). The finding is consistent with what Pinkman (2005) suggested, “Blogging should not replace face-to-face interaction, but it may provide a practice environment where students can think, reflect and create language slowly for a real-life audience.” (p 15).

On the other hand, Hall (2005) reviewed not only the advantages but also the disadvantages of using blogs in teaching and learning process. He highlighted that blogs entries were often written for the sake of completing an assignment; students commented less and less on each other's blogs as the semester progressed; some of the student's blogs were virtually ignored by their classmates; many students did not have computers at home; other problems include forgotten passwords, usernames, and e-mail addresses; a few students never took to blogging and rarely posted; it was difficult to keep track of all the blogs; blogs soon become outdated and discontinue after the class ends. Thus, it is important for the teachers to establish clear expectations and guidelines for participation at the beginning of the lesson such as participation should receive credit, and penalties should be given for lack of participation, determine how many times a week students should participate, deadlines should be set and a weekly pattern helpful and limit the length of the postings (Fleming, 2008).

In addition, they are learners who viewed the interaction through comments in blogs negatively. There are other studies that found out learners did not favour making comments, and some even experienced difficulty in doing so. Ducate and Lomicka (2008) found that the students ignored comments posted in their blogs. When they wanted to comment on their friends' posts, they felt constrained by the guidelines given by the teacher in posting their comments. In another study by Ellison and Wu (2008), learners expressed negative feelings about comments. According to the learners they were not at ease with making comments because they did not want to be perceived negatively or to offend their friends, they also felt the comments they received were not interesting or always being repetitious and they were frustrated with the low quality of the postings made by their peers, making it difficult for them to give feedback.

The findings from the aforementioned studies indicated that when students shared their learning activities with their peers, they developed a sense of community in which they can participate actively while learning among themselves. This motivates the students to improve their learning activities for the benefits of their groups. Despite the benefits of using blogs in language learning, teachers also need to be aware of the disadvantages blogs might have on students' learning such as feeling negative by the comments posted by their friends. Therefore, teachers need to find ways to control the aspects that might bring negative impact to students when they are blogging. Most importantly, the students practice the language using different skills in an authentic learning environment and they are conscious of the presence of audience besides their language teacher. This present study was based on explanatory of the condition students were in throughout the extensive reading

program with the use of blogs to collaborate and examined the nature of the interaction took place to help understand the students' perception about the use of blogs in their learning process.

2.4.2 Blogs Promote Reflection and Critical Thinking

Blogs have been used in education for some time and they document information, and encourage self-analysis and reflection. In addition, blogs facilitate the students' critical thinking skills as the students engaged in collaborative learning through their interactions with others which serves as a catalyst for critical thinking. Blogs foster critical thinking by encouraging students to evaluate what they read and write. Writing blogs offers students a way to improve their writing skills and encounter new ideas through interaction with other students. Blogs allow students to easily link to resources that support their assertions, and thereby encourage critical thinking (Di Zhang, 2009).

When writing blogs, learners have to make the connection between new and existing knowledge (Armstrong, Berry & Lamshed, 2004). They have to be responsible for their posts and they have to be prepared with how the readers will perceive their views. At the same time, learners also read their friends' posts and compare their postings with others. They interact with each other by giving and responding to comments. Through the interaction, learners practice self-analysis and reflection which support the metacognition process (Hain & Back, 2008).

2.4.3 Blogs Encourage Self-Expression

Most ESL learners are too conscious of their language competency. They are afraid to be laughed at by their peers if they show their weaknesses in their language performance. That is one of the main reasons for them not to contribute during face-to-face discussion. Introvert students who rarely speak in class or who seldom have the opportunity to share their views with their peers during in-class discussion, now have a platform to express themselves by sending posts and comments in their blog (Hernandez-Ramos, 2004).

Ducate and Lomicka (2008) also found that by using blogs, learners are aware that they have the real audience, and this encourages them to write with a purpose. Students enjoy an opportunity to open the windows of communication by reading their classmates' postings and having classmates comment on their own writing (Blackston, Spiri, & Naganuma, 2007). This kind of publication and collaboration help the learners to be confident with their own voices (Williams & Jacobs, 2004). Learners used blogs as platforms to demonstrate their self-expression and their distinctive writing styles (Oravec, 2003; Williams & Jacobs, 2004). Some studies have found that blogging can provide a sense of ownership over work. The sense of ownership may motivate students, perhaps from a sense of pride, to continue blogging and to make greater efforts in their studies (Dickey, 2004; Du & Wagner, 2005).

One important aspect of this present research is to deal with the manipulation of online journal in which students can share their thoughts about their reading with their group members, regardless place and time. Now the reliance on teachers can be

decreased as students will comment and motivate each other through their blogs. They can also suggest interesting reading materials as well as motivate their group members to keep up with their reading.

Though there are already existing studies and reviews on the use of blogs as an educational tool (Pinkman, 2005; Yih-Rueh, 2008; Nadzrah Abu Bakar & Kemboja Ismail, 2009; Ozkan, 2011; Sullivan & Longnecker, 2014), further studies still need to be done especially with respect to the use of blogs in the second or foreign language learning classroom. This is because the use of blogs as a teaching and learning tool is relatively new and it has only of late been gaining popularity (Pinkman, 2005). Furthermore, studies on the use of blogs in the second or foreign language classrooms are still lacking especially the ones which involved collaborative blogging approach in which students share the same blog to collaborate with each other instead of using one class blog or their individual blogs. Thus, the present study was initiated as an explanatory study to understand the real situation that take place when the use of blog is incorporated as part of the collaborative learning process in an extensive reading program. The use of a group blog enabled the researcher to make a comparison between the students' blog posts to find any similarities or differences when blogs were used with students with different linguistic ability and attitude towards learning the second language.

Despite the advantages of using blogs, educators need to be cautioned that blogs do not necessarily make students feel more proficient or better writers, however Armstrong and Retterer (2005) suggest that students who write “more frequently, and perhaps more informally” would be “more confident in their ability to write in

the target language” (p 248). Language teachers are able to optimize language tasks by manipulating the technologies because students do not have to rely on their formal language class to use the language with teachers and friends.

2.5 Collaborative learning in L2 classes

Collaborative learning is an instructional technique in which students work together in structured small groups in order to accomplish shared goals (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). In collaborative learning, students work in heterogeneous groups to support the learning of their individual members. Obviously, collaborative learning leads to positive interdependence of group members, individual accountability, face-to-face interaction and appropriate use of collaborative skills (Schaffert, Bischof, et al., 2006). Collaborative teams normally achieve higher levels of thoughts and retain information longer than students who do their work individually (Johnson and Johnson, 1986). Social software programs available on the net, can be used to facilitate computer-supported collaborative learning to enhance peer interaction and group work, and facilitates sharing and distributing knowledge among a community of learners (Lipponen, 2002; Augar, Raitman & Zhou, 2004). In this approach, students engage in collective learning in a shared domain and learning directly becomes a collaborative process of a group. Social software can serve as a knowledge platform for a collaborative learning to take place where members can share their knowledge with the group, put up interesting pieces of information, work together, discuss issues, and others. (Schaffert, Bischof, et al., 2006). In addition, collaborative learning, according to the research (Johnson, Johnson, & Stanne, 2000), offers many potential benefits beyond enhanced L2 acquisition. These benefits

include increased self-esteem, greater liking for school, enhanced inter-ethnic ties, and improved complex thinking.

The researcher realized when students were given frequent opportunities to talk and share their writing, they learned more and they were more engaged. Through this social interaction, especially when a student is paired with a peer, or a capable adult, with more knowledge or skills, students enter the —Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), an area where students maximize learning through collaboration with a more knowledgeable peer. Vygotsky's research focuses on young children in face-to-face interaction, but the implications of his work can also be applied to social interaction on the Internet. His ideas became the frame of my conceptual thinking about blogs.

Collaborative reading motivates ESL learners to read extensively because they form their own social interaction group that shares the same interest and activities such as working on a specific task after reading connected text (Moore, 2014). Blogging creates a tension-free learning environment for students (Leslie & Murphy, 2008) and this present study aims to discover the interactional patterns exist among the students when they were required to collaborate by using blogs as a platform for their discussion in an extensive reading.

2.6 Extensive Reading

Palmer (1968) coined the term 'extensive reading' to differentiate it from 'intensive reading' (as cited in Powell, 2005). Extensive reading revolves around the reading of large amount of long, easy to comprehend materials and normally carried out outside the classroom and at the learners' own pace and level. The main purpose of

extensive reading is for learners to enjoy reading to gain information and general understanding (Bamford and Day, 1997), not the meaning of individual words or sentences. Extensive reading is in contrast to intensive reading in which it is related to the teaching of reading in terms of skills such as to distinguish the main ideas from the details and to guess the meaning of unknown words and to enable learners read to get the gist of a passage for them to complete the comprehension tasks or activities related to it.

Recent research has consistently provided evidence for the effects of extensive reading on language learning. The reported benefits are associated with all aspects of English learning which are reading speed (Sheu, 2004), reading fluency (Barfield, 2000; Taguchi, Takayasu-Maass & Gorsuch, 2004), improving lexical-syntactical knowledge and language processing skills (Powell, 2005;), vocabulary enrichment (Rosszell, 2007; Nishino, 2007; Kweon and Kim, 2008), writing (Bell, 1998; Tsang), speaking (Widodo, 2008) and promote a positive attitude toward reading (Yin Leung, 2002; Yamashita, 2004). The whole idea of extensive reading is to keep students engaged in their reading. It requires students to get the meaning without stopping many times to find out the meaning of new vocabulary. The study by Sheu (2004) showed that if learners are provided with the interesting and linguistically appropriate reading materials, they will read enthusiastically and their English competency will improve. In his study, the participants were Taiwanese junior high school students and they read graded readers. During the first phase, when the reading time was limited and only reading was involved, Sheu found out that the reading speed improves. However, in the second phase of the study, the time doubled and collaborative activities among the students were applied. The result

from the T-Test showed that during the second phase, students developed positive attitude towards reading L2 materials but their reading speed was slower compared to the first phase of the study. This is an indication that in order to carry out an extensive reading program, we need to consider time factor as well as interesting and relevant collaborative activities for students.

Barfield (2000) also used graded readers with 40 first year university students. The participants spent one hour per week outside class to read. The duration of the study was 10 weeks. Besides writing journals, they were also required to report to their partners what they read. The study showed that the more the participants read the faster reader they became. In addition, Taguchi, Takayasu-Maass & Gorsuch (2004) measured students' silent reading rate by using Four Mann Whitney U tests. 29 Japanese students of a university in Tokyo were involved in the study for 17 weeks and their reading rate showed increment after the extensive reading program. The findings proved the extensive reading program contributed in helping students to be fluent in their reading. This finding resembles Powell's (2005) study outcome. The participants in his study were allotted 2 reading classes a week and they were assigned homework regarding the texts read. Moreover, what they read was tested at the end of the semester. The finding showed that the number of books read by the participants increased from 153 to 261 and they had positive attitude towards reading L2 materials after the extensive reading program. Before the study, only 3 out of 40 students liked to read English materials but after the program, 31 students enjoyed the activity.

Rosszell (2007) carried out a study with university students. The students read and then discussed in pairs or small groups the meaning of words and the usage. This enabled students to better understand, retain and use the words correctly. By using the words orally and in their writing, students gradually develop their vocabulary skills. A different approach was taken by Kweon and Kim (2008). With 12 Korean university students, they used authentic literary texts and conducted pre-test and post-test on vocabulary. The study was conducted 1 ½ hours daily for 5 weeks. They conducted 2 sets of post-tests. The finding indicated a significant word gain between pre-test and post-test 1 and most gained words were retained at post-test 2. The finding also showed that nouns were easier to retain compared to verbs and adjectives.

Nishino (2007) used another approach to study the effectiveness of extensive reading program. She carried out a case study with 2 middle school Japanese students, Mako and Fumi. In this longitudinal study (2.5 years), both students built their interest in reading L2 authentic texts, instead of the graded readers used at schools. The finding was similar to the findings in Takase (2003) although the subjects in Takase's study were the higher proficiency students. Both students in Nishino's study also showed positive improvement in their vocabulary development and they developed the interest to read authentic English materials more than the graded readers.

Leung (2002) also found out that the extensive reading program, the participant in her single case study showed a positive attitude towards reading after going through the program for 20 weeks. She wrote a journal as a record for her reading. Leung concluded this happened because the participant was able "to identify different

vocabulary appearing in various texts and figure out meanings of words or sentences that she had never learned before” (Leung, 2002: 8). The finding resembled to what Yamashita(2004) found out in her study with 59 Japanese university students to find out how the students’ attitudes towards reading in L1 and L2 affect their performance in extensive reading. He finds out that students may not feel comfortable and happy about reading although they do not feel anxious in reading. Their negative attitude towards reading L2 materials made them unmotivated to read a larger amount because of their lack of enjoyment in reading. It shows that it is important to motivate students to read by making them enjoy doing the activity.

Bell (1998) carried out a study with elementary level language students in Sanaa, Yamen. He used class reader and the students were required to keep reading diaries as their journals and prepare book reports. The program was carried out once a week for 20 minutes. The finding indicated that students improved in their writing.

All these studies help educators to implement extensive reading program with their students as the valuable insights and pedagogic implications are clearly provided. Generally the studies showed that extensive reading has a positive impact on students’ but the program needs to be well-planned with the participants, time allocated, the selection of reading materials and also the collaborative activities. As a matter of fact, for most learners, reading is the only practical choice for them to develop their language because of relatively short period of time that learners spent in second language learning in the language classroom. In short, students with a certain level of ability in English can learn to read by extensive reading alone. (Susser & Robb, 1990). Extensive reading has to be looked at holistically, as a part

of students' general development, not as a separate skill needed to be mastered. For the present study, the use of blog was integrated in an extensive reading program to provide a platform for the students to collaborate with each other. Since the students were reluctant to use their second language during in-class discussion, the use of blog is an alternative for them to collaborate by using the targeted language.

Furthermore, large quantities of reading done are important for the program to be extensive, still there is no absolute agreement about how much "extensive" is as stated in these studies: 100 minutes/ day for 5 weeks (Kweon & Kim, 2008); 45 minutes, twice a week (Takase, 2007); 30 minutes/ day, 18 books in 11 months (Neyman, 2002); an hour/ evening, 2 books a week (Susser & Robb, 1990). The variety indicates that the quantity of reading is not an absolute number of hours or pages but it will vary according to certain variables such as type of program and level of students. Regardless of how much reading needs to be done for a program to be called as extensive reading, the basic goal of extensive reading is to...

...prompt students to read a lot and enjoy doing so. The feeling of pleasure to do so is significant for preparing the ground in which language acquisition can germinate.

(Powell, 2005: 2)

Scholars also believed that the longer extensive reading program is implemented, the more benefits students (Krashen, 2006). All the studies mentioned above showed what is significant in extensive reading program is to create a feeling of willingness and pleasure to read among ESL students. Extensive reading programs cannot be measured by the number of books read, activities used or the time students spent on reading. What is more essential is to create a kind of environment that makes the

students have the internal force in to read. In this study, the internal force is measured through the students' nature of interaction and number of articles they managed to read and discuss. Therefore, the present study looked at the students' nature of interaction when the use blogs to collaborate in their extensive reading program. This study explored how the students collaborate by using blogs to prompt each other to read L2 materials more.

Day and Bamford (2002:2) list down 10 characteristics of successful extensive reading program which are:

- i. the reading material is easy.
- ii. a variety of English material on a wide range of topics must be available.
- iii. Learners choose what they want to read.
- iv. Learners read as much as possible.
- v. The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding.
- vi. Reading is its own reward.
- vii. Reading speed is usually faster, than slower.
- viii. Reading is individual and silent.
- ix. Teachers orient and guide their students.
- x. Teacher is a role model of a reader for students.

The previous extensive reading programs implemented in our country such as the Class Reader Program and the tested literature-in-English component failed to fulfill most of the criterion of a good extensive reading program (Mukundan, 2000). In 1999 the NILAM program was introduced and it fulfills most of the criteria for an

extensive reading program. Still, the students are not given the freedom to share their reading with the other students at their free time, instead they have to read at least 100 books to be awarded the title “Rakan Pembaca” (peer reader) before they are allowed to share their reading with the other students (MOE, 1999).

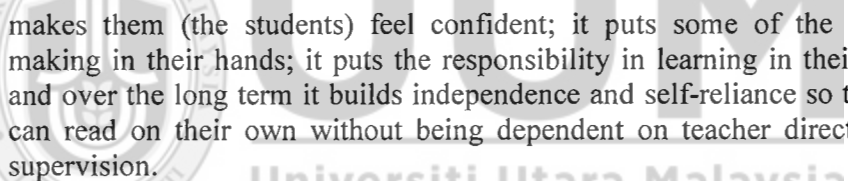
Based on the characteristics listed by Day and Bamford (2002) and after identifying the weaknesses of the previous extensive reading programs, the present study attempts to implement the extensive reading program with the inculcation of collaborative reading among the students through online discussion. The previous studies on extensive reading were interested in its effect on learners’ development. The present study took a different approach in terms of looking at the interaction exists among students in an extensive reading program when the use of blogs was integrated in collaborative learning.

Manning and Manning (1984) carried out a study on the value of combining extensive reading with peer interaction with 415 fourth grade students in the US reading in their native English. Students and teachers were assigned randomly to four groups:

1. Group 1: no extensive reading, extensive reading with follow-up activity
2. Group 2: extensive reading with follow-up activity
3. Group 3: extensive reading with individual teacher-student conferences about students’ reading
4. Group 4: extensive reading together with interaction with peers about students’ reading.

They found out that students in the fourth group in which extensive reading was carried with interaction with peers significantly outperformed students in the three other groups in reading achievement gains. (Jacobs, G., 2000). This study showed that by providing a space for students to interact with their peers, they had the tendency to read more since they are sharing their reading experience with one another. Therefore, it appears conducive to encourage collaborative reading.

Collaborative learning is simply defined as techniques in enhancing students-students interaction. Students are given some control over their learning process and the learning process is more on student-centred. This approach is appropriate to be applied with students in order to motivate them to be independent readers later because it (collaborative learning)...



makes them (the students) feel confident; it puts some of the decision making in their hands; it puts the responsibility in learning in their hands; and over the long term it builds independence and self-reliance so that they can read on their own without being dependent on teacher direction and supervision.

(Aebersold & Field, 1997:37)

Heal (1998) also uses group activities to increase students' motivation to read. The students are divided in small groups. Instead of using oral presentation and sharing, she meets the students periodically to answer questions about the section of the book the class had been assigned to read. During the first stage, the questions are provided by teachers and later each group wrote questions for the other groups. Groups are rewarded accordingly. She claims that this approach successfully increases the amount of reading done by students. All these studies indicate that collaboration among group members can motivate students to read.

Rosszell (2007) found out that students regularly write on end-of-course questionnaires that the support that group members offer each other during the discussion is the most enjoyable part of the extensive reading class as they enjoy their group mates' opinions and can develop lasting friendship. Powell (2005) carries out in-class group discussion after the students finish reading their books. He found out that the students who are initially reluctant to speak in front of their classmates are happy to talk after class about the books they read or even ask for advice on what to read next.

Obviously, this approach activates the students' individual learning motivation and simultaneously gives them the opportunities to encourage their team mates to progress in their reading. Jacobs and Gallo(2002) highlighted the advantages of adding the collaborative reading elements to the solitary task of extensive reading by making the argument...

...that when ER is supplemented with cooperative (collaborative) learning, peers may be able to enhance ER by modeling enthusiasm for reading, acting as resources for finding reading materials, creating more reading materials, facilitating comprehension, and serving as an audience for sharing what has been read.

(George, 2000; 13)

This is agreed by Senel (2008) who finds out that cooperative learning helps learners to participate actively in every task at the same time and creates a competitive language learning environment. Collaborative learning is obviously a technique in enhancing students-students interaction. This approach can help students to be responsible to their reading. Still, teachers need to create groups that are equitable because normally only extrovert and highly motivated students will take part in the activities (Senel, 2008).

Motivation can be stimulated by incorporating the pleasure of reading and the feeling of satisfaction to accomplish a meaningful task in the target language although the students are still at a low level of fluency (Powell, 2005). Extensive reading that occurs outside formal instruction as well as in fully monitored language class provides students with opportunities to improve their language skills in a pressure-free environment. This obviously helps to boost their confidence and mould a good motivation to read in the target language (Powell, 2005).

In the present study, students will have the opportunity to apply this through their blog writing in which they are allowed to have the multiple interpretation of the reading materials and they can motivate and influence their peers to read the articles. To motivate students to read, an environment conducive to reading must be created. Factors that need to be considered to create such environment include a learning situation that has a “low affective filter” (Krashen, 1987). This means students learn to read in a non-threatening and fun environment. In addition, it is also important to have an environment where teachers and students are supportive and encouraging towards each other (Supyan, Nooreiny and D’Cruz, 2000:69).

In addition, new technologies have added an exciting dimension to collaborative learning. Students can collaborate with each other regardless distance and time barriers. Through the use of blogs, students can post their comments about their reading without feeling afraid of making mistakes. They also feel comfortable and free to post their comments on the other group members’ blogs because their activities are not being graded. The platform provided to the students through blogs

serves as a conducive environment for them to share about their reading and to motivate each other to keep on reading.

2.7 Selecting Grading Criteria for Online Discussion

Grading criteria is needed to assess students' online discussion. When selecting through the most appropriate type of assessment tool to use, one of the most effective approaches is firstly, to determine the learning outcome then determine the assessment strategy related to that outcome (Ko and Rossen, 2004). There is no one type of assessment likely to be the best way to measure the learning outcomes. Therefore, using more than one type of assessment gives students a variety of ways to demonstrate their achievement (Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, and Zvacek, 2006). The possible elements to consider for assigning grades are how many blog posts the students read, how many responses the students provide and the length of student contributions (Fleming, 2008). Qualitative measures of the value of the contributions are more insightful, but require more work by those who evaluate the postings. If group work is used, teachers need to deal with some issues of evaluation such as grading.

2.7.1 Florida State University

There are many existing tools to evaluate students' online participation used in previous studies. In the present study, in order to get the general picture on the nature of blog posts written by students when they blogged from two different settings. The "Assessing Effectiveness of Student Participation in Online Discussions" which incorporate essential materials for building a learning community was used. The tool chosen was developed by Florida State University's

Educational (FSU Online Assessment, 2002). This approach requires a consistent involvement in assessment by the teacher and provides the learner with frequent feedback as to how effectively they are participating in each topic area (Edelstein & Edward, 2002). The aspects that are assessed in students' online participation are as shown in Table 2.1.



Table 2.1

FSU Online Assessment (2002)

Category	1	2	3	4	POINTS
Promptness and Initiative	Does not respond to most postings; rarely participates freely	Responds to most postings several days after initial discussion; limited initiative	Responds to most postings within a 24 hour period; requires occasional prompting to post	Consistently responds to postings in less than 24 hours; demonstrates good self-initiative	
Delivery of Post	Utilizes poor spelling and grammar in most posts; posts appear "hasty"	Errors in spelling and grammar evidenced in several posts	Few grammatical or spelling errors are noted in posts	Consistently uses grammatically correct posts with rare misspellings	
Relevance of Post	Posts topics which do not relate to the discussion content; makes short or irrelevant remarks	Occasionally posts off topic; most posts are short in length and offer no further insight into the topic	Frequently posts topics that are related to discussion content; prompts further discussion of topic	Consistently posts topics related to discussion topic; cites additional references related to topic	
Expression Within the Post	Does not express opinions or ideas clearly; no connection to topic	Unclear connection to topic evidenced in minimal expression of opinions or ideas	Opinions and ideas are stated clearly with occasional lack of connection to topic	Expresses opinions and ideas in a clear and concise manner with obvious connection to topic	
Contribution to the Learning Community	Does not make effort to participate in learning community as it develops; seems indifferent	Occasionally makes meaningful reflection on group's efforts; marginal effort to become involved with group	Frequently attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group; interacts freely	Aware of needs of community; frequently attempts to motivate the group discussion; presents creative approaches to topic	
				TOTAL	

The details of each category are as follow:

- *Promptness and Initiative* reflects the student's ability to participate in online discussions accordingly, which demonstrates self-motivation. The comments include whether or not students are actively and consistently engaging in the course content.
- *Delivery of Post* addresses the student's attention to detail in terms being grammatically correct with rare misspellings.
- *Relevance of Post* permits an objective assessment of the student's ability to post topics that are relevant to the original discussion with acknowledgement of references if provided. It also recognizes students who stay on topic as well as students who appears to disengage from the course content.
- *Expression within the Post* addresses the issue of how well opinions are expressed and how ideas or comments are presented. This category also allows the teachers to acknowledge the different students' writing styles.
- *Contribution to the Learning Community (LC)*, speaks to the assessment of whether or not the student makes an effort to further the development of a collaborative learning experience

The rating scale ranges from 1 to 4. Scale 1 indicates that students' participation is less than acceptable for the development of a progressive learning community. A score of 4 in any category represents the attainment of the highest standard of participation and reflects a good contribution to the learning community.

The assessment assumes that students' online discussion is reflective of different levels of participation, provides for a variance in the promptness of each post and offers postings that are different to some degree in most of the assessment categories (Edelstein & Edward, 2002). The writers also provided the practical example of how the assessment tool can be used (Appendix 1).

Several studies recommended that using an assessment rubric similar the ones presented above can be beneficial in structuring the assessment of an online discussion to be more objective and consistent (Garrison, Anderson and Archer, 2001; Edelstein and Edwards, 2002). As for the present study, this assessment tool was used at the macro level of assessment in order to analyze students' online discussion via blogs. Students' commitment to the program was assessed by making the comparison of the quality of their online discussion from the two different setting as stated in the research objective.

2.7.2 Bales' Interaction Process Analysis "Revised and Expanded"

Bales Interaction Process Analysis (IPA) system was developed to identify and record the nature of each separate act in ongoing group interaction. The unit to be scores is the single "act" which is an *act* of communication either verbal or nonverbal. The act may be understood by another member as equivalent to a single simple sentence. Bales's Interaction Process Analysis (IPA) which was developed to study small group interaction. The original Bales' IPA (1950) consisted of 13 codes that cover 2 main categories which were social emotional area for positive and negative reactions and the task area that covers attempted answer as well as questions. Chou (2002) added 5 more codes to the original process analysis which

were technical questions, topic specific discussions, and personal information exchanges when he found out these codes “were frequently seen in the synchronous discussions and yet there were not equivalent categories” (p 4). The IPA is especially appropriate for comparing and contrasting the interaction patterns between synchronous and asynchronous communication. Table 2.2 shows the revised and expanded version of Bales’ Interaction Process Analysis (2002) which was used in this study.

Table 2.2

Bales’ Interaction Process Analysis “Revised and Expanded”

CODE	CATEGORY
SOCIAL	EMOTIONAL AREA : POSITIVE REACTIONS
1	Shows solidarity, raises others’ status, gives help, reward
2	Shows tension release, jokes, laughs, shows satisfaction
3	Agrees, shows passive acceptance, understands, consurs, complies
TASK	AREA : ATTEMPTED ANSWER
4	Gives suggestions, direction, implying autonomy for other
5	Gives opinion, evaluation, repeats, analysis, express feeling, wish
6	Gives orientation, information, repeats, clarifies, confirms
6.1	Gives personal information
6.2	Gives topic-related information
6.3	Gives technical information
TASK	AREA : QUESTIONS
7	Asks for orientation, information, repetition, con firmation
7.1	<i>Asks technical information</i>
7.2	<i>Asks for topic-related information</i>
7.3	<i>Asks for personal information</i>
8	Asks for opinion, evaluation, analysis, expression of feeling
9	Asks for suggestion, direction, possible ways of action
SOCIAL	EMOTIONAL AREA : NEGATIVE REACTIONS
10	Disagrees, shows passive rejection, formality, withholds help
11	Shows tension, asks for help,, withdraws out of field
12	Shows antagonism, deflates other’s status, defends or assets self
*Categories	In italics are addition to the original Interaction Process Analysis.

For the present research, the revised and expanded version of Bales' interaction Process analysis was used as the micro level analysis since the categories were more specific in describing students' interaction pattern while blogging. The analysis also covers the interdisciplinary nature of interaction research that focuses on the interrelationship among learners, content, and technology (Chou, 2002). The results of learner interaction patterns related closely to the instructional design and theoretical ground of a course or a program. If a course or a program is based on student-centered instruction, the result for the interaction patterns might be different than a course based on teacher-centered instruction. This present research contributes to the understanding of interaction patterns exist with a focus on a learner-centered instructional design when the students used blogs in two different settings to share about their reading experience with their group members.

2.8 Summary

Extensive reading is simply a lengthy assignment of reading comprehensible reading materials that will increase exposure to the target language. Moreover, extensive reading also provides a good means of building students' schemata which can enhance their knowledge not only linguistically but also their knowledge in general. Previous studies showed the benefits of extensive reading to students' language development but some students might not feel comfortable to read L2 materials (Yamashita, 2004) and their negative attitude towards reading the materials made them unmotivated to read extensively. Powell (2005) claimed that the basic aim for extensive reading is to create the feeling of pleasure in students to read a lot. Malaysian Ministry of Education have implemented many programs such as the Class Reader Program, the tested literature-in-English component and NILAM to encourage students to read extensively. Unfortunately, the programs did not fully

achieve the aims yet. Therefore, educators need to manipulate the available technology and integrate it with extensive reading program as an attempt to make students feel interested to read more L2 materials.

In addition, collaborative reading enables students to motivate each other to reach their reading goal. The inculcation of the use of ICT in the teaching and learning process provides room for students to be in touch with each other regardless of time and place. Blogs enable students to keep interacting among themselves to encourage each other to read extensively as well as to share their reading materials. The use of blogs, undeniably, helps improve teaching and learning process, yet more studies need to be done to understand the nature and patterns of interaction take place when blogs are used in language classes. Most all the studies used individual blogs or class blog for students to post and comment. The present study used a group blog in which 4 students from one group can get accessed to their group blog. The students build up the sense of ownership towards their group blogs. The findings from the previous study also showed most students perceived blogging in their language learning improve their writing and reading. The present study focused more on the nature of students' blog posts and the kind of interaction exists when students were being supervised face-to-face and virtually.

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework of the learning theories which is Social-constructivist Theory. The issues and also past studies in relation to the use of blogs in classes, collaborative learning approach in second language lessons and also extensive reading program among L2 students. The on-line assessment tools, Florida State University Online Assessment and Bales Interaction Process analysis that were

used in this study were also presented. In the next chapter, the researcher will discuss the methodology applied for this study. Chapter 3 consists of the findings from the pilot study and the amendments made in the main study as well as the research tools used in order to ensure the main study carried out well.



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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter starts with the epistemology of qualitative research, followed by the explanation and justification for using a case study. This chapter then presents the justification for the researcher to be a participant observer and then the research design is outlined. This is followed by the pilot study findings and how they influenced the main study. Next the main study is described which includes the choice of research participants, data collection method and data analysis. The final part of this chapter discusses the reliability and validity of the findings and the ethical issues.

This study aims to:

1. To examine the similarities and the differences in the nature of the students' blog posts during face-to-face supervision and virtual supervision.

2. To investigate the interactional patterns of the students' blog posts in the two settings.

3.2 Epistemology of Qualitative Research

Creswell (1998) defines qualitative research as, an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. The purpose of qualitative research is to understand and explain participant meaning

(Morrow & Smith, 2000). Bryman (2004) states that qualitative research normally emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data (p 266). More specifically, using a qualitative approach allows the researcher to venture into how language is used in a naturalistic setting.

Qualitative research is also related to subjectivism which is normally related with the term constructivism or social constructivism (Saunders *et al.* 2007: 108). The focus of constructivist researcher is mainly on what people think and feel, how they communicate with each other regardless of whether it is done verbally or non-verbally and it attempts to understand and explain why people have different experience. Thus the central view of constructivism is that the researcher's role is to interpret the different constructions and meanings based on people experience. In this study, the researcher attempts to interpret the students' nature of blog posts and interaction patterns in two different settings: face-to-face and virtual. The data was gathered not only from blogs posts but also from the interview with students and the researcher's field notes and observation.

The main aim of any qualitative research is related to understand how people invent structures to help them make sense of what is going on around them (Easterby-Smith *et. al.* 2002). This means that the researcher makes an effort to get as close as possible to the participants being studied. The primary goal of research in social constructivism view depends on the participants' views of the situation. Therefore constructivist researchers conduct their studies in the "field" where the participants live and work in order to gain understanding of what the participants are saying (Creswell, 2007: 18). In this study, qualitative method is vital to understand the

reasons for students to create certain patterns of interaction in their blogs when they are in two different settings. This kind of study cannot be measured by numbers alone. Quantitative instruments like a survey which uses a Likert scale can gather students' perception of using blogs in their language learning and will give the list of strategies they used to overcome the problems they encountered during the program but, they cannot provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study. The qualitative research is carried out to explore the students' nature of blog posts, the interaction patterns as well as the problems they faced while blogging in their extensive reading programme. Qualitative research also helps to comprehend the students' experience when they are monitored by teacher in class and when they are monitored virtually.

Qualitative methods including observations and interview were used as to provide a clearer picture of the phenomenon as mentioned by Mohd. Majid (1994) who stated that qualitative studies such as in this study can be used to understand a phenomenon. This is also in line with Silverman (2006) who proposed that qualitative research offers "the ability to analyze what actually happens in naturally occurring settings (p 351). Thus, qualitative methodology provides a design for research that attempts to describe and understand educational phenomena. Furthermore, qualitative approach records daily events in ordinary, natural classroom settings. This is vital in this study because the main aims was to examine the students' blog posts when they were supervised face-to-face and virtually. Thus the events in ordinary and natural learning setting contributed to the selection of data collection methods and analysis of any study.

Qualitative approach was chosen because it allows understanding of classroom practices and leads to an in-depth exploration of the classroom interaction: face-to-face and also in blogs. Richards (2003) suggests that the complexity of the situation must be described so that it could be understood, not merely accepting its complexity. This study introduces the use of blogs in an extensive reading program with the expectation of encouraging students to read more of L2 materials while collaborating with their peers. The researcher hopes to discover some of the complexities in this research in order to find the best solutions for their lack of enthusiasm in reading extensively. Even though the frequency of students' participation in their group blogs from the different settings were presented in percentages, the reasons for the nature of the blog posts and the interaction patterns exist were explained descriptively as to comprehend the situation subtly. Besides identifying the nature of blog posts and the interaction patterns, the students' perception about the use of blogs in the program was also described.

3.3 Case Study

A case study is an intensive description and analysis of phenomenon or social unit bounded by time and place (Cresswell, 1998; Yin, 2003). This study employs a case design which involves a detailed description of a setting and its participants, followed by analysis of the data for themes, patterns and issues (Stake, 1995; Meriam, 1998). Thus a case study is the study of particularity and complexity of a single case. The case can be represented by a person, a group of people or an institution (Stake, 1995, 2000).

According to Yin (2003) a case study design should be considered when the focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions and also when the researcher cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study. It is also relevant when the researcher intends to cover contextual conditions because it is believed that they are relevant to the phenomenon under study and it is also used when the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context.

A case study has been proven to be useful especially for studying educational innovations, for evaluating programs and for informing policy (Collins and Noblit, 1978; as cited in Meriam, 1998). Yin (2008) stated that a case study focuses on a program or activity involving individuals, rather than group per se. In addition, case study researchers normally do not identify the cultural theme to examine at the beginning of the study. Instead, they focus on in-depth observations of the actual case (Yin, 2008). A case study is an in-depth explanation of a bounded system such as activity, event, process or individuals based on extensive data collected (Cresswell, 2007). One of the advantages of this approach is the close collaboration between the researcher and the study participants that enables them to tell stories. Through their stories, the researcher will have a better understanding of the participants' actions.

Although case studies can provide rich insights about teaching and learning processes in a research, there are still potential drawbacks. The drawbacks include unsystematic procedures, the influence of biased views on the direction of the findings and conclusions as well as the insufficient basis for generalization (Yin, 2003). According to Guba and Lincoln (1981), case studies can whether

oversimplify or exaggerate a situation that might lead a reader to a misinterpretation about the actual condition. The limitation is also due to the sensitivity and integrity of the researcher since the researcher is the main instrument for data collection analysis. The researcher is left to rely on her or his own abilities throughout the research. In order to overcome the drawbacks as much as possible, the present study provides subtle description by using multiple data collection which includes students' blog posts, interview and teacher's observational notes as a triangulation.

This study is considered a case study as it provides an intensive description and analysis (Yin, 2003) of a single case (Stake, 1995) of a secondary school. The case refers to several individuals in a group who underwent the extensive reading program in one secondary school in the east Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. 20 students were divided into groups of 4 and they underwent the same extensive reading program for 6 months.

3.4 A Participant Observer

In any qualitative research, there are many roles that a researcher can play as a participant, participant as observer, observer as participant and as an observer depending on the nature of the study. Cresswell (2012) and Mills (2011) indicated that to learn about a situation subtly, a researcher needs to be involved in activities at the research site. This will enable the researcher to get the first-hand information about the activities take place during the study and to understand the situation more. In this study, primarily, the researcher was a participant observer. By becoming part of the study, meaningful interpretations could be drawn. More importantly, participant observers are able to record the nature of students' interaction

thoroughly and accurately because students regard them as co-learners or partners (Widodo, 2008).

In this study, primarily the researcher was a participant observer where she was involved in teaching the class. By participating in the study, more meaningful insights of the students' activities were gathered. The students were not only observed during blogging in class, but they were also provided with support and encouragement when needed while they were doing their in-class discussion on the reading materials as well as when they were blogging both during face-to-face and virtual supervisions. Assistance was given when needed by the students and the group was managed to be approached at a very close distance and yet, they remained comfortable. The students were observed and the data was collected in form of field notes. The research was carried out in a natural setting and the phenomena was observed and described as it occurred.

In this study, the researcher was also the English teacher for the students. Therefore, she was with the students in the class, conducting the activities during face-to-face sessions. The researcher monitored the students' progress in their discussion, offered help when needed and encouraged the students to contribute during their in-class discussion and also while blogging. The researcher also participated in the students' blog discussion by giving ideas and sharing her experiences about the issues discussed. By joining the discussion, the students realized that they were monitored by the researcher during virtual supervision although she was not with them physically. The students could also refer to the researcher to get the reading materials to be read by their group members.

One of the benefits of implementing participant observer is, it provides an opportunity to find out something, which might have been overlooked before, which could be significant for the research (Yaacob, 2006).

3.5 Research Procedure

This research involves three phases which are the pilot study phase, the main study (i.e the implementation of the collaborative learning via blogs in an extensive reading program) and the data collection and analysis phase. Figure 3.1 shows the phases involved in the research design for this study.



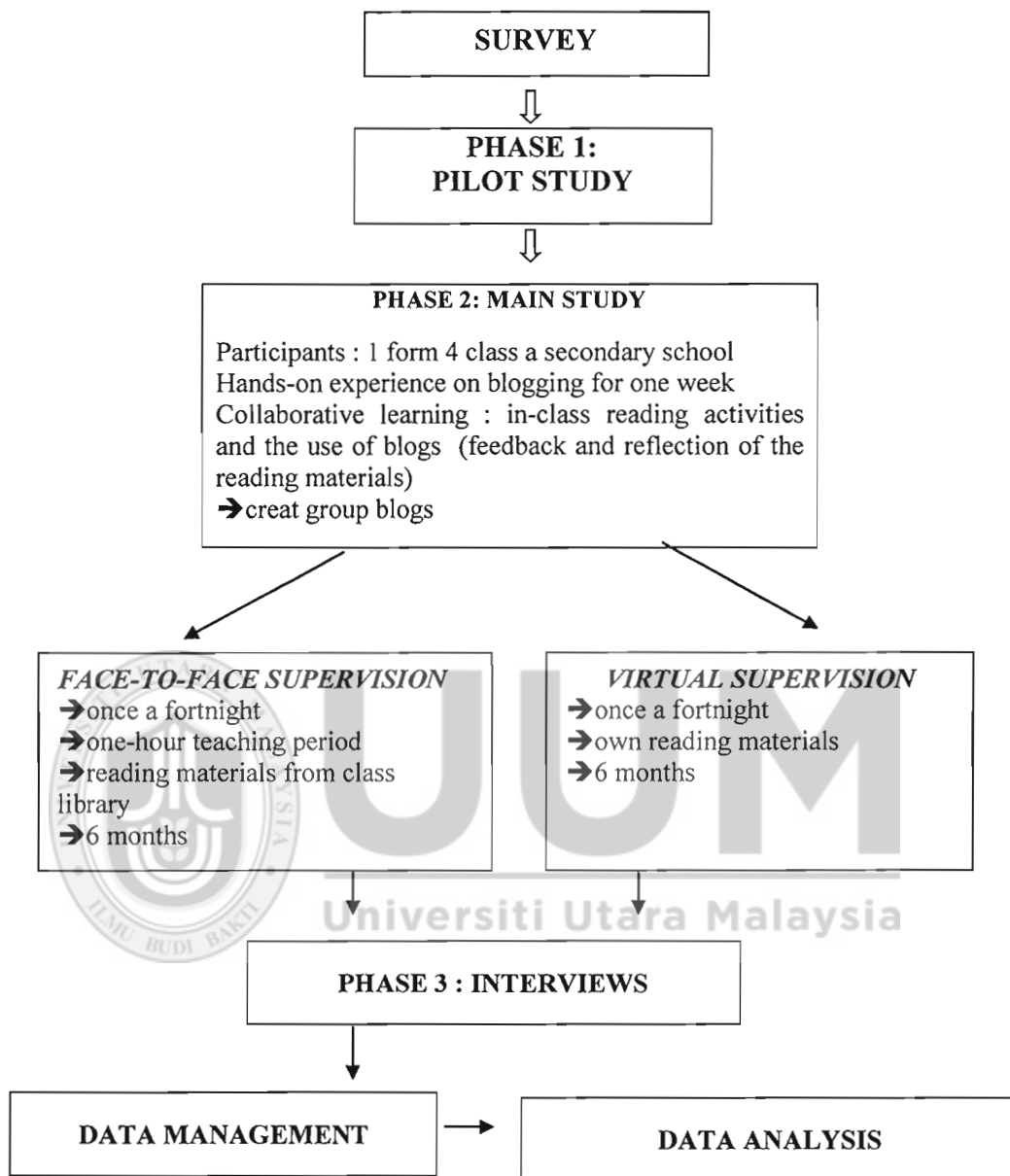


Figure 3.1. Research Procedure for Pilot Study

In Phase 1, the study started with a survey distributed among 100 form 4 students of a secondary school in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. The questionnaires was carried out to examine the students' interest in L2 extensive reading, their interaction by using English as their second language and their background knowledge about the use of blogs in relation to their second language learning. Then, a pilot study was carried

out with 12 students to explore students' experiences when using blogs, to identify problems faced by them, and to test the instruments to be used in the main study. The procedure for the pilot study is further described in Section 3.6 Study Findings and How They Influenced the Main Study.

In Phase 2, one class of Form 4 consisted of 20 students (aged of 16 years old) was chosen to be in the extensive reading program for the main study. The students were from the best class in the school. As their English teacher, the researcher chose this class because the students were used to her style of teaching and her presence when they were carrying out in-class activities. The school administrator only allowed the students to be involved in the program during their physical education period which is one hour per week. After a discussion with the school administration, the class would meet only once a fortnight for a face-to-face session and supervision. For alternate weeks, the students would blog from their own places for virtual supervision. Thus throughout this program for 6 months, the class only met for 12 times to do their in-class reading and discussion as well as blogging activities and for the alternate 12 weeks, the students did their own reading and carried out blogging activities on their own, supervised by the teacher virtually.

During this phase, the students were divided into groups of four. The group division was discussed in detail in 3.10 Participants. For the first week, they were given the hands-on training to create their own blogs and to familiarize themselves with the elements exist in blogs. Then, they were guided on how to create a group blog or also known as a collaborative blog. A briefing was given to the students on how the program would be carried out. For the first meeting, they just explored the features

of blogs and familiarized themselves with their blogs. Then, the students were guided to set up their group blogs at Blogger. They watched a demonstration of how to create a blog by the teacher. After that, by using Blogger.com, they designed their own blogs. Blogger.com was chosen because it was easy to use and free blog provider. After they had completed their blogs, they were required to write in their first entry of a self introduction and post it. Their blog addresses are collected and posted on the teacher's main blog. The teacher also printed out the students' blog addresses according to the students' groups. The blog addresses and the passwords were as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

The Details about Group Blogs

GROUP	EMAIL ADDRESS	BLOG ADDRESS	BLOG'S NAME
Alpha 1	alphakk2@yahoo.com	http://alpha1smkkk2.blogspot.com	apha1
Alpha 2	alpha2kk2@yahoo.com	http://alpha2smkkk2.blogspot.com	alpha2
Alpha 3	alpha3kk2@yahoo.com	http://alpha3smkkk2.blogspot.com	alpha3
Alpha 4	alpha4kk2@yahoo.com	http://alpha4smkkk2.blogspot.com	alpha4
Alpha 5	alpha5kk2@yahoo.com	http://alpha5smkkk2.blogspot.com	alpha5

For the following 3 months, the students were involved in the program. Initially, the study was planned to be implemented in 3 months. However, the second phase of the study was carried out for another 3 months. One of the reasons was due to the fact that some students were involved in co-curricular as well as co-academic activities that made them absent from classes. The next reason was because of the

term examinations which were compulsory for the students to take. In order to get enough data, and with the agreement with the school administration, the second phase of the program was implemented for another 3 months.

During face-to-face supervision, students sat together with their group members and they chose the reading materials provided in the class library and read together with their group members. They carried out activities as assigned by the teacher. The activities included a small group discussion and presentation that required the students to collaborate with each other to explore the texts they had chosen. Then they were given time to post in their blogs about what they had discussed and other aspects of the reading materials that they wanted to share with their group members. The students were also given time to post comments about their friends' entries. Teacher would monitor the students' progress and offered help when needed.

Meanwhile, during virtual supervision, students would blog from their own places. They could carry out the activity from their own homes or at cyber cafes. They searched for their own reading materials and shared them with their group members. They would collaborate in their blogs by discussing the issues raised by the article and other aspects of the article that they wanted to discuss. The teacher would supervise them virtually and if needed, participated in their online discussion.

After the blogging activities were completed, interview sessions with the group leaders were conducted to get the students' feedback and experience about the

program. The group leaders represented their respective groups for the interview sessions. The interviews were carried out after one month the main study was implemented, at the end of Phase 1 and also at the end of Phase 2. Informal interviews with the other group members were carried out if in any circumstance needed.

All the data from the students' blog posts, interviews and teacher's field notes were analyzed. The details for data analysis are explained in 3.12.

In the next section, the results of the pilot study will be presented and the explanation on how they influenced main study will be discussed.

3.6 Pilot Study Findings and How They Influenced the Main Study

Ministry of Education in Malaysia is concerned about the students' lack of ability to express ideas by using English as their second language as well as their lack of interest to read L2 materials as discussed in Chapter 1 (1.1). In addition, the insights gathered from the literature as cited in Chapter 2 showed the collaboration among students has its effect on students' learning and reading L2 materials. Based on these, an extensive reading program was carried out by integrating the use of blogs in. In-class reading lessons and face-to-face blogging were carried out and the students' reactions as well as their blog posts were monitored and supervised. 12 form 4 students involved voluntarily in this study. Initially, 100 questionnaires were distributed to form 4 students. The questionnaires were to examine the students' interest in L2 extensive reading, their field of interest, their interaction by using English as their second language and their background knowledge about the

use of blogs in relation to their second language learning. The pilot study involved a survey, observations and interviews in a secondary school in Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

The objectives of the pilot study were:

- i. to explore the students' experience and views when using blogs in their second language extensive reading classes
- ii. to identify the problems that might arise during the main study.
- iii. to narrow down the focus of the 2013 Main Study
- iv. to test the instruments to be used for the main study.

3.6.1 Research Questions: Pilot Study

The following were the research questions for the pilot study:

1. How do the students view the use of blogs in an extensive reading program?
2. What are the problems students faced when blogs are used in an extensive reading program?

Figure 3.2 shows the procedure for the pilot study.

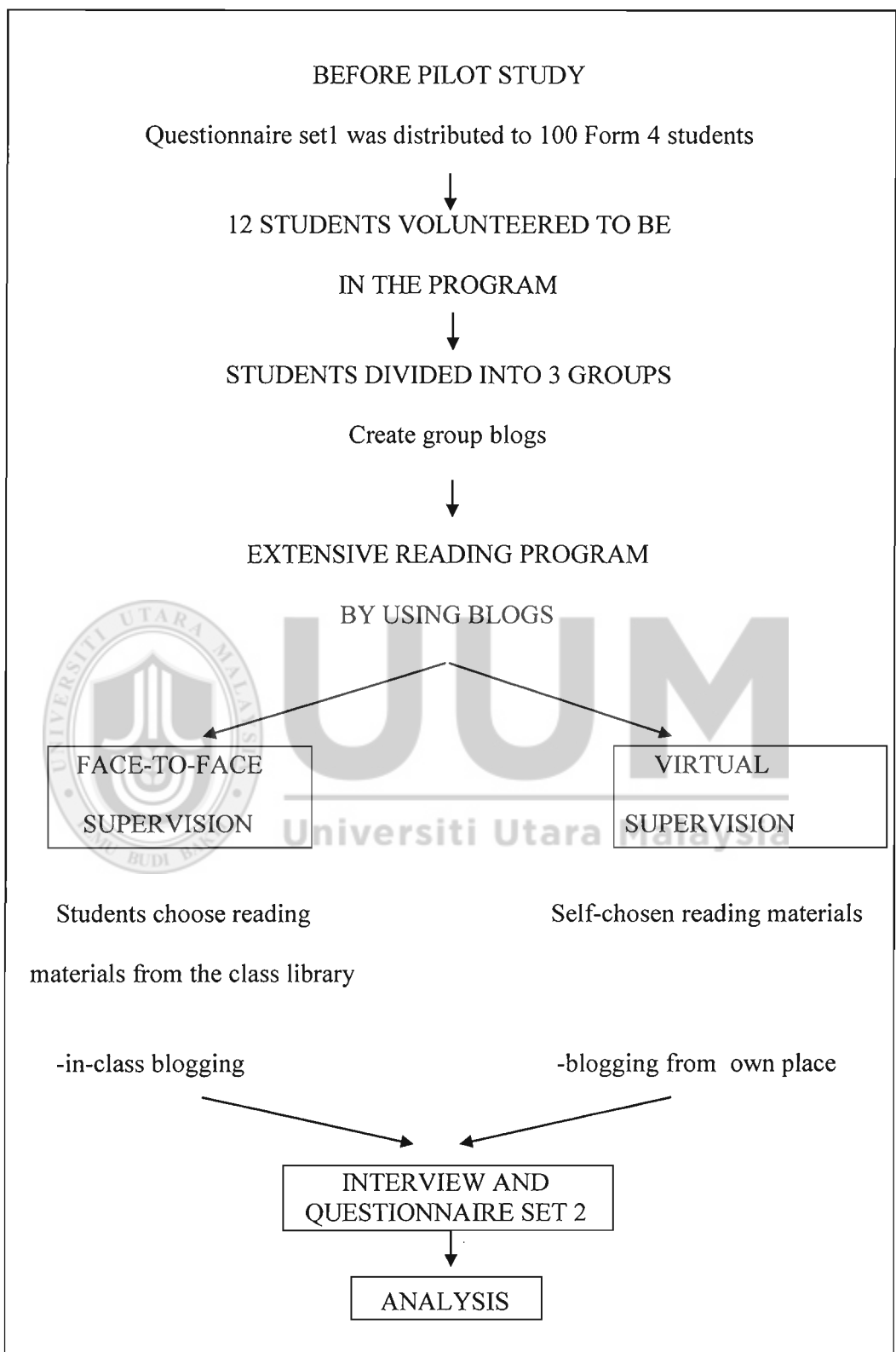


Figure 3.2. The Procedure for Pilot Study 2012

Prior to the pilot study, Questionnaire 1 adopted from Jones (2006) was distributed to 100 Form 4 students to examine the students' interest in reading L2 materials extensively, their in-class discussion and their background knowledge of the use of blogs in their language learning processes. Twelve students volunteered for the pilot study which consisted of 7 female and 5 male.

They were divided into groups of 4. Thus 3 groups were formed and named as Alphanian1, Alphanian 2 and Alphanian 3. The students then were assisted to create their group blogs. The program took four weeks and for each session, the class met for one hour. We met during the Physical Education period after getting the permission from the school administrators. The class was carried out in a computer laboratory. For face-to-face supervision, the students chose reading materials provided by teacher in class. One group chose one topic of their own interest and read in class. They discussed the materials in class and then spent time to post in their blogs anything related to the texts.

They were monitored both during the discussion and while they were blogging and their progress were jotted down in the field notes. For virtual supervision, the students were required to find their own reading materials and discuss the materials in their blogs. Their posts were monitored virtually. After 4 weeks, the students had met twice for face-to-face supervision and also did the blogging twice from their own places for virtual supervision.

Then, the second set of questionnaire was distributed to these students. They were also called for an informal interview. The interviews were carried out in according

to their groups. The interviews aimed to justify the findings from the blog posts and also the teacher's observational notes. The students' responses during the survey (Questionnaire 1), Questionnaire 2, their blog posts, interviews as well as the field notes were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

3.6.2 Setting the Scenes and Profile of Respondents: Pilot Study

As mentioned earlier, the class was carried out in a computer lab during the Physical Education lessons. The students were divided into groups of 4. The respondents consisted of 12 Form Four students with 7(58%) female and 5(42%) male. All of them have been learning English since kindergarten, for about 10 years. Their average grade for English subject for the public exam, Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) is B grade. They volunteered to be involved in the extensive reading program for one month. Tables 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 below show the profile of respondents.

Table 3.2

Profile of Respondent Group 1: ALPHANIAN 1

CODE	GENDER	ENGLISH GRADE
1PS1	F	A
1PS2	F	B
1PS3	M	B
1PS4	M	B

n=4

Table 3.3

Profile of Respondent Group 2: ALPHANIAN 2

CODE	GENDER	ENGLISH GRADE
2PS1	F	A
2PS2	F	A
2PS3	F	B
2PS4	M	B

n=4

Table 3.4

Profile of Respondent Group 3: ALPHANIAN 3

CODE	GENDER	ENGLISH GRADE
3PS1	F	A
3PS2	F	A
3PS3	M	B
3PS4	M	B

n=4

The students' language proficiencies were measured by using their PMR result. 5 out of 12 students (42%) scored A(excellent) for their PMR (the public examination) and 7 (58%) scored B (good). This indicated that this group has mix abilities students for language competencies.

Figure 3.3 shows the students' seating arrangement in the computer lab.

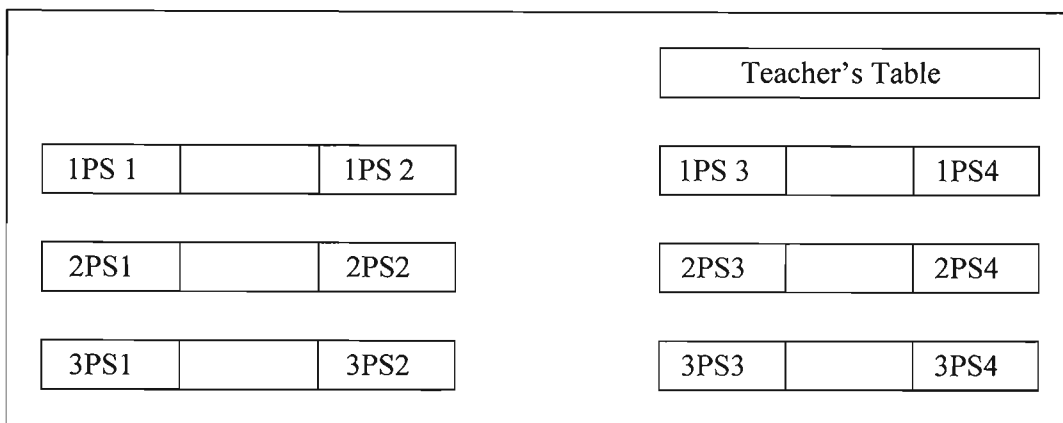


Figure 3.3. Students' Seating Arrangement

Each table is equipped with a set of computer. The students took their own spots during the blogging sessions and they gathered as a small group during in-class discussion.

3.6.3 The Findings: Pilot Study

I shall now discuss the summary of the findings derived from the questionnaires.

3.6.3.1 Students' Perception of the Use of Blogs in an Extensive Reading Program

Only 25 out of 97 students or 26% admitted that they had interest in reading L2 and they read English materials whenever they had accessed to them. Still, they preferred reading L1 materials. The others (74%) read English materials when assigned by the teacher, normally in their reading lessons in which they would read the texts and answer comprehension questions as well as to write out the summary of the passage. They preferred intensive reading (73%), instead of extensive reading.

The response for their background in blogging showed that 78 (80%) out of 97 students felt that they had some experience with blogging and 19 others (20%) claimed to have the basic knowledge about blogs. They reported that they read blogs

that are related to their interests such as entertainment, and sports. Only 23 out of 97 (24%) students had their own blogs.

The findings showed that although the students were familiar with technology, they did not use blogs on their daily basis. Most of them did not favour reading English materials except during their formal reading class.

Feeling confident

As stated by a student (1PS2) from group Alphanian 1 when asked about the use of blogs in their reading program, “It’s great!!!” His view was supported by his group member, 1PS3 who mentioned that blogging made her feel more confident to write in English,

“**Blogging** buat I rasa yakin to use English with my friends **sebab semua orang guna** English **dalam** blogs.” (1PS3, Alphanian 1, Questionnaire)

<“*Blogging makes me feel confidence to use English with my friends because all students use English in writing blogs.*”>

The use of blogs also helped shy students to interact with their friends without feeling afraid to be laughed at for their limited language competency as stated by 3PS3 from group Alphanian 3,

“I am a shy girl. In class, **biasanya** (*normally*) I will not speak English **sebab takut** my friends **akan gelak punyalah** (*because I am afraid to be laughed at by my friends*)” (3PS3, Interview).

Blogs served as a platform for students to use English with their friends. Another student built his confidence to use the language in blogs after he read his friends’ posts and comments. 2PS4 from Alphanian 2 stated that,

“I know I am not good to use English. When I read my friends’ posts and comments, **barulah saya tahu yang** they face the same problem as me. They just write and I **tahu ada salah**. I feel okay and happy to use the language **dalam blog**.” (2PS4, Alphanian 2, Questionnaire)

<“I know I am not good to use English. When I read my friends’ posts and comments, *then only I know that* they face the same problem as me. They just write and I *know there are errors*. I feel okay and happy to use the language *in blogs*.”>

Promote Collaboration

The students enjoyed reading the materials and shared with their friends without having to answer comprehension questions regarding the texts and come out with a summary of the text as they normally do in their reading lessons. 2PS3 from Alphanian 2 wrote,

“I can share my reading with my group members. No need to think and search for answers for comprehension questions and write summary after that.”

Since extensive reading encourages students to read a lot of reading materials and students are not required to understand every single line of the article read, the pressure to the students was lessen.

On the other hand, there were also the negative comments that reflected that the use of blogs in their teaching and learning process made them feel “*frustrated*”, “*discouraged*” and “*worried*”.

Blogs Improve English Competencies

All students (100%) gave positive responses by stating “Yes” to the first part of the question. They stated several ways on how blogs can help to enhance their English language proficiency.

3.6.3.2 The Problems Faced by Students When Blogs are Used in an Extensive Reading Program

i. Wasting Time

Several students were not blog-friendly. They attempted to write a post but to no avail due to technical problems. This was expressed by 2PS2 from Alphanian 2:

“There are time when I cannot get my blog...I try and try for several time but I cannot. I waste my time to get it open. I am worry if I am the less active member in my group. I am learning about blog from my friends although sometimes I feel like giving up.”

(2PS2, Alphanian 2, Interview)

ii. Poor Command of English

Students felt embarrassed to use English in their blogs because they thought that their command of English was very poor. They felt conscious and kept reminding the researcher not to tell the others about this program. 1PS1 from Alphanian 1 wrote,

“My English is terrible. I prefer not to share.”

The same view was expressed by 3PS4 from Alphanian 3,

“I feel tension, my friend will laugh at me, English not that good. Don’t tell other class, okay. I don’t want them to read our blog, **malu** (*shy*)” (Questionnaire).

iii. Low internet connection especially when the lessons were in the morning.

The two school computer labs with 50 computers used only one school internet connection. The internet connection was also shared with a teacher’s room which was located beside the computer labs. Thus, when many users used the same source of internet connection, the service became slow.

“Internet very slow, have to wait and wait. I think it waste our time.”
(1PS4, Alphanian , Questionnaire).

iv. Reluctant Group Members

Although all these 12 students volunteered to be in this program, there were still several students who felt reluctant to post actively in their blogs. The reasons given were not feeling comfortable to use English in blogs and also fear of being commented on their language use. The feedback given by the students showed this.

“I wish I can write in Bahasa Melayu. It’s more fun and I can say what I want to say easily” (IPS1, Alphanian, Interview).

“My English is terrible. I prefer not to share” (Questionnaire).

v. Group members didn’t give immediate feedback after the posts.

Another problem faced by the students was not getting immediate feedback from their group members. They were used to the other social applications such as WeChat and WhassApp in which they normally got the immediate feedback from their friends. As for blogging, the students were not required to be online synchronously. Therefore, there were possibilities for them not to get the immediate feedback from their group members.

“My post was only commented by one friend and that’s it. It is just like one question and one answer. I prefer WeChat,” (3PS2, Alphanian 3, Questionnaire).

vi. Influence of the Mother Tongue (Kelantanese dialect)

The field notes revealed that during the in-class discussion, students were reluctant to use English. They used Bahasa Melayu (their first language) throughout the discussion. When one group representative presented in front of the class about their selected reading materials, they managed to deliver it in English although there many fillers and interjections such as “mmm” and “aaa”. When the researcher asked the

rest of the students to ask the presenter any questions about the article presented, the session took place in 3 languages-English, Bahasa Melayu and their Kelantanese dialect. The researcher tried to prompt them to use fully English but the class went silent and they kept exchanging looks and pushed each other to speak and the slot ended with laughter. When the researcher just ignored the language they used during the discussion, the class became livelier when most of them participated and exchanged ideas.

3.7 Refining Research Instruments for the Main Study

The Pilot Study has helped to improve the instruments used for Main Study. Firstly, for the observation notes, the researcher learned that it was easier to use different sets of observation notes according to groups observed rather than writing all the observations in one set of note. It helped to monitor the group progress and eased in making comparison by compiling the observation notes based on groups and lessons, rather than compiling merely based on lessons. The observation notes would still include time, the students' activity and the researcher's action during the lessons. Therefore, in the main study, the researcher included a systematic observation checklist. This observation checklist is explained in detail in 3.10.1.

Secondly, the purpose of conducting the interviews with the students was to look at the suitability of the questions as well as to trial run the technique for the interview. They managed to provide relevant responses to the questions. However, they were allowed to use their mother tongue because they felt more comfortable with it. The representatives of each group rather than the whole group would be called to share their group experience in the extensive reading program by using blogs. The group

leaders would get the input from the other leaders and share with their group members. Thus, in the main study, group interviews will be conducted with the group leaders.

Finally, the students' blog posts would also be monitored closely both during face-to-face and virtual supervisions as to make sure the students were aware of the teacher's presence and would make them be on task.

(Details for the Pilot Study is in Appendix 5)

In the next section, the methodology used for the main study will be outlined. This includes the location of the school, participants, the research design and instruments, procedures for data collection and procedures for data analysis.

3.8 The Location of the School: The Main Study

The school for the main study was selected based on convenience sampling which is based on the sample are the easiest to access (McMahon, 2003). In addition, the researcher did not consider selecting the school to represent the entire population of the secondary schools in Malaysia as the main aim of this study is to investigate the students' nature of interaction using blogs in an extensive reading program.

Marshall and Rossman (1995) gave the following criteria in choosing the research site: (a) entry is possible; (b) there is a high probability that a rich mix of the processes, people, programs, interactions, and structures of interest are present; (c) the researcher is likely to be able to build trusting relations with the participants in

the study; and (d) data quality and credibility of the study are reasonably assured. For this study, the selected research site addressed all the four criteria.

The study was conducted at a selected school in Kota Bharu district in Kelantan. The school is located 10 kilometers from the capital city of Kelantan and only 2 kilometers from the Kubang Kerian Satellite Centre. It is categorized as a sub-urban school which has 1013 students with 98 teachers. It is a one-session daily school and most of the students are average achievers students. For upper form levels, Form 4 and 5, the school only offers 1 class for each level of pure science which is occupied by good and excellent students. There are two account classes and the remaining 5 are arts classes. The average number of students per class is 30. The school is fully equipped with internet access computer labs. The school is selected as it caters to the specific needs of the research and it is also convenient for the researcher since the school is equipped with computer labs and the other facilities. The site to conduct interviews with the students was also conducive for both the researcher and the respondents. It was an isolated room that enabled interviews to be conducted without any distraction.

3.9 Participants: the Main Study

Students were chosen from Form 4 intermediate achievers based on convenient sampling. They were 16 years old and were in an in-tact class, 4 Science 1. The class was chosen out of 8 Form 4 classes because the students were considered as the best class for Form 4 in this school. After the discussion with the school administration, they also agreed with the researcher's choice because the students at least had the ability to use English compared to the other classes. The availability of

the participants chosen was simply to fulfill the requirements of the research (Mc Mahon, 2003) which was to see how the use of blogs for collaborative reading can encourage the students to read extensively.

In addition, they were seen as those who needed assistance in improving their language competency by building their interest in reading the target language materials since they are at the early stage for their tertiary level education. Addressing reading motivation for these types of students represents a critical need since this is the grade at which students begin to focus on content as opposed to reading skills.

The Form 4 class was selected to participate in this study. In their class, they are further divided into groups of 4. The group was formed by using student own selection as to make them feel comfortable to collaborate throughout the program. According to Chapman et al. (2006), teachers can improve group dynamics and learning experiences by letting students to choose their own group members. Students who formed their own groups had better communication, were more enthusiastic about working together, and were more positive about their group abilities. Similarly, in a communication module amongst 126 first-year students Myers (2011) found that students who selected their members had higher levels of commitment, trust, and relational satisfaction.

4 Alpha was the best science class in this school. Although it was the best class, the students had mixed abilities including their language proficiencies. From the group

formation, there were 3 girls' groups and 2 boys' groups. Table 3.6 indicates the participants' group profile.

Table 3.5

Participants' Profile

ALPHA 1 (GIRLS)	ALPHA 2 (BOYS)	ALPHA 3 (GIRLS)	ALPHA 4 (GIRLS)	ALPHA 5 (BOYS)
1A1	2A1	3A1	4A1	5A1
1A2	2A2	3A2	4A2	5A2
1A3	2A3	3A3	4A3	5A3
1A4	2A4	3A4	4A4	5A4
N=4	N=4	N=4	N=4	N=4

l=group l A=Alpha l=the first member for group Alpha l

Alpha 1 consisted of four girls who were the top students in this class. They always competed with each other to get the best place in class in all the subjects. They always wanted the best for themselves.

Alpha 2 was a boys' group. They are a good group of students in term of academic achievement. The main problem with this group was that they were too self-conscious and they could not accept the fact that their blogs could be accessed by other classes.

Alpha 3 was another girls' group and they were the average achievers. This group consisted of girls who were active in co-curricular activities. They participated in lots of co-curricular activities as well as co-academic activities. This made them rarely be in class.

Alpha 4 consisted of girls who were active and always willing to follow orders. They were “excited” and “ambitious” to start blogging. These girls were the close competitors for Alpha 1 in their class.

Alpha 5 was a boys’ group. They shared the characteristics of Alpha 1 and Alpha 2. They were clever students but they were too self-conscious. They did not want people to look down at them.

3.10 Data Collection Methods

The primary data was gathered through observation, blog entries and students’ interviews. In-class observations will show the real process that the students go through during the program in which collaborative reading is integrated with the use of web logs and the data gathered will also indicate the problems encountered by the subjects and how they solve them as stated by Silverman (2006), “Observation is almost self-explanatory” (p67). This indicates that observations made in the field notes will provide information of what really takes place during the lesson.

Whereas blog entries will reveal the students’ reactions towards the program since they are free to write anything about the reading materials as well as about the program in general. Finally, Glesne & Peshkin (1992) stated that interviews present an “opportunity to learn about what you cannot see and to explore alternative explanations of what you do see” (as cited by Tellis, 1997). The data collection process involves gathering and then analyzing some specific information.

The decision to use three sources of evidence stems from the research objectives described in Chapter 1.

Table 3.6

Instruments Used in the Study

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	Instrument 1 Observation Notes	Instrument 2 Blog entries evaluation	Instrument 3 Interview
1. How is the nature of the students' blog posts similar and different during face-to-face and virtual supervisions?	X	X	X
2. What are the interactional patterns of the students' blog posts in the two different settings?	X	X	X

In order to answer Research Question 1, that is to find the nature of the students' blog posts both during face-to-face and virtual supervisions and Research Question 2, which is to investigate the interactional patterns of the students' blog posts, all the three research methods - observation notes, students' blog entries and interview were used in order to get richer data. In addition, the data from the three different sources helped to triangulate the findings.

3.10.1 Observation Notes

For six months, the Form Four class that used blogs for collaborative learning in an extensive reading program was observed. The students' and the teachers' action and reaction were observed and recorded in a specific form; the observation checklist which was adopted from Yaacob (2006). While this checklist was helpful, in

organizing the data analysis, some of the aspects might be missing when writing the notes. Thus, the tapes and transcripts were used as the “endless opportunities to redefine the categories” (Silverman, 2006:92).

Observations enabled the researcher to get the first hand information how the use of blogs was integrated in collaborative reading program. The observations were recorded through note-taking. Observation was important because fundamentally it was about “understanding the routine rather than what appears to be exciting” (Silverman, 2006). If the information from the observation notes was not clear, it was jotted down and later clarification was made during the interview.

For the present study, it employs an unstructured observation. The aspects observed included the students’ responses to the reading texts, the language used during the discussion and how they carried out with their blogging activities. Thus an attentive observing technique which required a continuous attention to detail was employed.

Unstructured observation enables a rich variety of information to be obtained. After every class meeting, the details of what the class did were jotted down. Even then, the observer will inevitably miss much of what is going on in the class. For this reason, to make the observation more focused as the session progressed, certain groups were observed in greater depth and also concentration on specific aspects of the learning process such as the students’ interaction were applied. Therefore in the findings, selected behaviors in the field notes were described in a non-judgmental ways (Widodo, 2008) and then the connections were made to related theories. In this regard, the field notes focused on selected behaviors such as in-class activity, the

students' interaction, the nature of students' blog posts and also the interactional patterns in their blog posts when they blogged from two different settings.

There are several limitations of using observation as a study method. One of them is the participants might not fully trust the researcher and they might also feel uncomfortable having a person they are not familiar with in their class. They might exclude the researcher from their community by switching to the language that is unfamiliar to the researcher (Kawulich, 2005). To alleviate this problem, the researcher had chosen her own English class for the main study. The researcher and the students had known each other since form 3 and the researcher was also a fluent Kelantanese speaker if the students were to switch to their dialect. Another limitation of observation method mentioned by Johnson and Sackett (1998) is the data collected or recorded based on the researcher's interest in the setting, rather than representing the actual happening (as cited by Kawulich, 2005). To alleviate this problem, the researcher used systematic observation procedures to sample and record behavior. Although the researcher observed all the five groups during in-class sessions, she focused her observation to 1 or 2 groups to get in-depth data.

3.10.2 Blog Entries

Another method employed was document analysis of students' blog entries. Blog entries are vital to examine the nature of students' blog posts in two different settings: face-to-face and virtual. They are also essential in identifying the interaction patterns in those settings. Although it would be an advantage if all students participated in the discussions for the sake of learning, some students might consider it as not important as the online discussion is not being graded and they might opt not to participate (Fleming, 2008). Since the students were required to

publish at least once a week for their online discussions and also to comment and give feedback on their friends' blogs, it was necessary to select a few of the completed discussions to be graded although it was compulsory for the students to participate. The aspects that would be evaluated include the number of postings the students did, how many responses the student provided and the length of students' contributions. It also included promptness and initiative shown by the students, the relevance of the post, expression used in the post and the contribution to the learning society (Fleming, 2008).

Then, their blog posts were printed out and were analyzed independently by two coders (see 3.13 Reliability and Validity of Findings). The first analysis done by using FSU Online Analysis (refer to 2.7.1) in order to find the answer for Research Question 1, the nature of students' blog posts when they blogged from 2 different settings. The students' blog posts were analysed by using 5 main categories which are Promptness and Initiative, Delivery of Post, Relevance of Post, Expression within the Post Contribution to the Learning Community. The rating scale for each category ranges from 1 to 4. Scale 1 indicates that students' participation is less than acceptable for the development of a progressive learning community. A score of 4 in any category shows the attainment of the highest standard of participation and reflects a good contribution to the learning community. The average mark for each category for each blog group was calculated. Then, the same blog posts were reread and analyzed by using Bales' IPA (refer to 2.6.2). This was to find the patterns for Research Question 2, the students' interactional patterns when they blogged from the two different settings.

The original Bales' IPA (1950) which was developed to study small group interaction consisted of 13 codes that cover 2 main categories which were social emotional area for positive and negative reactions and the task area that covers attempted answer as well as questions. Chou (2002) added 5 more codes to the original process analysis which were technical questions, topic specific discussions, and personal information exchanges. For this study, the revised and expanded version of Bales' Interaction Process Analysis (2002) was used. Thus, the students' blog posts were analyzed by using 18 codes as used in Bales IPA (2002).

3.10.3 Interviews

Interviews were conducted with the students to gather information and a means of validating what had been observed and analyzed. Tellis (1997) mentioned that interviews are important for a secondary source of information, thus, it is vital for validation of data. Qualitative interviews are special kind of conversations that are used by the researcher to explore informants' experiences and interpretations. Interviews were used to uncover the meaning structures that participants use to organize their experiences. The meaning structures are often hidden from direct observation. Interviews provide ways to explore more deeply participants' perspectives on actions observed by researchers (Hatch, 2002: 92). In the context of this study, the questions were open-ended as to give the informants opportunities to share their unique perspectives in their own words. Through this method, the informants' perspective on the phenomenon of interest was unfolded as they viewed it, not as the researcher viewed it (Marshall and Rossman, 1995). Thus, to ensure a 'subjective view' of the matter, the researcher used the 'general interview guide approach', also known as the semi-structured interview. According to Patton

(1990:111 as cited by Noorizah (2006), the interview guide “provides topics or subject areas about which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject”. Hence, the interviewer had the freedom to reword the questions spontaneously and establish a ‘conversational style’. Still, at the same time, the focus of the interview was maintained and allowed ‘individual perspectives and experiences to emerge’. All interview sessions were tape-recorded, transcribed, and checked for accuracy by the second coder (see 3.6).

For the students’ interview, the questions were constructed by the researcher based on the needs to find out the information about the students’ reaction about extensive reading after they were given the opportunity to collaborate with their friends through blogs and also their views about the use of blogs for collaborative learning. The questions asked including:

- i. Do you feel comfortable sharing what you have read with your friends in your group blogs? Why?
- ii. How do you make sure every member in your group participate in the reading and blogging activities?
- iii. How do you normally search for the reading materials? Do you feel comfortable to read your self-chosen materials or the ones provided in the class library?
- iv. How do you feel when the other classes are reading your blog?

The scheduled interview was conducted for three times. The first interview (Appendix 8) took place after one month the program started, the second interview (Appendix 9) was at the end of Phase 1 and the final interview (Appendix 10) was at

the end of Phase 3. A representative who was the group leader from each group was interviewed. The interview was carried out as a group interview as the group leader represented their groups to give the feedback of what happened in their groups during the program. This also allowed the other group leaders to know the strategies adopted by the other groups to get the utmost impact of the program. It was like a sharing sessions among the groups. Group interviewing involves interviewing a number of people at the same time, the emphasis being on questions and responses between the researcher and participants (Gibbs, 1997).

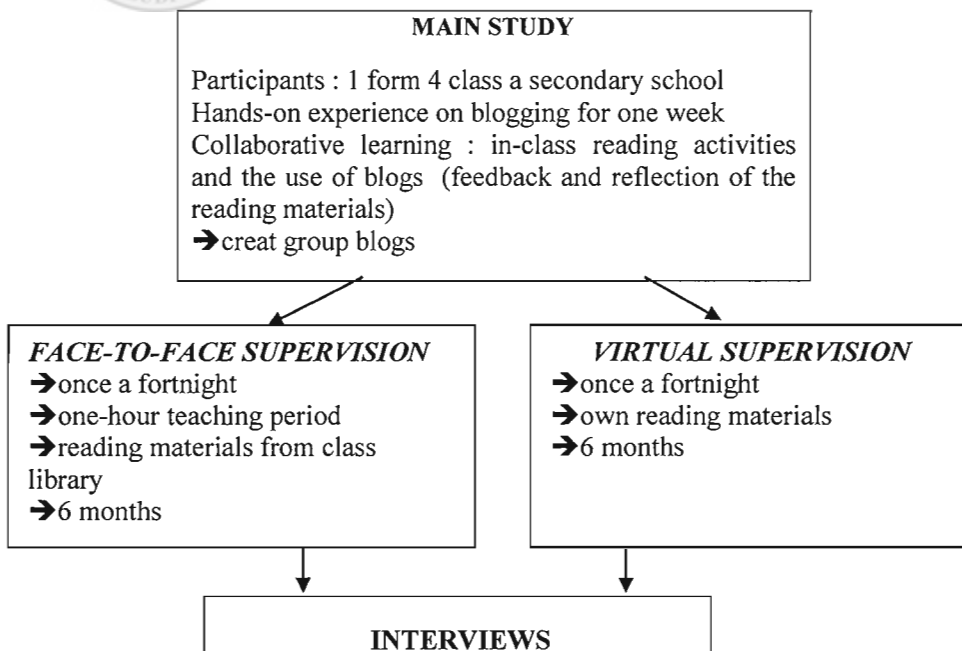
First, all the 5 students were briefed on the purpose of the interview and they were to sign a consent letter (Appendix 6) to make sure they understand that they might withdraw from the study at any time and this was an important aspect of building their trust in the interviewer (Jacob & Ferguson, 2012). The researcher met with the students in her room and sat around a table.

The group representatives were the group leaders whom the other members put the trust on. They shared their experiences with the leaders and the leaders shared the information with the other team leaders. To avoid biasness when only collecting data from only one group member in the interview, the researcher monitored the face-to-face discussion closely and based on the researcher's observation, she decided to carry out informal conversational interview with 2 groups, Alpha 1 and Alpha 2 to further clarify on their reaction on the program. The informal conversational interview relied on the spontaneous questions posted in a natural interaction and normally occurred as a part of ongoing observations (Turner, 2010). The questions came from on the spot moment experiences as a means for further

understanding or to get clarification of what was witnessed or experienced at a particular moment. There was no specific question asked but just relied on the interaction with the students to guide the interview process (McNamara, 2008).

One of the limitations of face-to-face interview is it is not usually time-bounded as the gathering of data from the respondents can take a long time. The interview took not more than one hour since the students were asked to “both share their stories and their time” (Jacob & Ferguson, 2012:5), thus asking someone to devote more than an hour and half of their time can become problematic for several reasons such as they might lose interest in the interview. The interview was recorded using a smart phone and throughout the interview, only brief notes were taken in order to maintain eye contact with the students.

3.11 The Main Study Research Procedures



The above figure was taken from Figure 3.1 but the focus will be on the main study and the interviews conducted. The students blogged from two different settings, face-to-face and virtual for alternate weeks.

During face-to-face supervision, the students were in the computer lab, sitting according to their groups. They chose the reading materials from the class library and read the articles in their groups. They discussed the issues raised in the article, the characters and other aspects of the article in their group. As a participant observer, the researcher monitored their progress and jotted down in her observation notes. She also assisted the groups when needed. There were many activities carried out during in-class sessions after the students finished reading their materials such as individual presentation, group presentation and question and answer session. As their teacher, the researcher kept encouraging them to use English as the medium of communication although most of the time, it failed. The students carried out the activities by using 3 languages; English, Bahasa Melayu and Kelantanese dialect. The researcher just made sure they were on task. After 40 minutes, the students were given 30 minutes to blog. They were equipped with one personal computer each. The researcher continued to monitor their progress especially what they did before they posted in their blogs. After the class ended, she printed out the students' blog entries, made a copy for the second coder and did the analysis by using both tools, FSU Assessment and Bales IPA. If there was a need arises, the researcher called a specific group for an informal interview to get the immediate feedback from them for example when group Alpha 2 refused to participate in their blog discussion in the first week of the program.

In the second setting, virtual supervision, the students blogged from their own places every alternate week. It was agreed by the groups that one member would search for reading materials and posted it in their respective blogs. The researcher had provided a guideline for the students in choosing articles to read for instance the issues, length and vocabulary used. The other group members would read the material and gave comments on it.

Initially, during the pilot study, the participants were asked to find their own reading materials and posted it in their blogs. The researcher found out that no discussion took place as the students were just posted their entry and ignored their friends' posts. Since this study was about students' collaboration, it was better to have one group member to post the article and the other group members would read the same article before they discussed it in their blog. The researcher printed out the blog entries and made a copy for my second coder and analysed them by using the 2 study tools mentioned above. After the researcher identified the patterns of their blog posts, she called a specific group to get more information about their entries.

The interviews were carried out 3 times (see 3.10.3 Interview).

3.11.1 The Integration of Blogs for Collaborative Learning in an Extensive Reading Program

The program of integrating the use of blogs in collaborative learning in L2 reading lessons took into consideration the Form 4 English syllabus as this program was meant to supplement the main stream English teaching. Throughout the program, the students were also guided and encouraged to be independent and practice autonomous learning in which they had to interact not only in-class, but also online

via the use of blogs, with their group members and also the teacher who acted as the facilitator and moderator, to discuss their reading materials and activities. Not only that, the students also posted or published about the reading they did and gave and received feedback. In addition, they also shared their learning experience going through this program (see 3.5 Research Design).

3.11.2 The Reading Materials

The students were provided with 40 articles to read in 10 weeks during face-to-face supervision. The articles were chosen based on the students' preferences during the pilot study. Two English teachers searched for the related articles, discussed on the issues raised, the length and the language structures used to make sure they were appropriate for the students. In every meeting (once a fortnight), they chose one article to read. This brought to the total of 10 articles to be read collaboratively in class. In addition, they were also required to search for their own reading materials to be suggested to their group members, at least one article a fortnight, which brought to the total of 10 articles. That was the students' reading goal- to read at least 20 articles in 6 months.

Most extensive reading studies made full use of graded readers because it was proven that graded readers which target at English language learners, usually showed readability levels and were controlled for syntax, sentence length, complexity and vocabulary (Bamford, 1984). This present study used articles and short stories taken from magazines and newspapers. These reading materials originally were not meant for language teaching and learning. Thus, the language used was authentic and there was no obvious way of discerning how easy or hard they would be for the learners

(Rodrigo, et.al., 2007). This was rather different from graded readers which have a series of levels or grades based on vocabulary used.

Initially, the articles were provided to students and the chosen articles were divided into categories based on topics; sports, entertainment, narrative and social issues. The reading materials were color coded so that the learners could easily select the articles that match their interests. Table 3.6 displays the categorization.

Table 3.7

Categories of Articles

COLOUR	CATEGORY OF ARTICLES	NUMBER OF ARTICLES
Red	Sports	10
Blue	Entertainment	10
Yellow	Narrative	10
Green	Social Issues	10
Total		40

Before the lesson, all of the reading texts compiled were duplicated so that there were enough copies for all the students. Then, the articles read and suggested by students would be compiled accordingly.

(see 3.5 for Research Procedure)

3.12 Procedure for Data Analysis

The main data for this research comes from observation notes, students' blog entries and students' interview.

3.12.1 Observation Notes

The observations were done in the computer laboratory for English language lessons implementing the integration of the use of web logs in collaborative learning, focusing on reading activities. The main objectives were to investigate how the students worked in their own respective groups, their behavior and attitude towards the reading process and activities. The students' and the teachers' reaction were observed and recorded in a specific form; the observation checklist which was adopted from Yaacob (2006) (Appendix 9). In this observation checklist, it includes date, time and number of students, what teacher does and what students do. The observation notes were recorded through note-taking. If the information from the observation notes was not clear, it would be jotted down and later clarification will be made during the interview which the questions were based on FSU Assessment and Bales IPA.

3.12.2 Blog Entries Evaluation

The analysis of the students' blog entries and their comments in their friends' blogs were reported in descriptive form. This data helped to elicit to what extent the integration of web logs in an extensive reading program could help students to collaborate with their peers by using English as the medium of interaction. The aspects that would be evaluated included the number of postings the students do, how many responses the student provided and the length of students' contributions. It also included promptness and initiative shown by the students, the relevance of the post, expression used in the post and the contribution to the learning society

(Fleming, 2008) (see 2.7.1 for details) and also by analyzing the posts using the codes adopted from Bales' IPA (see 2.7.2).

3.12.3 The Interview

The interview was conducted thrice involving 5 selected students who acted as the group leaders (see 3.11.1.3). The questions were in form of semi-structured and open-ended questions to elicit data for the research. This interview was a flexible method allowing new questions to be brought up during the interview and generally has a framework of themes to be explored, as opposed to the structured interview which has a formalized and limited set of questions (Silverman, 2006). The interview was recorded for accurate transcription and analysis using selective decoding. Thematic content analysis was then applied to discuss the finding. The steps to implement thematic content analysis as suggested by Anderson (2007) and Yan & Wildemuth (2009) were used.

Step 1: Prepare the Data

The data was transformed into written text before analysis started.

Step 2: Define the Unit of Analysis

The interview text unit was then be classified for content analysis. The data gathered was unitized before they were coded. Differences in the unit definition could affect coding decisions as well as the comparability of outcomes with other similar studies (De Wever et al., 2006). Thus, defining the coding unit is one of the most fundamental decisions. When using theme as the coding unit, the researcher is looking for the expressions of an idea.

Step 3: Develop Categories and a Coding Scheme

Categories and a coding scheme were derived from three sources: the data, previous related studies, and theories. To ensure the consistency of coding, the researcher developed a coding manual, which consisted of category names, definitions or rules for assigning codes, and examples. The two coders constantly compared the codes assigned to the coding manual that evolved throughout the process of data analysis.

Step 4: Test the Coding Scheme on a Sample of Text

To develop and validate the coding scheme early in the process, the researcher had tested the clarity and consistency of the category definitions to code a sample of the data during the preliminary study. After the sample was coded, the coding consistency was checked and negotiated (see 3.6).

Step 5: Code All the Text

When sufficient consistency was achieved, the coding rules were applied to the entire text. During the coding process, the researcher checked the coding repeatedly as the coding would proceed while new data continued to be collected and new themes and concepts emerged and had to be added to the coding manual.

Step 6: Assess the Coding Consistency

After coding the entire data set, the researcher rechecked the consistency of the coding since human coders were subject to fatigue and likely to make more mistakes as the coding proceeded. New codes were added since the original consistency check. Also, the coders' understanding of the categories and coding rules might change subtly over the time, which might lead to greater inconsistency.

Step 7: Draw Conclusions from the Coded Data

Then, inferences of the data were made and the reconstructions of the meanings were derived from the data. This involved exploring the properties and dimensions of

categories, identifying relationships between categories, uncovering patterns, and testing categories against the full range of data (Bradley, 1993).

Step 8: Report Methods and Findings

The coding process as well as the methods used to establish the trustworthiness of the study was reported (see 3.6).

The interview data were transcribed, read and coded by two coders by using open coding approach. Both coders assigned the appropriate themes for the interview data. Then, the themes assigned were compared, discussed and negotiated. This technique enabled the researcher to direct the reoccurring patterns or themes, and of the implementation of the use of blogs in collaborative learning in reading lessons at the school level.

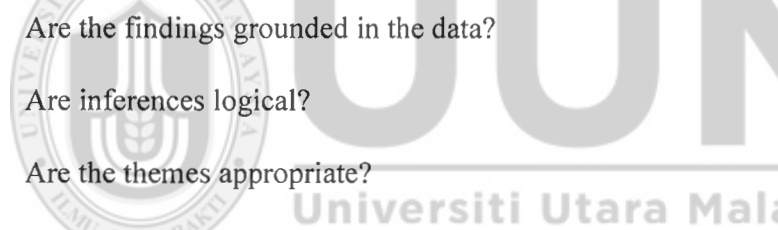
3.13 Reliability and Validity of Findings

Researchers use different data sources in order to increase the accuracy of the findings of a study. Triangulation refers to “a process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data or methods of data collection in descriptions and themes in qualitative research” (Cresswell, 2012: 259). The accuracy of the study is ensured as the information is gathered on many sources of information, individuals or processes.

In this study, there are different types of methodological triangulation used to capture different sources. The primary sources were from the students’ blog entries, observation, and students’ interview. The interviews enable the exploration of the students’ internal state and the in-class observation data provides

understanding of the real situation when the program is carried out. The three processes of data collection were considered appropriate for this study as they offered 3 different methods to investigate the nature of students' blog posts during face-to-face and virtual supervisions as well as the interactional patterns exist in their blog posts.

Another way to validate the accuracy of the research findings is through the use of external audit (Cresswell, 2012). This refers to the service of an individual outside the study to review different aspects of the research. The auditor will review the research and discuss the findings of the research. Schwandt and Halpern (1988) in Cresswell (2012) outlined the auditor's typically questions:

- 
- Are the findings grounded in the data?
 - Are inferences logical?
 - Are the themes appropriate?
 - Can inquiry decisions and methodological shifts be justified?
 - What is the degree of researcher bias?
 - What strategies are used for increasing credibility?

In this study, the researcher acted as a researcher and also participant. I got a help from an English teacher who has had 20 years of teaching experience and also a master degree holder who has the knowledge of how coding is done in qualitative studies to be the inter coder. She was involved in this study from the Pilot Study until the end of the main Study. As the second coder, she neither entered the class nor joined the interview sessions but she dealt with the students' blog posts as well

as the interview data. Inter coder reliability is the term for the extent to which independent coders evaluate a characteristic of a message and reach the same conclusion (Lombard, Snyder-Duch & Bracken, 2010). The students' blog posts were coded independently. The findings were then compared and discussed before the final coding and themes decided. In order to assess the reliability of the coding at least two different researchers must code the same body of content (Mouter & Noordegraaf, 2012). The interview data was also analyzed independently before discussion on the emergent themes was carried out.

The inter coder process started by choosing a coder. The selection for the coder was set as being competent in understanding the FSU (as presented in 2.6.1) and Bales' IPA (refer to 2.6.2). Having the competency and experience in using both types of analysis would ensure the coders comprehended the subject matter well and were ready to take the role of a coder. A master degree holder English teacher was chosen and trained. During the pilot study, the teacher analyzed the students' blog posts before she was assigned as the second coder. Figure 3.4 shows the inter coder process.

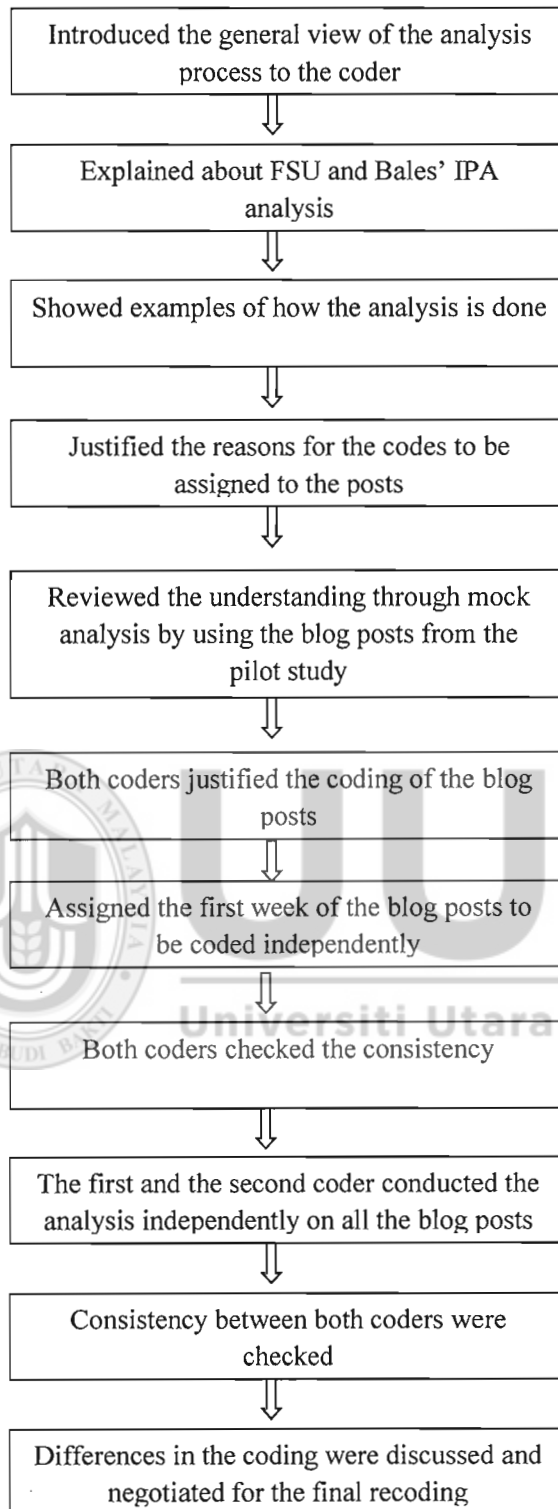


Figure 3.4. Inter Coder Process

Figure 3.4 shows the process that the inter coder was guided on both analysis. The inter coder was given the first set of students' blog posts taken from the pilot study as a mock analysis. Prior to that, she was briefed on both type of analysis used and was shown how the analysis was supposed to be carried out. After the analysis was done, both coders discussed and justified on the codes assigned to the blog posts. After both coders satisfied with the codes given, the first week of the blog posts from the main study was chosen and again both coders coded the blog posts independently. After the analysis was completed, we discussed and checked for consistency. Then both coders coded all the blog posts independently before discussion were carried out to check for consistency. After all blogs were coded, the coders compared the coding and reconciled minor differences. The differences between the two coders were discussed and negotiated before we finally coded the posts. The percentage similarity between the first coder and the second coder was at 87%. Percent agreement seems to be used most widely and is intuitively appealing and simple to calculate (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, and Bracken,2010). The different codes assigned to the posts by the two codes were analyzed and negotiated. The remaining differences were then discussed and clarified and finally the similarity rate was 95%.

Meanwhile, the interview data was transcribed and analyzed by both researchers to get the major themes of the students' perceptions towards collaborative blogging in an extensive reading program, the problems they encountered and the potential use of blogging in their future language lessons. The themes identified then were discussed by the two coders to assign the most appropriate themes to the students' responses.

3.14 Summary

After recognizing the complexities of the study and establishing the conclusions, different methods to increase trustworthiness of research findings were manipulated. The different methods used also acted as a triangulation in order to avoid any bias if only one method was used. Throughout this study, the researcher played a role as “observer as participant”. The data was collected through observations, interviews and analysis of students’ blog posts. The justification discussed includes the strengths and weaknesses of each method. Furthermore, some information about the participants and the procedures for data collection were laid out. Lastly, the reliability and validity of this study were taken into consideration. The summary of the pilot study was also included as the findings justify the data collection methods used for the main study.

In the following chapters, the researcher shall present the findings of the study followed by the discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study conducted in a secondary school in Kelantan, Malaysia. The purposes of this study were two folds: to introduce blogging into an English as a Second Language (ESL) class and to identify the significance of its use for the students' interaction in their extensive reading activities. This study was designed to reveal the nature of secondary school students' blog posts and the interaction patterns when the students collaborated by using blogs as a medium during face-to-face and virtually supervisions. The students' blog entries, teacher's observation notes and interview data from five group leaders and 10 members from two groups were analyzed to understand the phenomenon.

The research questions were as follows:

1. How is the nature of the students' blog posts similar and different during face-to-face and virtual supervisions?
2. What are the interactional patterns of the students' blog posts in two different settings?

The students in this study used blogs to publish their comments and to obtain feedback about the reading materials, as well as to discuss the issues raised in the specific reading materials. This study was conducted in two phases; the first phase was carried out for three months from April till June 2012 and the second phase also took place for three months from March until May 2013 at a secondary school. As explained in Chapter Three (3.5 Research Design), the study had to be implemented in two phases because during the first phase, there were interruptions such as the

participants were involved in co-curricular activities and examinations. Thus, in order to accumulate enough data, with the school authority's permission and the participants' agreement, the second phase of the program was carried out in 2013.

The researcher used multiple data source in this study. Since the study requires detailed data from the students' interview both orally and in written form, in-depth analysis on the types of blog posts, analysis of teacher's observation notes documenting the process of learning and teaching instruction and open-ended surveys of the students were collected. The researcher also profiled each of the eight selected student from the two selected groups as the least and the most active groups. These profiles were developed from the students' interview, analyses of their blog entries and researcher' observation notes. Seidman (1998) suggested that "crafting a profile or a vignette of a participant's experience is an effective way of sharing interview data and opening up one's interview material to analysis and interpretation" (p 102). Finally, I provided a description on my experience as a teacher researcher using blogs to implement an extensive reading program.

4.2 The Main Study

The main study was carried out in two phases. Phase One started from April till June 2012 for three months and Phase Two was also carried out for three months, from March until May 2013. Although initially the plan was to carry out the study in three months, there were some constraints to get enough data for this study and those constraints could not be avoided such as school sports, school holidays and teachers' as well as students' meetings. Some of the English classes also had to be postponed because the students had to attend the sports rehearsal and they also sat for the school

term examination. To get enough data, with the students' agreement and also the school administration's permission, we extended the program for three more months starting from March to May 2013.

Table 4.1 shows the data collection phases of the study.

Table 4.1

Data Collection Phases

	PHASE 1										PHASE 2									
WEEK	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10
FACE-TO-FACE	X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X	
VIRTUAL		X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X

4.3 The Findings

This section explains in detail the findings of the study based on the research questions. First, the findings for Research Question 1, what is the nature of the students' blog posts during face-to-face and virtual supervision, are presented. The analysis using FSU Online Assessment (2002) covers 5 main components which are Promptness and Initiatives, Delivery of Posts, Relevance of Posts, Expression within the Posts and Contribution to the Learning Community. The comparison of the findings for all the five components between Face-to-face and Virtual Supervisions is outlined to see if there is any difference or similarity between the two. The next section describes the findings for Research Question 2, what are the interactional patterns of the students' blog posts during face-to-face and virtual supervision. The analysis was done by using Bales' Interaction Process Analysis (2002) which covers 4 main components; Social Emotional Area (Positive Reactions), Task Area (Attempted Answer), Task Area (Questions) and Social Emotional Area (Negative

Reactions). I also add in one more category to the analysis which is relevant to the students' blog posts which is Diverge from the Topic Discussed. Following the findings for the 2 research questions is the profiles for the most active and the least active group for this program. Next, the challenges in blogging and also students' perceptions on the use of blogs for an extensive reading program are presented.

4.3.1 The nature of the students' blog posts during face-to-face and virtual supervision

In order to answer this research question, the total number of blog posts according to groups, the nature of blog posts based on the FSU Online Assessment (2002) analysis, teacher's observation notes and the students' interview were analyzed.

The number of students' posts and comments in their group blogs in both face-to-face and virtual supervisions were counted. This served as a guide to calculate the frequency of the codes and themes existed in the blog posts.

In this study, the students were taken to the computer lab once a week during the double period lesson; approximately for one-hour under the teacher's supervision. Apart from that, students also blogged outside of formal lessons during the alternate week of their class meeting in which the teacher supervised them virtually. Majority of the students blogged and commented each week. Table 4.2 shows the number of blog posts during face-to-face and virtual supervisions.

Table 4.2

Total Number of students' Blog posts and Comments

GROUP: ALPHA	FACE-TO- FACE	VIRTUAL	TOTAL
1	129	133	262
2	94	61	155
3	71	88	159
4	105	115	210
5	69	147	213
TOTAL	468	544	1012

As can be seen in Table 4.2, over the 20 weeks, one class of 20 students wrote over 544 blog posts and comments when they were monitored virtually and the number of blog posts and comments for face-to-face supervisions was 468, thus the total was 1012. For this analysis, the number of blogs was separated based on face-to-face and virtual supervision. To make the comparison clearer, the total of blog posts for the five groups for both face-to-face and virtual supervision were calculated and compared. The number of blog posts showed the students' participation throughout the program whereby it indicates their commitment on the use of online learning in their teaching and learning sessions.

Generally, the students participated more during virtual supervision as compared to face-to-face supervision. Alpha 1, 3, and 4 showed consistency in their blog participation in both supervisions with the total of 262, 159 and 210 respectively. Meanwhile, Alpha 2, a boys' group indicated the decrease in the number of blog posts during virtual supervision. However, this group (Alpha 2) participated more during face-to-face. On the other hand, Alpha 5, another boys' group was more

active in their blog discussion during virtual supervision compared to face-to-face sessions. Figure 4.1 illustrates the number of students' blog posts.

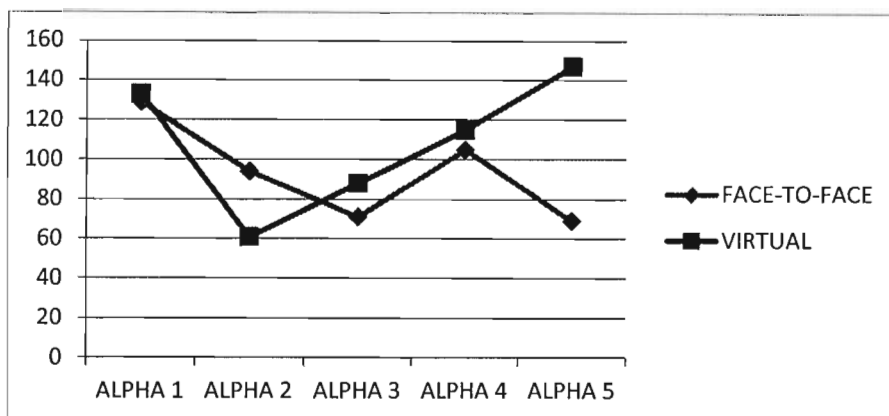


Figure 4.1. Total Number of Students' Blog Posts and Comments

Figure 4.1 shows that 4 groups adhered to the trend shown by the total number of blog posts for both supervisions. Generally, Alpha 1,3,4 and 5 indicated that they posted more during virtual supervision compared to the face-to-face supervision. This is similar to the finding by Jarrell and Freiremath (2005) who examined how online chat in language classroom increased students' motivation to communicate. They found out that students preferred online chat because it provided time for them to plan and consider, made them feel more relaxed compared to face-to-face discussion. On the other hand, Alpha 2 participated more during face-to-face sessions. When asked about the patterns, their responded:

“We make full use of the time in the computer lab. Teacher *ada, senang nak tanya*. If you notice, during Phase 1, *kita orang memang slow untuk blog dalam kelas. Malu, takut semua ada*. Then only, we notice, *rugi tak guna masa dalam kelas*, at least we use English *masa kelas juga*.”

<“We make full use of the time in the computer lab. Teacher was around and it was easy for us to ask. If you notice, during Phase 1, we were slow to post in our blog during in-class sessions. We felt shy and fear. Then only, we notice it was such a waste of our time in class, at least we use English during the period.” > (2A2; Interview)

“We read the articles together in class. That helps. **Banyak boleh tanya** friends and also **boleh** refer teacher. Easy and fast understanding **lah**. Just that in blogs, we use English to discuss **tapi dalam kelas, memang BM la.**”

<“We read the articles together in class. That helps. We can always ask our friends and also refer to teacher. Easy and fast understanding. Just that in blogs, we use English to discuss but in class, obviously we use Bahasa Melayu.”>

(2A1, Interview)

It shows that this particular group felt that the presence of the teacher helped them to participate in the blog posts faster since they could always refer to the teacher if they faced any problem. This did not happen during Phase 1. In Phase 2, the students might have familiarized themselves with the program and knew what to do to get the optimum effects from the program. In one of my observation notes, I jotted down:

“All groups now can accept my presence when they are blogging in class. They look more relaxed and comfortable. Group 2 was the most active group during in-class supervision. After they read the article, they drew a mind map on papers and they divided the task of who would write on what. They kept asking me in Bahasa Melayu for clarification of the parts of the text that they didn’t understand.”

Universiti Utara
(Observation notes; May 6, 2013)

To make the comparison clearer, the number of blog posts and comments were separated based on face-to-face and virtual supervisions. Table 4.3 shows the number of students’ blog posts and their comments during face-to-face supervision.

Table 4.3

Students' Blog Posts and Comments during Face-to-face Supervision

WEEK GROUP	POSTS										TOTAL
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
ALPHA 1	5	3	1	2	4	0	2	2	1	2	22
ALPHA 2	1	0	1	0	0	2	4	1	1	1	11
ALPHA 3	1	1	2	1	2	0	0	1	1	2	11
ALPHA 4	5	3	1	0	4	0	1	1	1	1	17
ALPHA 5	0	0	3	2	1	0	1	2	0	1	10
	COMMENTS										
ALPHA 1	4	7	8	7	30	0	25	19	1	6	107
ALPHA 2	2	0	12	0	0	12	35	8	10	4	83
ALPHA 3	9	5	12	0	0	5	10	5	9	5	60
ALPHA 4	11	0	30	0	9	3	10	8	9	8	88
ALPHA 5	0	0	17	6	6	0	6	20	0	4	59

TOTAL POSTS: 71 TOTAL COMMENTS: 397 TOTAL: 468

As indicated in Table 4.3, there were 71 posts and the total of 397 comments that gave the total of 468. Alpha 1, a girls' group had the largest number of posts and comments with the total of 129 while Alpha 2, a boys' group had the least number of posts and comments which was 69.

Table 4.4 on the other hand, presents the number of students' blog posts and their comments during virtual supervision.

Table 4.4

Students' Blog Posts and Comments during Virtual Supervision

POSTS											
WEEK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
GROUP											
ALPHA 1	5	3	1	1	2	2	4	1	2	2	23
ALPHA 2	8	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	15
ALPHA 3	4	4	1	0	2	3	1	0	1	1	17
ALPHA 4	5	4	1	2	1	2	1	0	2	1	19
ALPHA 5	1	3	4	0	5	1	5	0	1	1	21
COMMENTS											
ALPHA 1	12	8	8	6	17	10	25	9	8	7	110
ALPHA 2	15	1	4	4	0	0	7	7	2	6	46
ALPHA 3	10	1	4	0	12	26	2	0	6	10	71
ALPHA 4	28	8	8	9	6	14	7	0	1	15	96
ALPHA 5	12	9	19	0	41	17	19	0	5	4	126

TOTAL POSTS: 95**TOTAL COMMENTS: 449****TOTAL: 544**

Table 4.4 shows that there were 95 posts and 449 comments posted by the students during virtual supervision that gave the total of 544. Three groups, Alpha 1, 3 and 4 consistently participated in the blog discussion but the other two groups Alpha 2 and 5 showed a different pattern. For Alpha 2, their contribution to the discussion was the least compared to the other groups but for Alpha 5, they became the most active group. In summary, students in this study posted more during virtual supervision compared to face-to-face supervision.

To further analyze the data, FSU Online Analysis was used. In the next section, I will discuss the findings based on the use FSU Online categories. The nature of students' blog posts were analyzed by using Florida State University (FSU) Online Assessment Tool (2002). The students' posts were analyzed based on 5 categories; Promptness and Initiatives, Delivery of Posts, Relevance of Posts,

Expression within the Posts and Contribution to the Learning Community. The total of marks awarded for all students' participation in blogs determined the categories that reflected their nature of blog posts.

The rating scale ranges from 1 to 4 with 1 is the indication of student's participation which is less than acceptable for the development of a progressive learning community. A score of 4 in a category represents the highest standard of participation and reflects a significant contribution to the learning community. Applying the rubric, the objective scores for each of the groups during face-to-face supervision are as shown in Table 4.5 while the objective scores for each of the groups during virtual supervision are as shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.5

The Score for FSU Online Assessment for Face-to-face Supervision

CATEGORY	ALPHA	ALPHA	ALPHA	ALPHA	ALPHA	AVERAGE
	1	2	3	4	5	
Promptness and Initiative	4	4	4	4	4	4
Delivery of Post	4	3	3	3	3	3
Relevance of Post	4	3	4	4	3	4
Expression within the Post	4	3	4	4	3	4
Contribution to the Learning Community	3	3	3	3	3	3

Table 4.6

The Score for FSU Online Assessment for Virtual Supervision

CATEGORY	ALPHA 1	ALPHA 2	ALPHA 3	ALPHA 4	ALPHA 5	AVERAGE
Promptness and Initiative	4	4	4	4	4	4
Delivery of Post	4	3	3	3	3	3
Relevance of Post	4	3	4	4	3	4
Expression within the Post	4	4	3	3	3	3
Contribution to the Learning Community	3	3	3	3	3	3

Table 4.5 shows that the groups received the highest score of 4 in Promptness and Initiatives, Delivery of Posts and Expression within the Post. However, they achieved an average of 3 for relevance of Post and Contribution to the Learning Community. In Table 4.6, which describes the virtual supervision, they scored 4 for Promptness and Initiatives and Delivery of Post, but an average of 3 was given for the Relevance of Post, Expression within the Post and Contribution to the Learning Community.

To make the picture clearer, the average score for every category for both supervisions were compared as shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7

Comparison of the Average Score for FSU Online Assessment between Face-to-face and Virtual Supervisions

CATEGORY	Face-to-face	Virtual
Promptness and Initiative	4	4
Delivery of Post	3	3
Relevance of Post	4	4
Expression within the Post	4	3
Contribution to the Learning Community	3	3

The comparison indicates that although the students blogged from two different settings, they shared the same nature of interaction particularly in terms of Promptness and Initiative and Delivery of Posts, except for one category which is “Expression within the Post”. They scored the average of the high band, 4 during face-to-face supervision, whereas during virtual supervision, they were given band 3. They seemed to be more focused under the teacher’s supervision. This will be discussed in further detail in the next section.

4.3.1.1 Promptness and Initiative

In both supervisions, the average score given to the students’ blog posts were band 4 that has the description of “*Consistently responds to postings in less than 24 hours, demonstrated good self-initiative.*” During face-to-face supervision, 64 out of 71 posts (90%) were responded in less than 24 hours and the discussion among the group members mostly took 2 to 5 minutes to be responded by other group members. Although the members responded within 24 hours but they needed to be prompted by the teacher. During Phase 1, most groups did not show any sign for them to post during face-to-face session. Only on the third meeting they started to feel comfortable with the situation and started to post in their respective blogs. Meanwhile during virtual supervision 87 out of 95(92%) posts were responded in less than 24 hours for all groups. In fact Group 5 which initially the least active group had the most posts for virtual supervision in which they had 147 posts out of 544.

This finding shows that whether or not the teacher was around, the students were taking in-charge of their own learning. The students noticed that even though they

were not directly monitored by the teacher when they blogged from their own places, they were still monitored by the teacher virtually. Figure 4.1 shows how the students reacted when they knew that the teacher was reading their posts although at that time they were blogging from their own places. In Figure 4.2, students were discussing about the role of parents.

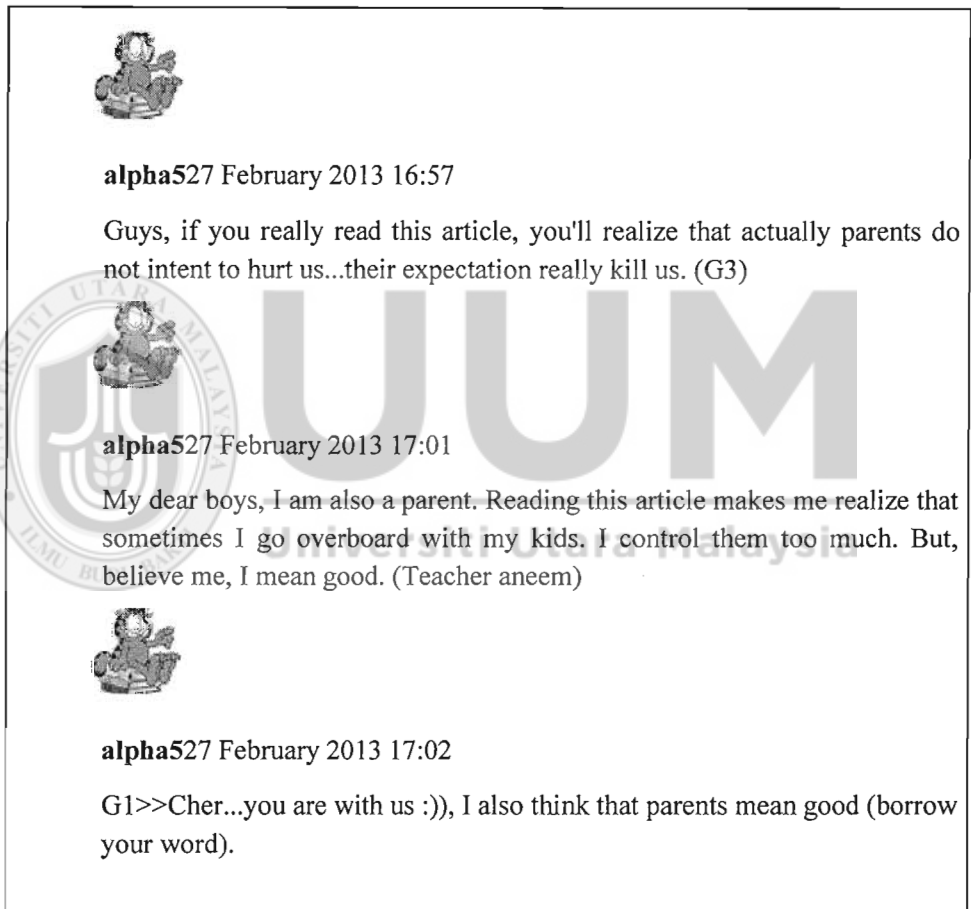


Figure 4.2. Students' Blog Post (Alpha 5, February 27, 2013)

What can be seen here is that students became more conscious of what they commented and were a bit shy knowing the teacher (Teacher Aneem) was reading or virtually supervising them.

In my informal conversation with this group, I jotted down:

Alpha 5 came to see me this morning. They were so eager to have me joining their blog discussion during the virtual session. I noticed that the presence of a teacher in their discussion made them feel that their discussion was valued as not only they were interacting with each other but the teacher was there to monitor and read their posts. Alpha 5 group leader, 5A1 thanked me for joining them. “My group member **duk sohor pada group lain, teacher join blog kami.**” *<My group members were busy telling others that you joined our blog>*”

(Informal Conversation/Observation Notes, March 3, 2013)

This indicates how the students appreciated the presence of teacher, even virtually.

The threaded discussions exist in blogs also generated interaction among the students (Edelstein & Edwards, 2002) because they realized that their contribution to the discussion actually helped the group members to accomplish their aims for reading. Since the objective of this extensive program was clearly explained to them, the students knew that their contribution to the group discussion was significant.

4.3.1.2 Delivery of Post

For the Delivery of Post that addresses the details of students’ blog posts in terms of being grammatically correct with rare misspellings, for both supervisions, the students scored an average of 3 with the description of “Few grammatical or spelling errors are noted in posts”. Most of the sentences posted in their blogs were correctly structured for both supervisions. Figure 4.3 indicates the blog posts taken from Alpha 4 when they were discussing about an article entitled, “Street Kids 2”.

STREET KIDS 2

From the passage, we can conclude that street children are between of 5 and 17 years. One of the factors that lead them to become street children is they had to face an unpleasant home environment with parents who are alcoholic or drug addicts. Besides, they also have been promised jobs or glamorous life but was cheated in many ways. Furthermore, some of them also trusted adults but are exposed to sexual and physical abuse (SARAH)

alpha4 said...

I like read the text. I also found a few factors that lead them to become street children, such as they promised a chance to study away from home and end up in abusive plants too. (NOR HAFIZAN)

alpha4 said...

I also like this text. We can see this problem with our teenagers in Malaysia. Other factor is sometimes the children might run thinking that they can lead a free life but get trapped in worse condition (ALIANA)

alpha4 said...

In my opinion, parents plays the main role in this situation. They should not abandon their children (Zainey)

alpha4 said...

The children should not trusted adults easily. They may be cheated by adult without they conscius (NOR HAFIZAN)

Figure 4.3. Students' Blog Posts during Face-to-Face (Alpha 4, 24 July, 2012)

As indicated in Figure 4.3, the students completed the task during face-to-face supervision. Almost all the structures were correctly written and comprehensible. However there are some grammatical errors made by them such as Subject-verb-agreement, modal verbs, articles and spelling.

1. *Subject-verb agreement*

- e.g :
- i. **One of the factors** that *lead* them to become street children... (4A2)
 - ii. In my opinion, **parents** *plays* the main role... (4A3)
 - iii. ...**they** also have been promised jobs or glamorous life but **was** cheated in many ways (4A2)

2. *The use of root verbs after modals*

e.g : i. The children **should** not *trusted*...(4A1)

3. *Missing articles*

e.g : i. They may be cheated by (**an**) adult...(4A1)
ii. ...but get trapped in (**a**) worse condition. (4A4)

4. *Spelling errors*

e.g i. plants (4A1)
ii. conscious (4A1)

Next, Figure 4.3 shows the blog posts from the same group, Alpha 4 during virtual supervision. Despite the errors, they attempted to use even complex sentences in their posts.



HOW IMPORTANT IS ENGLISH? 4A

"CONFIDENT SELF-EXPRESSION IN SPEECH AND WRITING IS ONE OF THE BEST QUALIFICATIONS FOR A SUCCESSFUL CAREER"

and this means for English, not Bahasa Melayu...we need to improve ourselves friends...to get the better career.

alpha4 said...

4B:A always question this in our country. I know English is important but if you look at Thai and Japan and also China, they develops although they are using their own language. Why do we put English as number one in our country to be success person?

alpha4 said...

4C...

You are talking about a different issue here. Remember that our country practise English as our second language, not the first language. And as we know, English as the language of the world will help us to be a better person if we can master it.

alpha4 said...

(4D)>>>still, I agree with what B said, why not we be like those countries. Easier to use Bahasa Melayu as it is our first language and in our country, all people understand this language no matter you are chinese, indian or melayu. So, why must we be goos in English to excel in our own country?

Figure 4.4. Students' Blog Posts during Virtual Supervision (Alpha 4, May 27, 2013)

Similar to their blog post during face-to-face supervision, few grammatical and spelling errors were obvious in the posts. The grammar errors spotted were Subject-verb-agreement, verb to be, articles, and spelling.

1. *Subject-verb agreement*

- e.g :
- i. ...**theydevelops** although they are using their own language (4A2).
 - ii. Remember that **our countrypractice**...(4A3)

2. The missing of do-verb

- e.g i. why (**do**) not we be like those countries...(4A4)

3. *Missing articles*

- e.g : i. ...understand this language no matter you are **(a)** chinese, indian or melayu (4A4)
ii. ...country to be **(a)success** person? (4A2)

4. *Spelling errors*

- e.g i. **goos**(4A4)

5. *Upper-lower Case*

- e.g i. ... language no matter you are**(a)chinese, indian** or **melayu**(4A4).

The findings from both extracts of Alpha 4 blog posts showed that regardless of the teacher's presence, the students still made the same language mistakes such as subject verb agreement, modals, missing articles and others. This can be a good teaching point for English teachers in general. More focus should be given to grammar aspects in order for the students to self-check on their errors. As for spelling errors, the students' responses were "typo-errors, teacher" (Informal Interview, 4A4), and "Laa...ingat dah betul..bila dah send baru perasan, **salah type, sorry**" <*I thought it was correctly spelt...after I posted it, then I realized, typo error, sorry*> (Informal Interview, 4A1). Spelling errors seemed to be a minor problem since students might have typed the words wrongly. I also noticed that

"most students are using only their 2 index fingers to type on the keyboard and some have to search for the letters. It's quite surprising since these students are Gen Y students and I expect them to be good at typing. This might affect their participation in blog discussion. Their favourite question, "**Mana pulak huruf ni?**" <*Where is the alphabet?*>" (Observational Notes, May 27, 2013).

Referring to the responses given in the questionnaire, these students are supposed to be computer savvy and should not face any problem using computer. According to

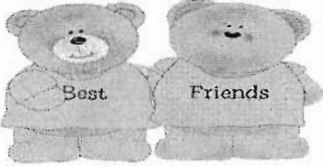
them, they are technology savvy but “*we normally use our smart phones, we use more of our thumbs to type, not the other fingers*” (Informal Interview, 4A3).

4.3.1.3 Relevance of Post

The average mark gained for both supervisions was 4 that have the description of “frequently posts topics that are related to discussion content prompts further discussion of topic”. Still, during virtual supervision, there were times when the students sent posts that were not related to the topic. During face-to-face supervision, the students posted questions in their blogs that prompted further discussion of the topic as shown in Figure 4.5. In this particular blog excerpt, the students invited the other group members to join the discussion about Best Friends by using questions.



BEST FRIENDS



Hello friends! :) I just read an interesting article about "Best Friends". You all must not really know what the meaning of BEST FRIENDS. Right?? Let's me explain to you all. Best friends refers to the friends who share anything among themselves. The best friend are such friends who are always there for you when you needs them. They never let you down in any situation. So, I sure all of you must have your own best friend like me. :)

~AIDA

Alpha's Team
Yes, of course! I also have best friends. I have four best friends name's is Syah, Tiha, Nana and Zatul. They are very cheerful friends. I like be friend with them. errr?? ~AMIRAH

Alpha's Team
"Errr"?? What Amirah?? I think unnecessarily friends should call 'best friend' because some of them didn't loyal to us. Examples, they can open ours top secret. It shown that they didn't loyal to us. ~FATWA

Alpha's Team
Yes, I agree with you Fatwa. Eventhough, we consider them as a best friend who really faithful, they broke our beliefs. So, I think we must know how to find a true friend that always us even in sad situations. ~ASYIKIN

Alpha's Team
Yeah! Sometimes, we have to choose friends. There were also a 'best friend' that lie to us. So, we have to choose your friends wisely. ~AIDA

Alpha's Team
Yes! The thing that we have to choose friends is truly but we do not have to judge the book by its cover. Isit true friends?? ~AMIRAH

Alpha's Team
Yup! It true. I agree with you Amirah. Sometimes if we thinks negative we can hurt our heart's friend. They will be sad and disappointed with us. ~FATWA

Figure 4.5. Students' Blog Posts (Alpha 3, June 13, 2012)

Figure 4.5 shows an example of students' blog posts when they were discussing about "Best Friends". Amirah for example in line 2, posted a question by saying, "I like to be friend with them, errr?" and this was responded by Fatwa in line 3, "Errr"?? What Amirah??" questioning what Amirah wanted to say, then proceeded with her comments. Similarly in line 10, Amirah posted another question, "Isit true friends??" she invited responses from her friends by asking questions.

As for the virtual supervision, the average score for both phases of the study was also 3 for the category of “Relevance of Posts”. Still there are times, when the students occasionally sent posts that were out of topic that put them to level 2. Figure 4.6 provides the illustration taken from the same group, Alpha 3 during visual supervision. In this blog, they were discussing about “Holiday and the Cheer Factor”.

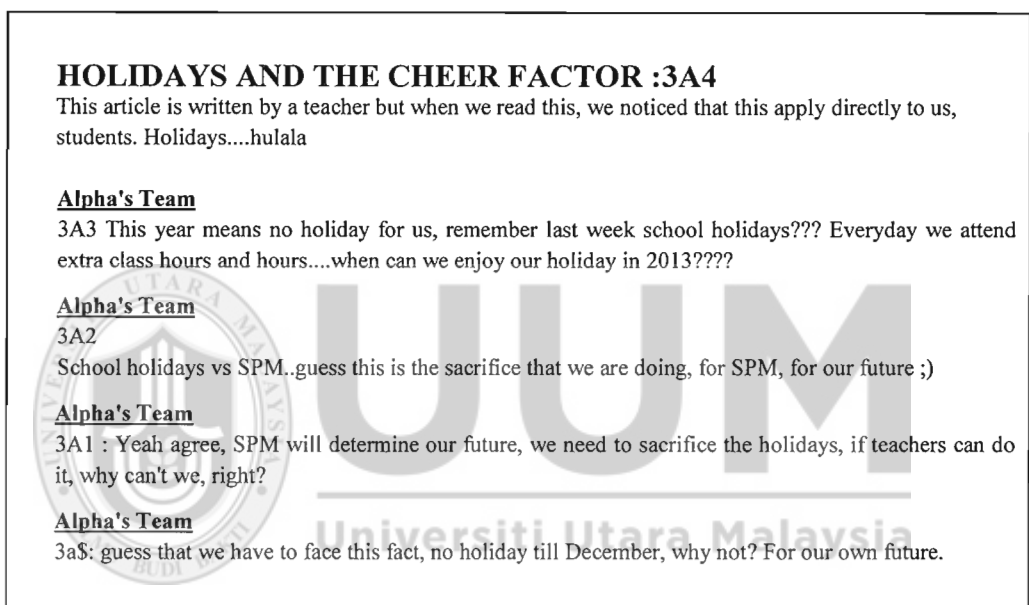


Figure 4.6. Students' Blog Posts (Alpha 3, April 2, 2013)

Figure 4.6 shows that even though the group did not specifically talk about the article read they were talking and commenting about not having holidays due to the SPM examination that they had to sacrifice. The blog entry became a platform for them to voice out their feelings regarding extra class during the school holidays. 3A3 showed her frustration by not having holidays,

“This year means no holiday for us, remember last week school holidays??? Everyday we attend extra class hours and hours....when can we enjoy our holiday in 2013????”

However, they kept encouraging and motivating each other. For example 3A1 mentioned,

“Yeah agree, SPM will determine our future, we need to sacrifice the holidays, if teachers can do it, why can't we, right?”

When they were asked about this, the responses given were:

“Sorry teacher, **tak sengaja, tiba-tiba rasa nak cuti..yang sebenar-benarnya cuti. Ni asyik kena datang kelas tambahan je, bila cutinya?**”*<Sorry teacher, it was not done on purpose. Suddenly I feel like having a holiday...the real school holiday. We just have to come for extra class during holidays, so when is our holiday?>*”

(3A3, Informal Interview)

“I notice this, but as a group leader, I just let them discuss the issue, **masih***<still>* related to school holidays, at least, **kita boleh motivate satu sama lain** to study *<we can motivate each other to study>*”

(3A1, Informal Interview)

The students' responses during the informal interview indicated that they were aware that they diverged from the main topic discussed but they still proceeded with the blog discussion. The topic discussed was actually still related to the issues raised in the article but they got too carried away with the discussion. The group leader played her role well by letting the group members continued with their blog discussion because they were still collaborating with each other by using the targeted language.

The researcher also noticed that when in class, the students were particular about the subject matter they wanted to post in their blogs. They kept referring to the article read by their group members.

“The 20 minutes allotted for them to read was fully used by the students. They did the task assigned to them. Some jotted down notes in their books. During the group discussion, they kept referring to the articles the group had chosen and also their notes.”

(Observation Notes, June 13, 2012).

This might explain the reasons for most of the posts to be related to the discussion content.

The next section discusses the expression used by the students within the blog posts.

4.3.1.4. Expression within the Posts

For this particular category, the students gained the different average scores for the two supervisions. The average of 4 marks was given for face-to-face supervision that describes the blog posts as “Express opinions and ideas in a clear and concise manner with obvious connection to topic.” Whereas for virtual supervision, the average mark of 3 was given to the blog posts that describes the blog posts as “Opinions and ideas are stated clearly with occasional lack of connection to topic.” First we shall look at the excerpt taken from group Alpha 5 for face-to-face supervision as shown in Figure 4.7. In this excerpt, they discussed an article entitled “Guidelines and Thoughts for Academic Success”.

Want to be Excellent Students??? Read this!!! 5A3 Guidelines and Thoughts for Academic Success

Adapted and shortened in 2005 by Alison Lake and Carl von Baeyer from a web page by Steve Thien, Kansas State University, which was based on the following articles in *The Teaching Professor*. Larry M Ludewig, "Ten Commandments for Effective Study Skills," Dec 1992. John H. Williams, "Clarifying Grade Expectations," Aug/Sep 1993. Paul Solomon and Annette Nellon, "Communicating About the Behavioral Dimensions of Grades," Feb 1996.

Reading this article make me realise that its not difficult to be good student. I just need to put where myself should be an "A" or a "C" student. Reading the criteria make me notice the aspects I always ignore in myself. I want to be an "A " student but I have some "C" character. What should I do?

alpha5

5A4: Wow..it's a good article, I also like the list given to us, you should print this and give to teacher. We can share this with our classmates.

alpha5

Yes, we should give this to our friends ...why not? sharing is caring, right? 5B

alpha5

5A3>>>>why not..I will print this. We did this to our articles before this. We have to give to teacher to be share with others.

alpha5

5A4...Al the positive attitude right? I want to respond to your question, how can you get the characteristic of A student...not easy but it come with practice and determination...we should instill this, bit by bit.

alpha5

5A1 Sometimes it is more easy to say than to do it. To be determined? It's not easy when you are surrounded by friends who can easily influenced you, not that easy. >>>5A

alpha5

5A2..do you still remember the word teacher teach in class "optimistic"??? Now you sound th opposite. You need to support and encourage our friends, not to make him feel down

alpha5

ooopppssss...don't get me wrong, fren, I just state the reality, I don't mean to give negative opinion :::))) >>>>5A

alpha5

5A3 I like this point so much :

"A" students have retentive minds and practice making retentive connections. They are able to connect past learning with the present.

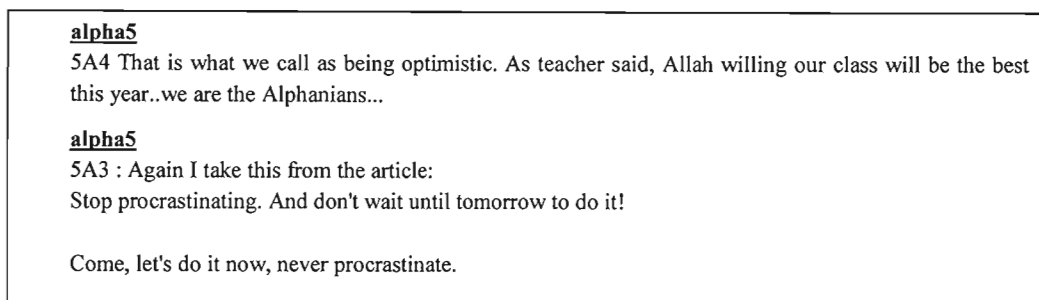
If only I can to this, I think I can easily see the connection of the topics we learned especially for add maths, bio, phy and chem. >>>5C

alpha5

5A2>>>the importance of mind map, right??? just like we did for our PAI subject.

Figure 4.7. Students' Blog Posts (Alpha 5, March 31, 2013)

Figure 4.7 Continued



The group came across this article in a website and decided to read the article together in the computer lab instead of using the articles provided in the class library. As can be seen in Figure 4.7, they discussed the article in detail and they even connected the article to their own experience, 5A2 typed, “the importance of mind map, right??? justlike we did for our PAI subject”. They could relate the article to their life as students and the topic was relevant to them. As 5A3 stated in his comment, ““A” students have retentive minds and practice making retentive connections. They are able to connect past learning with the present. If only I can to this, I think I can easily see the connection of the topics we learned especially for add maths, bio, phy and chem.” This shows that he kept referring to the content of the article, and related it to their present learning.

After reading through the comments in the post, the researcher asked them what made them be on task and 5A3 response was, “the topic is interesting and related to us” (Informal Interview). In summary, this study indicates that if the topic of discussion is interesting and relevant to the students’ interests, they could make connection to their daily lives. Their expression also became more meaningful.

In contrast, Figure 4.8 taken from the same group shows the blog posts and the interaction patterns during virtual supervision.

Imperfect Life

I have read a passage thatveeally catches my eye. I really like that passage because there are many motivational sentences that we can use it our daily life. The sentence that really catches my eyes is "life is full of imperfect things and imperfect people". It's so true!(**serabut dengar syahir menyanyi....*tutup telinga***) Nobody is perfect and nobody can do anything perfectly. Even if it seems oerfect, there is still a small flaw that can be seen if we use a microscope. This sentences actually more suitable for couples who want a longlasting relationship. Like, each couple need tolearn to accept each other's fault. That's all. -5A2-

alpha5
Yeah! There are more benefits in this story 5A3

alpha5
Al-amin, why do you think that this story have benefits?5A4

alpha5
You read or not this story?If you read this story, you must know the benefits 5A3

alpha5
I've read the story but i didn't understand this story, oj, thanks 5A4

alpha5
OKAY!no biggie ;D 5A3

alpha5
Ooooo...this story really interesting to me...next comment please!!! 5A2

alpha5
You say couples?? OiOi2...we still student, as old man say, they say we must chase our achievement first, after that go find wife and husband. Last but nit least, merry christmas ID (5A3)

Figure 4.8. Students' Blog Posts (Alpha 5, July 17, 2012)

In Figure 4.8, it shows that when they blogged virtually, they diverted from the discussion. There are parts when students did not connect to the topic such as

*"It's so true!(serabut dengar syahir menyanyi....*tutup telinga*) (interrupted by Syahir's singing... *covering my ears*) (5A2).*

This boy just described what he did and how he felt at that time regardless the relevancy to the topic discussed. The threaded discussion ended with

"Last but nit(not) least, merry christmas ID" (5A3).

This is another example of not being on task. Although generally, the group members were on task in the discussion, they had the tendency of posting irrelevant responses just for the sake of posting. When I asked them about this, their responses were,

“It’s a joke, teacher. To make our discussion more cheerful” (5A3, Informal Interview)

This was supported by another group member who said,

“We feel more relaxed teacher. It is only our group members. We just reply what they posted” (5A4, Informal interview).

Still, they were aware about the teacher’s presence as stated by the group leader,

“We know you read our blog, I already told them about this but it just happened **macam tu je**<*naturally*>” (5A1, Interview 3).

Thus, this indicates that students felt at ease when they blogged from their own places although they knew they were still monitored by the teacher. They were more relaxed and they wanted to make the discussion cheerful. Sometimes, the interaction happened naturally even though they were aware of teacher’s presence. In the observation notes, after the researcher read through all the blogs posted virtually, she jotted down,

“The students sometimes are not aware that I am reading their blog posts when they posted virtually. They did not really check what they wanted to post in their blogs. I could see a lot of typo errors that they normally would not do in their posts when they blogged in the computer lab. They also posted things that were not related to the topic. Does my presence have effect on their posts? I feel the answer is “yes” by looking at their posts” (Observation Notes, April 20, 2013)

The next section discussed the last category of FSU Online Assessment.

4.3.1.5 Contribution to the Learning Community

For this category, both supervisions were given the same average mark which was 3. In this band, the description given is “Frequently attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group; interacts freely.” Figure 4.9 shows the blog posts taken from group Alpha 4 for face-to-face supervision which contributes to the Learning Community.

FREAKY FRIDAY & CONTROL FREAK (4A4)

I like this idea, making a compare between the movie and the book. Remember our Yeeeeaaaahhh, if only that can happen, I cannot imagine. (tapi mcm best jugakkan????)

alpha4 said...

4B: How I wish I could change roles with my dad. My mum understand me and can always talk to me about any topic, but my dad..mmmm..4A2

alpha4 said...

4A: welcome back to our blog.Such a long holiday, right? As we agreed before, we will continue blogging after we spend our time doing the list of homework given by our sweet teachers .4A1

It is normal, mom understand us better than our dad.With my dad, I become a bit formal, we only talk about important things.

alpha4 said...

C>>>> IWelcome back, yes, our sweet teachers with all the homework ;(((, "I even go to KL and take my books together.I do not really enjoy the holiday because at every free time, I will do the homework.Now, it's over...what a release. Yes, I face the same situation. I can count the words I talk with my father daily.With my mum, I am more open, we are like friends. 4A3

alpha4 said...

4; first day of schooling, nice to see you girls...luckily we do not listen to our teachers nag, everybody finish the homework..good alphanians.

Me and my dad is different, we are close, we always talk about so many things.My dad love asking us about our activities.Just that there are time when I think he do not understand our needs and desires as teenage. 4A4

Figure 4.9. Students' Blog Posts (Alpha 4, May 27, 2013)

Figure 4.9 shows that the students frequently attempts to direct the discussion as mentioned by 4A4, “I like this idea, making a compare between the movie and the

book” which indicates that the discussion would be about the comparison between a movie and a book. 4A1 also attempted to get the attention of the group members by reminding them of what they were supposed to do:

“welcome back to our blog. Such a long holiday, right? As we agreed before, we will continue blogging after we spend our time doing the list of homework given by our sweet teachers.”

This shows that the group knew the direction of their discussion and the task that they had to complete. The group members also present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group. 4A2 responded to the topic exchanging roles with her mother as,

“How I wish I could change roles with my dad. My mum understand me and can always talk to me about any topic, but my dad..mmmm.”

This was responded by 4A1 by stating,

“It is normal, mom understand us better than our dad. With my dad, become a bit formal, we only talk about important things.”

The conversation continued when 4A3 contributed her ideas,

“Yes, I face the same situation. I can count the words I talk with my father daily. With my mum, I am more open, we are like friends.”

The flow of the conversation shows that the group members contributed to their blog discussion by providing relevant details. In addition, Figure 4.9 also indicates that the students interacted freely with their group members. The expression used by student 4A4, “Yeeeeaaaahhh, if only that can happen, I cannot imagine. (**tapi mcm best jugakkan????**)<It wil be good too, right?>”, it shows that she was comfortable writing. She did not really concern about the formality in writing to express her view

regarding the text read. The use of the first language was spontaneous. Her response when asked about this,

“I like the movie, teacher. I like the novel too. Something that I can share with my friends. **Maksud tak sampai kalau** I use English. **Puas hati dapat express in BM.** This is our blog **kan?** Teacher **kata kita kena anggap blog tu macam diary kita,** express what you want to express. **Rasanya** still related dengan story line **tu kan?**” (4A4, Informal Interview)

<“I like the movie, teacher. I like the novel too. It is something that I can share with my friends. I just cannot make the meaning come across. I feel satisfied when I express it in Bahasa Melayu. This is our blog, right? You said we need to assume the blog as our diary. Express what we want to express. I think it is still related to the story, right?”>

This rather contradicted with what the researcher wrote down in her observational notes,

“During face-to-face, all groups were very particular about their posts. They kept asking each other and they even asked me to make sure what they drafted were grammatically correct before they posted it. I cannot monitor them directly and be there to help them when they blogged from their own places. And I noticed, the use of BM words here and there in their posts during virtual supervision” (Observational Notes, July, 2012)

Although the students used English to write their blog entries actually they still felt more comfortable to use their L1 to express their thoughts and opinions. Figure 4.10 shows the group blog posts during virtual supervision.

Parents Play Snoop... 4A4

This is another interesting article. We have discussed this in class. The article suggests that parents should play snoop on their children as to control their kids. I beg to differ....I don't agree with this.

alpha4 said...

I also like this article,remember what teacher say during discussion? Parents need to know because they want to monitor what the kids do. I agree with you, I will not want my parents to know ALL about my secrets. 4A2

alpha4 said...

Interesting. Parents google our name? Ouch...this is a good idea for our parents (luckily my parents do not read English paper) 4A1

alpha4 said...

B>>>I am safe, even my if my parents know how to google. Why?>>Because I never use my real name :)) 4A3

alpha4 said...

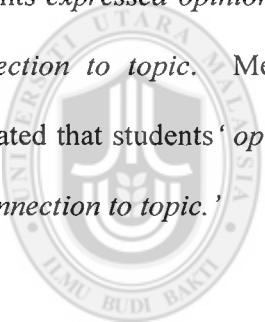
A: You are good. I never thought of this. I can do like this too. 4A1

Figure 4.10. Students' Blog Posts (Alpha 4, February 27, 2013)

In figure 4.10 they were discussing about "Parents Play Snoop". The students showed that she was not afraid to disagree with the ideas written in the article, "*I beg to differ....I don't agree with this*" (4A4). The use of emoticons indicated that they felt as ease writing in their blog, "*I am safe, even if my parents know how to google. Why? Because I never use my real name :))*" (4A3)

In short, there were frequent attempts by the students to direct their discussion and to present relevant viewpoints to be considered by group members in both types of supervisions such as "*welcome back to our blog. Such a long holiday, right?*" (4A3, face-to-face supervision) and "*I also like this article, remember what teacher say during discussion?*" (4A2, virtual supervision) The questions posted served as direction to the other group members to proceed with their discussion.

In summary, the students' blog posts for both face-to-face and virtual supervisions show that they collaborated with their group members by using English. Despite their complaints of feeling uncomfortable using English in their blogs, the students managed their discussion well although there were time when they used Bahasa Melayu especially during virtual supervision. Most of the time they were on task and if there were group members diverted from the topic, the group leader always reminded them to be back on the track. The finding showed that the students' posts fell in the same categories both during face-to-face and virtual supervision except for the category of "Expression within the Post" in which for face-to-face supervision, the average score accumulated by all five blogs was in band 4 that showed the students *expressed opinions and ideas in a clear and concise manner with obvious connection to topic.* Meanwhile, the average score for visual sessions was 3 indicated that students' *opinions and ideas were stated clearly with occasional lack of connection to topic.*



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This reflects the fact that the students were not affected by the presence of the teacher face-to-face or virtually. They still posted in their blogs consistently by responding their friends' posts in less than 24 hours and they also demonstrated good self-initiative in their blog discussion. Few grammatical and spelling errors were noted in the students' blog posts. In fact, when they were interviewed, they admitted that they checked their work first before posting in their blogs. During both supervisions, they frequently posted topics that were related to discussion content prompted further discussion of topic. They prompted each other to make sure everybody managed to contribute in their discussion. The students also expressed their opinions and ideas in a clear and concise manner with obvious connection to topic

and frequently attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group and they also interacted freely.

In the next section, the findings for Research Question 2 were discussed.

4.3.2 The Interactional Patterns of the Students' Blog Posts during Face-to-face and Virtual Supervisions

In order to find out the interactional patterns exist in the students' blog posts, the researcher used Bales Interaction Process Analysis (2002) (see 2.3.2). Bales Analysis consists of four categories: Social Emotional Area: Positive Reactions, Task Area: Attempted Answer, Task Area: Questions and Social Emotional Area: Negative Reactions. The researcher added in one more category; Diverge from the Topic Discussed which she found relevant for this study. In this section, the researcher will describe the categories accordingly.

Table 4.8 below shows the general result of the interaction patterns using Bales IPA (2002).

Table 4.8

Analysis of Blog Posts Using Bales IPA (2002)

CODE	CATEGORY	FF	V	TOTAL
SOCIAL EMOTIONAL AREA : POSITIVE REACTIONS				
1	Shows solidarity, raises others' status, gives help, reward	50	42	92
2	Shows tension release, jokes, laughs, shows satisfaction	48	66	114
3	Agrees, shows passive acceptance, understands, concurs, complies	94	102	196
TASK AREA : ATTEMPTED ANSWER				
4	Gives suggestions, direction, implying autonomy for other	20	22	42
5	Gives opinion, evaluation, repeats, analysis, express feeling, wish	42	80	122
6	Gives orientation, information, repeats, clarifies, confirms	93	93	186
6.1	Gives personal information	118	143	261
6.2	Gives topic-related information	34	41	75
6.3	Gives technical information	6	9	15
TASK AREA : QUESTIONS				
7	Asks for orientation, information, repetition, con firmation	20	24	44
7.1	Asks technical information	1	8	9
7.2	Asks for topic-related information	7	19	26
7.3	Asks for personal information	14	13	27
8	Asks for opinion, evaluation, analysis, expression of feeling	3	4	7
9	Asks for suggestion, direction, possible ways of action	5	1	6
SOCIAL EMOTIONAL AREA : NEGATIVE REACTIONS				
10	Disagrees, shows passive reaction, formality, withholds help	9	5	14
11	Shows tension, asks for help,, withdraws out of field	1	0	1
12	Shows antagonism, deflates other's status, defends or assets self	8	10	18
DIVERGE FROM THE TOPIC DISCUSSED				
13	The post does not relate to the topic			
** NO 13	<i>an addition to the original Interaction Process Analysis as added by the researcher.</i>	4	10	14
TOTAL OF CODES USED		577	692	1269

From the analysis, researcher found out that the students' blog posts included all the interactional codes as suggested by Bales (2002) but some codes were used more

frequently than others. Although the students blogged from two different settings, the frequency for the most codes used showed that their posts were applied to the same categories.

Under Social Emotional Area for Positive Reaction, from the analysis of the blog posts, the category of “*Agrees, shows passive acceptance, understands, concurs, complies*” (code 3) showed the highest frequency used by the students in both types of supervision, 94 times were coded during face-to-face sessions and 102 times in virtual sessions with the total of 196. Meanwhile the category of “*Shows solidarity, raises others’ status, gives help, reward*” (code 1) had the least frequency, 92, with 50 times coded in face-to-face supervision and 42 times in virtual supervision. The students exchanged jokes and showed tension release and laughed more during virtual supervision compared to face-to-face sessions. The students might feel the freedom to collaborate with one another without being monitored by teacher and also due to ample time they had to blog during virtual supervision.

As for Task Area: Attempted Answer, both face-to-face and virtual supervisions showed that the students gave “*personal information*” (code 6.1) and “*orientations, information, repeats, clarifies and confirms*” (code 6) most frequently and the category that was least used was “*giving technical information*” (code 6.3). Both supervisions showed the same patterns of the students’ interaction.

Next, for Task Area: Questions, both supervisions showed that the students ask “*for orientation, information, repetition and confirmation*” (code 7) more than the other codes. Code 7.2 “*asking for personal information*” was also frequently used by

them. The least frequent code used during face-to-face supervision was “*asking for technical question*” (code 7.1) while during virtual supervision was “*asking for suggestion, direction and possible ways of action*” (code 9). As a group, the students liked to get the members’ confirmation or agreement on what they discuss and they also depended on their group members to clarify any doubt they had regarding the reading materials.

The last category of Bales’ IPA (2002) is Social Emotional Area: Negative Reactions. Generally, this category was the least frequent used by all the groups in both types of supervisions. They “*disagreed and showed passive reaction*” (code 10) towards their group members and showed “*antagonism and defended themselves*” (code 12) but they did not withdraw out of the field easily, only once during face-to-face session and none in virtual. Since they chose their own group members, they supported each other during collaboration process.

The new added category to Bales IPA (2000) is code 13 *Diverge from the Topic Discussed*. For this category, it is more frequently took place during virtual compared to face-to-face sessions. This may be due to the fact that the students felt comfortable when not being surrounded by their friends and monitored by the teacher. They had the tendency of expressing ideas that were irrelevant to the topic but still by using English as the medium of interaction.

In the next section, we shall examine the categories in detail. I shall start first with the Social Emotional Area: Positive Reactions.

4.3.2.1 Social Emotional Area: Positive Reactions

The first category in Bales IPA analysis is social emotional area that covers positive reactions. The following extract illustrated the social emotional area of the blog posts. The extract was taken from group Alpha 3. The girls were discussing the difference in cultures between western and east. They related the issue to what they as teenagers expected in their lives. The girls also provided reasons for them to support their view:

“Yes I agree with that. We want to lead our life freely but our parent are controlling us all the times” (3A1)

“I agree with you dear, sometimes we just need the space for us”
(3A1)

“Be positive, do not just expect them to understand us, we also need to understand them”(3A3)



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East versus Western (3A3)

I have to say that reading English novel is not in the list of the hobby that I have. I love reading novels, but malays novels. The last English novel I read was Catch Us If You Can because it will come out in th exam.

Luckily teacher showed us the movie first, at least I know what to expect from the novel when teacher said the theme is similar. When I read the first chapter, I notice that western will always be western, they live freely, they are too open minded. What differs us from them is that we are guided by our religion on what we can do and what we cannot do. We have rules to follow,

Alpha's Team

3A2>>>

Sometimes as teenagers I always want freedom. I feel that I was controlled too much by my parents. They are too many "Don't do that and don't do this". Sometimes I feel boring. But when I watch the movie, I realize that there are some thing that I need to understand my parents more.

Alpha's Team

3A1: Yes I agree with that. We want to lead our life freely but our parent are controlling us all the times. We cannot decide for ourself. Hope our parent try to understand us too.

Alpha's Team

3A3

Be positive, do not just expect them to understand us, we also need to understand them. Difficult to do but why dont we try?

Alpha's Team

3A1>> I agree with you dear, sometimes we just need the space for us. I was like Anna sometimes. feel like holding my mum and I want her to listen to my heart. How I wish...

Alpha's Team

3A4

We laugh when we watch the movie, but I know that we have learn something important. We will never appreciate and understand someone not until we are in their shoes. Starting from now, we need to undrstand our parents' condition more, why are they controlling us? They must have the good reason, right?

Figure 4.11. Students' Blog Posts (Alpha 3, June 8, 2013)

Another extract as in Figure 4.12 taken from group Alpha 1. The girls discussed the issue of being a shopaholic. Sine the issue was related to them, they easily discussed and brought their own experiences to the discussion.

BUY ME

Assalamualaikum

*Shoppaholic!! Majority of them are women and girls!!
Everybody love shop.. That was the article is about. The article tell us about a woman who named Natalie who is easily possess with sale and also branded products. Because of she too obsesses with the branded, she used the credit card overdrawn to the maximum and ignore about the bills from the bank. The call from the threatening debt collector force her to hold a garage sale immediately to pay up the minimum amount to avoid the public humiliation. Lastly, to gain the money, her best friend help her by sell Natalie stuff on-line. They finally make it but.....she still a shoppaholic! Okay, I hope you guys enjoy reading the article!! It's very interesting especially for girls. Enjoy reading!! *^^**

alpha1

1A1

I love shopppppp!!!! This article remained me to be careful with the danger when shopping..
Fuhhhh!!! Dangerous!!
Branded vs Pirate.. I choose PIRATE!! Better to wear that than live with debts!!
Live Happily!!!:D

Alpha1

1A3

I really agree with you.. I also love shopping!! This article shows us that we should be wise when spend money!!!.. But I confuse?? Do you have credit card Aisyah?? but you only 16 years old.. hahaha :P

alpha1

1A1

erk???? hehehe. I didn't have one.... But doesn't have a credit card doesn't mean we would not have debts.. Right??? We love shop but we don't have a money, so of course we need to borrow it.....
Am I right Hazwani?? :P

alpha1

1A2

I AM A SHOPPAHOLIC TOO! HEHEHE ... BUT I ALWAYS BE CAREFUL IN BUYING SOMETHING . LOOK AT THE PRICE FIRST, WHETHER IT IS EXPENSIVE OR CHEAP, THEN YOU CAN BUY IT. ALWAYS KEEP IN MIND THAT SPENDS MONEY TOO MUCH FOR SHOPPING IS THE BAD BEHAVIOUR AND JUST WASTE OUR MONEY !

alpha1

1A3

THAT ARTICLE SOUND GOOD ..NATALIE WAS WRONG WHEN BEEN A SHOPPAHOLIC .. SHE NEED TO BUY NEEDED THINGS FIRST BEFORE BUYING WHAT HER WANT TOO .. I AM ALSO A SHOPPAHOLIC , BUT I'M NOT THE SAME LIKE NATALIE . I TRY TO BE CAREFUL WHEN BUYING THINGS . WE MUST SEE THE QUALITY OF THE PRODUCT FIRST BEFORE BUY IT . NOT ALL EXPENSIVE THINGS IS GOOD !

Figure 4.12. Students' Blog Posts (Alpha 1, June 18, 2012)

1A1's response to the topic discussed indicated how she showed positive acceptance of the topic discussed, "I love shopppppp!!!!!!" and 1A3 also complied to the issue discussed, "I really agree with you.. I also love shopping!! This article shows us that

we should be wise when spend money". The selection of the article was also agreed, "That article sound good, Natalie was wrongwhen been a shopaholic" (1A3).Both extracts indicated that the students would agree with their friends and then provide examples or elaborations to their statements. The students chose their own articles to read and that could be one of the reasons for them to have issues that related to them and something that they could easily agree with. The next category is the task area for attempted answer.

4.3.2.2 Task Area: Attempted Answer

The second category was the task area for attempted answer. Two codes, no 6,"*Gives orientation, information, repeats, clarifies and confirms*", and 6.1, "*Gives personal information*" were the two most frequently coded with the total of 186 and 261 respectively. The researcher decided to describe both because the total for both codes seemed to be more dominant than others. The following extract in Figure 4.18 illustrated code 6.1and Figure 4.13 illustrated code 6 for Task Area for attempted answer.

1A1 Devils Unleashed

This article is about some students might look innocenceand adorable but sometimes they tried to setting freethe "devils" inside them. The interesting part in this article is when the girls telling how they hide illegal stuff that they bring to school. There are many hiding places and the best hiding place is in your locker or in your socksand shoes, also on top of the speaker. One of them does not listen to the prefect. But generally, she pretends to abide by the school rules to avoid getting caught.She would "play smart" and give reasonable reasons. Lastly, I hope you all will read this article and found it is an interesting article.

^^

alpha1
1A3 Wow!!!! It is very an interesting article.. I want to try unleashed my "devils" too.. hahahahaha.. Just kidding.. I'm a good girl okayyy....)

alpha1
1A2 I think we must not be deceived by looks. It not really shows the true attitude by someone. If you want to do bad things do it '**berpada-pada**'

alpha1
1A1 :I agree with you all!!

Figure 4.13. Students' Blog Posts (Alpha 1, June 14, 2012)

Group Alpha 1 discussed the issue on “Devils Unleashed”. 1A3 just expressed her opinion regarding the text, “Wow!!!! It is very an interesting article” and 1A2 further elaborated the issue by giving her personal opinion, “I think we must not be deceived by looks. It not really shows the true attitude by someone.” Another extract is taken from group Alpha 2 illustrated how students gave orientation, repeated, clarified and confirmed in their blog discussion.

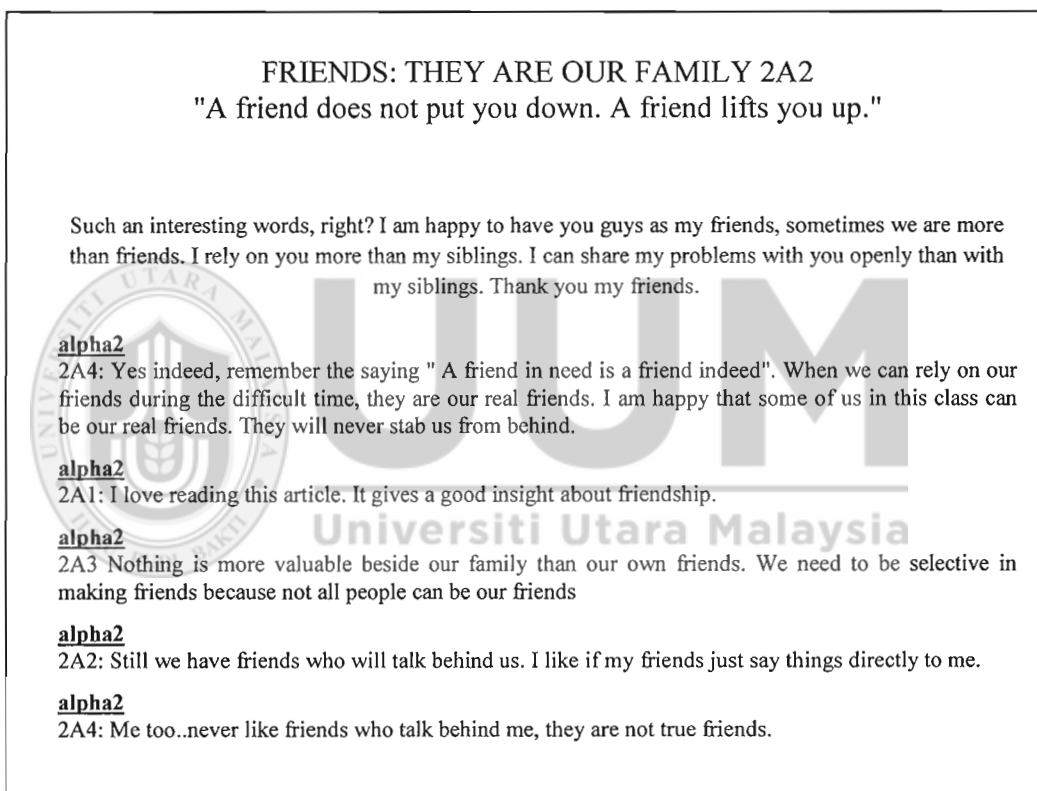


Figure 4.14. Students' Blog Posts (Alpha 2, April 3, 2013)

The extract showed 2A4 gave orientation of the issue discussed and then she clarified her statement by writing, “Yes indeed, remember the saying “A friend in need is a friend indeed””. When we can rely on our friends during the difficult time, they are our real friends” and 2A3 further confirmed and made clarification, “Nothing is more valuable beside our family than our own friends. We need to be selective in making

friends because not all people can be our friends.” Since the topics or the articles were chosen by the group members themselves, it can be the reasons for the students to easily repeat and confirm the issues discussed. The next category described was the task area for questions.

4.3.2.3 Task Area: Questions

The most coded category for Task Area for questions was no 7, “*Asks for orientation, information, repetition and confirmation*”, with the total of 44. It was recorded 20 times in face-to-face and 24 times in virtual sessions.

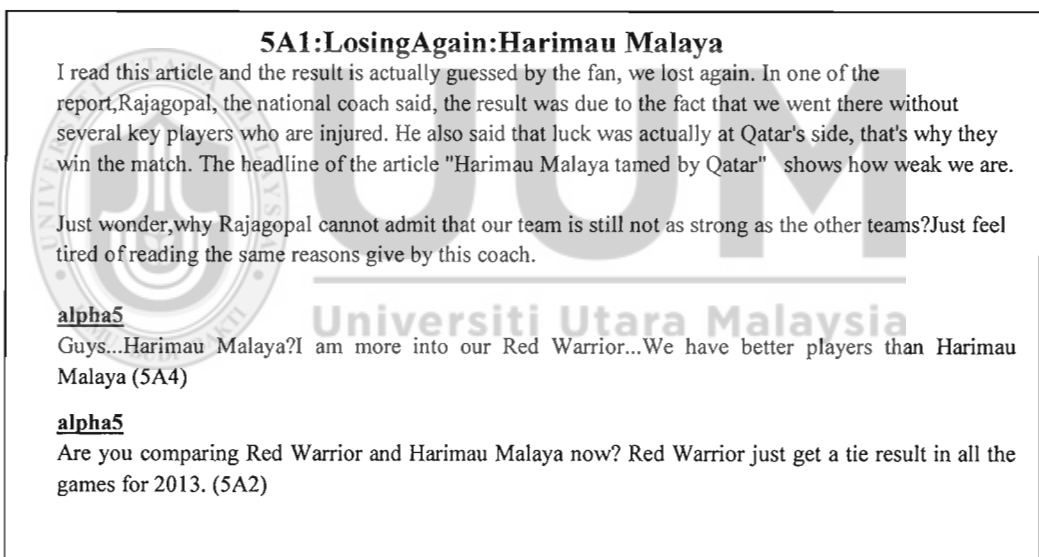


Figure 4.15. Students' Blog Posts (Alpha 5, February 10, 2013)

In Figure 4.15, 5A4 asked for confirmation by repeating the fact that was stated by 5A1, “*Guys...Harimau Malaya?...*” and 5A2 also asked for clarification and information by writing. “*Are you comparing Red Warrior and Harimau Malaya now?*” Both types of questions invited responses that would be more on repetition

and giving information. These kinds of questions kept the discussion going in the group blog.

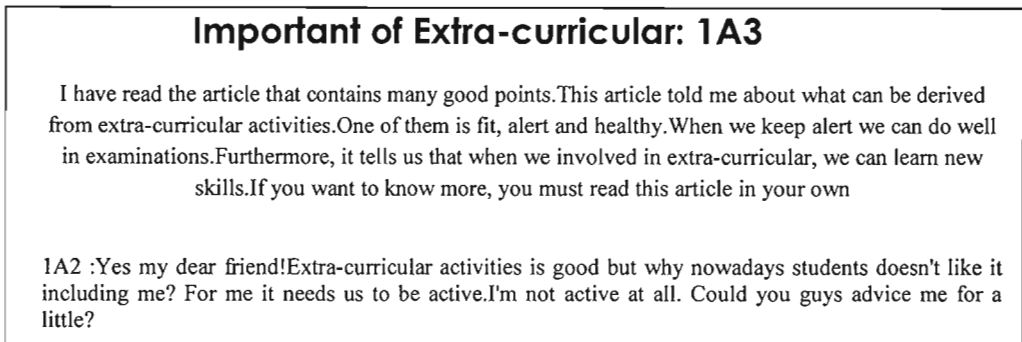


Figure 4.16. Students' Blog Posts (Alpha 1, July 27, 2012)

Figure 4.16 shows the extract taken from Alpha 1 blog posts. When 1A2 stated, “*Extra-curricular activities is good but why nowadays students doesn't like it including me?*” she actually already had the answer from the article. This was also another strategy to let the other group members to read the article in details and got the answer from it to be shared with the one who asked.

The next section will present the findings for the last category of Bales IPA (2002) which was Social Emotional Area for the Negative Reactions.

4.3.2.4 Social Emotional Area: Negative Reactions

The last category in Bales' Interaction Process Analysis is Social Emotional Area for the Negative Reactions. The frequency for code 12, “*shows antagonism, deflates other's status, defends or assets self*” was 18; 8 times for face-to-face and 10 for virtual sessions. Figure 4.17 illustrates the example of this code. They discussed an issue that was very close to them, parents and teenagers' relationship. 5A1 deflated his group member's status by posting a statement, “*Frenz, don't be too negative, they*

scold us because they want us to be better person” and he further defended his opinion by stating, “Guys, if you really read this article, you’ll realize that actually parents do not intent to hurt us...their expectation really kill us.” The student defended his view by providing reasons.

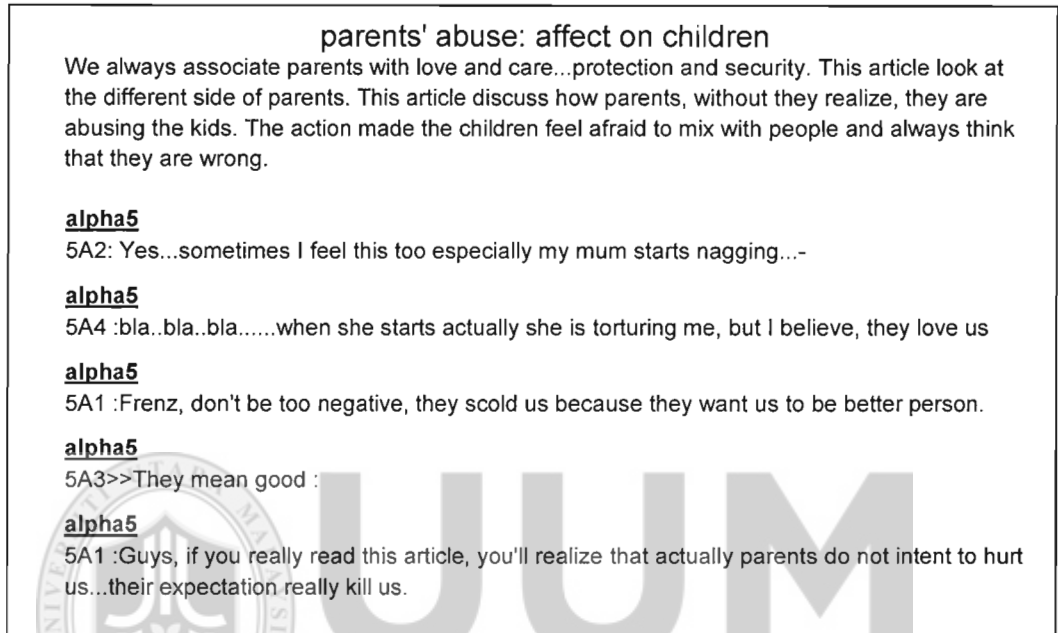


Figure 4.17. Students’ Blog Posts (Alpha 5, February 27, 2013)

4.3.2.5 Diverge from the Topic Discussed

This is another category added by the researcher after discussing with another coder. Both coders think that it is necessary to add in this category since it helped to monitor the students’ progress. Code 13 referred to “*The post does not relate to the topic*”. The frequency gained was 4 for face-to-face and 10 for virtual sessions. This brought to the total of 14. The examples were as stated below:

“Watch out for grammar mistakes next time dude” (Blog Post, Alpha 5, June 13, 2012).

“The internet connection at school really kills me”

“Hmmm couldn’t agree more. Sometimes I pity teacher, she tried things to make sure we can blog. Hope our school has better internet connection.” (Blog Post, Alpha 1, February 20, 2013).

4.3.2.6 Summary of All the Categories in Research Question 2 Using Bales IPA (2002)

In summary, Bales’ Interaction Process Analysis showed that students’ blog posts vary in categories. They asked question, attempted to answer, showed positive and negative reactions and sometimes diverged from the topics discussed. The extracts presented above illustrated the examples for the most used codes for each category. Still, all the codes in Bales IPA were used by the students in both supervisions but with different frequency. The use of all the codes indicated the students’ cooperation and collaboration in their blogs discussion. The researcher also noticed the students managed to use English in their blog discussion. Not all posts portrayed correctly construct sentences but all of the posts were comprehensible. The sentences posted communicated meaning. Thus, English teachers should consider blogs as a potential platform for students to collaborate using the targeted language.

In the next sections of 4.3.3.1 and 4.3.3.2, the profile of the most active and the least active groups were presented. The researcher described the perceptions and experiences of two selected groups, Alpha 1 and Alpha 2, which were the most active and the least active groups during the program respectively. This section depicts their views of using blogs in the extensive reading program with the aim to encourage them to collaborate with each other in their reading. Comparisons are also drawn from the analysis of their nature of blog posts, their interactional patterns in blogs, their responses during the interview and also the data from my observational notes.

4.3.3 Profiles of the Most Active Group and the Least Active Groups

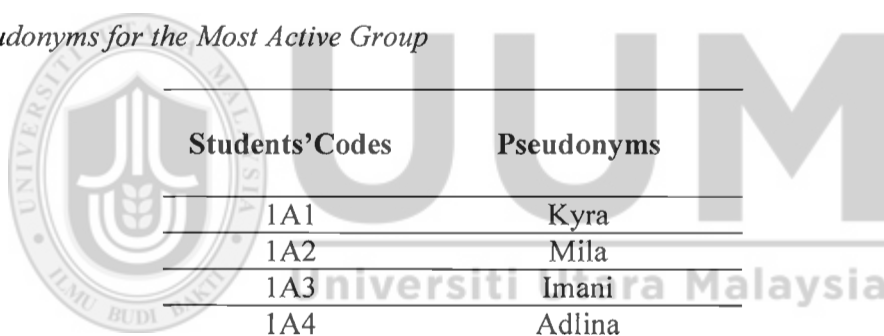
In this section, the researcher will provide the profiles of the two groups: the most active and the least active. From the five groups participated, Alpha 1 is considered the most active while alpha 2 is the least active based on the number of blog posts and the nature of their comments.

4.3.3.1 The Most Active Group

Alpha 1 consisted of 4 girls. Pseudonyms as shown in Table 4.9 were given to them to make the description clearer.

Table 4.9

Pseudonyms for the Most Active Group



Students' Codes	Pseudonyms
1A1	Kyra
1A2	Mila
1A3	Imani
1A4	Adlina

As mentioned earlier, the students chose their own group members (see 3.10) and all the four girls shared similar characteristics. They were the school prefects and the top scorers for the school examinations. They were also technology savvy. They were very interested to use technology as a learning tool. Most of the other students respected these girls because they were very discipline and always gave their best effort to make the task assigned a success. They did not have problems collaborating with each other and they believed in group work. As Kyra said in the interview:

“I feel happy when teacher said we can choose group members. First, I don’t like to work with the boys, they will always take advantage on me. With my Alpha 1 girls, I can really enjoy the program. This is also my members for my group discussion for other subjects.”

Imani also agreed with Kyra:

“Not that we don’t want to mix with others, but they are always not serious in class. **Kami dah kenal lama**<*We have known each other for years*>. It is easy for us to cooperate and to remind each other about the work.”

They were happy to be given the opportunity to choose their own group members because they were familiar with each other. This made them feel easy to cooperate with each other and remind one another of the assigned tasks.

These girls are also very competitive. During the second phase, when the other groups had started blogging earlier than their group did, their responses were as shown in the extract in Figure 4.18:



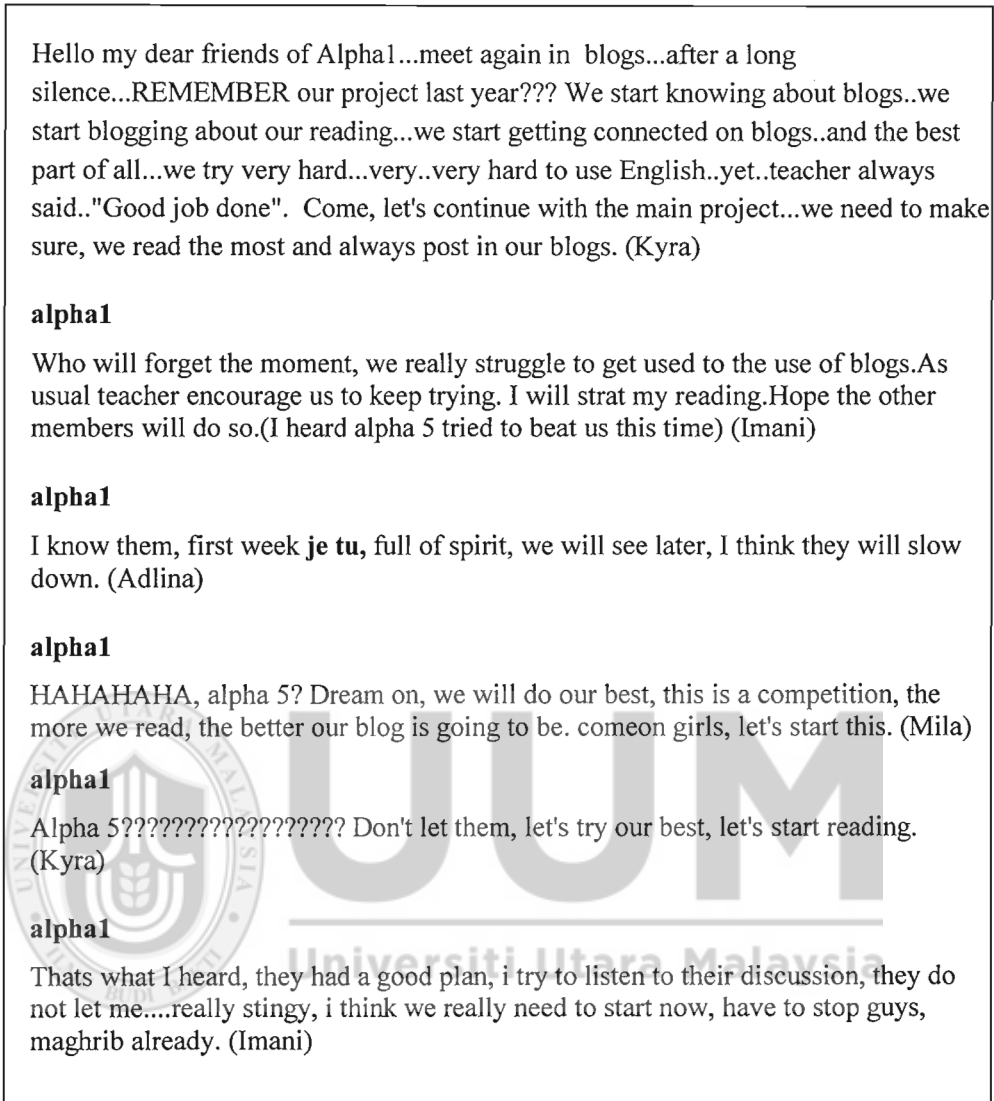


Figure 4.18. Students' Blog Posts (Alpha 1, February 7, 2013)

As the group that always the top scorers and performed the best in various fields, they kept inspiring each other to compete with the other groups. As stated by Kyra who acted as the group leader, *“Come, let's continue with the main project...we need to make sure, we read the most and always post in our blogs.”* In addition, they were conscious about the other groups, *“I heard alpha 5 tried to beat us this time”* (Imani).They also kept encouraging each other to carry out the task. Imani also wrote in the blog, *“I will start my reading. Hope the other members will do so.”* Her

view was supported by Mila, “Come on girls, let’s start this,” and also Kyra who wrote, “Don’t let them, let's try our best, let's start reading.”

Throughout the program, this group performance is shown in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10

Alpha 1 Blog Posts

ALPHA 1	Face-to-face Sessions	Virtual Sessions	TOTAL
PHASE 1	71	63	134
PHASE 2	58	70	128
TOTAL	129	133	262

During Phase 1, they posted more during face-to-face sessions compared to virtual sessions. Adlina said:

“At that time we were not busy. We really did our best during the class sessions. We helped each other. When we see the other groups still have difficulty to read the article and keep laughing during the activity, we know we can be the best group. We feel comfortable having you around to help us.” (Interview)

Since these girls were competent in English, they did not face any major problem reading, understanding and discussing the articles. They felt confidence to be the best group. This group appreciated the teacher’s presence when they were blogging but not when they were discussing the articles, According to Imani,

“Comfortable? Hahaha, sometimes feeling okay to have you to help us especially to tell us the meaning of words but there are time when we cannot do our work when you are around. Just feel shy because we are using more BM than English” (Imani).

Although these girls were competent in the second language, they still preferred to use their mother tongue during the face-to-face discussion.

During phase 2, this group participated more during virtual sessions than face-to-face sessions. The two group members, Kyra and Adlina were active in co-curricular activities and also held posts as school prefects. They had to leave the class earlier for several times. As a result, most of the entries and responses were done at home.

“I feel guilty with my group members. I don’t know, **kebetulan**<*it is just coincidence*>. I was called for a meeting during English class. And that happened several times. We discussed this in our group and we decided that we will complete blogging at home. We don’t want our team to be left behind. I am the leader of this group, I will make sure the group do well.” (Kyra, Interview)

Although she was busy, Kyra was committed to the task assigned for this program. She was also committed and found ways to solve problems faced. Alpha 1 was the group who started with “paper blog” (see 4.3.4 (iii Slow Internet Access p 200)).

For FSU online assessment, group Alpha 1 scored excellent grade which the average of 4 marks for two categories which are Promptness and Initiatives and Expression within the Post. They gained the same score for both supervisions, face-to-face and virtual. For Promptness and Initiative, the description in band 4 is consistently responds to the postings in less than 24 hours and demonstrates good self-initiative. The group members always made sure that they were online at approximately the same time to read their friends’ posts as well as to respond. According to Mila,

“We are lucky to have 1A1 as our group leader. She always reminds us about our blog. She always challenges us to beat the other groups. She will call or text us to make sure we are aware of our time to go online” (Interview).

Meanwhile, Kyra as the group leader said,

“I trust my group members. I know them for so long but as the group leader, I have to play my role. I need to make sure we do our things on time. We have a lot of other subjects to study. If one member does not cooperate in this blog, the fun of being in the group is not there anymore.”

This shows that the bond existed among the group members enabled them to cooperate well and build up the sense of trustworthiness. Furthermore, Kyra's leadership qualities helped to put the group on task most of the time.


Another category of FSU online assessment that this group scored the average of 4 was Expression within the Post which describes as "expresses opinions and ideas in a clear and concise manner with obvious connection to the topic". The members of Alpha 1 were always on task when they were blogging, regardless of the teacher's presence. This is an excerpt as shown in Figure 4.19 taken from their blog during virtual supervision.



Internet Safety for Children & Teens – What Parents' Should Know

<http://childdevelopmentinfo.com/kids-media/children-teens-web-internet-safety.shtml>

A very interesting article found on this website. This is only the intro. Just read the line that I have bold. This shows that parents should know about internet. This is generation Y. Parents should expose themselves as to catch up with this new generation We are the generation, right? It is more interesting because this article also look at Reasons Why the Internet Can Be Dangerous for Children and Teens and What to Do If Your Child Runs Into Trouble Online

Posted by alpha1 at 23:48 

alpha1 14 February 2013 23:51

Such an interesting topic. I have read this topic. If you notice, in our previous discussion we discuss about the dangers of internet. I think the issue is the same. (Imani)

alpha1 14 February 2013 23:53

A1A: Yes, I noticed that. Just that this article is more detail. And I think our parent should read this article so that they can monitor us (OMG...am I really give this suggestion :::::))))-(Mila)

alpha1 14 February 2013 23:54

HAHAHAHHAAAA...I am impressed with your suggestion. (Imani)

alpha1 14 February 2013 23:55

I don't believe myself too ;) (Kyra)

alpha1 15 February 2013 00:16

(Adlina)>>>>>>>>>>>>>>> Indeed I am impressed with your suggestion. After I read the article, I realised why should our parents read it. The problems that they may face:

1. My parents know English very little. (I have to translate this to BM...Can Google Translate help me here???)
2. They have never use computer. (My mum is a housewife and my father is a labour)
3. I will never tell my password to them if they know to use computer. (hulalalaaaa.....)

alpha1 15 February 2013 00:19

I agree with you:

1. Yes..my parents too know only little English.
2. Just like you...they never use computers, not even fb
3. Password? It's a NEVVVEEERRR EVEERRRRR :) (Imani)

Figure 4.19. Students' Blog Posts (Alpha 1, February 15, 2013)

The extract showed that Alpha 1 was on task although it was virtual supervision.

The group scored the average of 3 which was described as a good grade for Delivery of Post, Relevance of Post and Contribution to the Learning Community. Although they were the top scorers in school examinations, they were a bit clumsy in their posts. A few grammatical errors and spelling errors are noted in the posts. When asked about this, their responses were:

“When we draft, our posts are better but when we just type in what we thought at that time that was when we did a lot of errors” (Kyra, Interview)

“It’s just the typo” (Adlina, Interview)

“Sometimes, we did not notice that because we are more into the discussion of the issues raised” (Imani, Interview)

Their posts are frequently related to the discussion content and prompt further discussion of the topic. They kept asking questions and asking for their group members’ opinion regarding the issues raised. In their posts, the group members frequently attempts to direct the discussion and present the viewpoints for consideration by group and always interact freely. They kept reminding each other as not to go off task:

“>>>>guuuyyyss...back to our discussion about the article, I think we should create a post about the advantages of using blogs. We can add more explanation there. What say you?” (Kyra, Blog Post, February 25, 2013)

Generally, group Alpha 1 viewed blogging as an opportunity for them to improve their English, to collaborate with their friends by sharing reading articles as well as discussing the issued in the articles. They saw their experience to use blogs for their extensive reading classes as a wonderful learning experience. Kyra said, *“I learn to be a good leader. I become closer to my group members because we still keep in contact with each other after school hours.”* Imani also said, *“the best part is that we*

are using English in our blog...just unbelievable” (Interview). Alpha 1 members preferred face-to-face discussion because they could see their friends’ reaction including their non-verbal response. They felt close to each other because they were doing this as a group project and everybody had their roles to play to make sure the members benefit from the program.

In conclusion, these girls were highly proficient in English but still opted to use their mother tongue during face-to-face discussion, highly motivated to be in the program and highly committed to the assigned tasks. They were also competitive and preferred to work with the members they were familiarized with to enable them to collaborate well. Finally, Alpha 1 was very competitive and goal-oriented.

4.3.3.2 Profile of the Least Active Group

It was a coincident. The researcher did not plan to study the differences exist between gender in using blogs in teaching and learning process but the least active group was a group consisted of boys. Alpha 2 consisted of 4 boys. Pseudonyms as shown in Table 4.11 were given to them to make the description clearer.

Table 4.11

Pseudonyms for the Least Active Group

Students’Codes	Pseudonyms
2A1	Adib
2A2	Aqil
2A3	Faris
2A4	Darween

As they chose their own group members and all the four boys felt comfortable to work with each other. The boys had the average of B grade for their English in Malaysian public examination, PMR. Like Alpha 1, Alpha 2 members were also technology savvy. They were active in sports and are considered “popular” among the girls in the school. Initially, they were eager with the use of technology in the teaching and learning process as expressed by them:

“This will be interesting. We are not familiar with blogs but I guess it is just like facebook, WeChat and Whassapp. Very interesting” (Aqil, Interview).

“We can design our own blog, right? That’s the best. This program will be great” (Darween, Interview).

Table 4.12 shows the number of blog posts sent by this group.

Table 4.12

Alpha 2 Total Blog Posts

ALPHA 2	Face-to-face Sessions	Virtual Sessions	TOTAL
PHASE 1	16	35	51
PHASE 2	78	24	102
TOTAL	94	59	153

After a month, only 3 posts and comments were made during face-to-face supervision and 25 posts and comments were made during virtual supervision. Only after the program started, the boys realized that the use of English was mandatory and they needed to understand the chosen texts fast in order to discuss among the group members. They started to face the problems since this group of boys was too conscious of what other students might say to them. All of them were well-known among the female students in that school as they were active in sports and also good looking. Faris even said:

“**Kalau semua tingkatan 4** <If the other students from the other classes> can read our blog and if the whole school can read our blogs, that means trouble. Gosh...**memang habis la kantoi...memang kena gelaklah**<that’s it...they will laugh at us>. Sure...” (Interview).

Adib agreed with his statement. According to him:

“**Habis reputasi kita...hancur...**the girls sure **gelak sakan la** <There goes our reputation...done...the girls surely laugh at us>. This is like we are killing ourselves” (Interview).

They did not have problems collaborating with each other and they also believed in group work. Their main problem was to post the entries in their blog. They were so afraid to make any grammar or structural errors and they felt very uncomfortable with the ideas that the blog could be accessed by the other students from the other classes. They were afraid that others would know that they were not good in English. When the researcher monitored them in the computer lab, they were just like the other groups, discussing the article, copying down the expressions they liked and drawing the mind map of the issues raised by the writer. The researcher could see them collaborating well. When it was time to post in their blog, nobody was willing to start blogging. They kept asking one another to start and for the first 2 weeks, the researcher managed to get 3 entries in their blog. In their exercise books, the researcher could see the points jotted down and the drafts they made. When the researcher asked the group leader, 2A1, he said:

“We did the task. We read, we discussed but we just could not blog. **Takutlah**<Feeling afraid> teacher, as if we are telling others **yang kami tak pandai English. Boleh tak kita guna journal macam dulu? Teacher dah lah baca**” <We feel afraid to blog. It is as if we are telling others that we are not excellent in English. Can we just use journal like before. Only you can read it>” (Interview)

Surprisingly, during virtual supervision, they came out with 25 posts and comments.

When asked about this, their responses were:

“Nobody is watching me at home. I just write in the blog because we used nickname. Only our group members and you know who is who. **I dah**<I have>encourage my group members, **susah jugak**<rather difficult> teacher, **kami buat je tapi sebenarnya**<we just did it but actually>, still **rasa malu dengan budak-budak kelas lain**<feel embarrassed with the students from the other classes>” (Adib, Interview)

“In class others are looking at us, **dia orang tengok ke**<are they>? I just don’t feel comfortable” (Aqil, Interview)

“Teacher...you are around. Teacher **macam tengah pantau kesalahan kami**<I feel like you are spotting the errors we made>” (Faris, Interview)

“At home, I have **cukup masa**<ample time>. ask my sister can correct my sentence before I post it” (Darween, Interview).

Looking at the analysis by using CSU online assessment, during face-to-face supervision, Group Alpha 2 shared the same criterion as Group Alpha 1. Although they started late posting the entries and comments in their blog, in the second phase of the study, they managed to post 106 entries and comments. They were also on task and always responded to their friends within 24 hours. So, for the two categories in Fleming analysis, Promptness and Initiatives and also Relevance of Posts, Alpha 2 managed to get into the excellent band with the average of band 4.

Adib, the group leader claimed that:

“It’s not easy to manage this group. We are friends but **nak pujuk dia orang tulis dalam blog memang satu benda susah**<to persuade them to write in blogs is not an easy task>. At one point...they did not talk to me, they think I **terlampau mendesak**<push them too much>. Then we came back again as a team. I told them, **memang kena terima hakikat, English kita orang tak sebagus group lain**<we have to accept the fact that our English is not good compared to others in our class> Just try” (Interview)

When Adib expressed this, Faris quickly said:

“Adib **memang sabar**<is really patient with us>. **Dia yang tak putus-putus pujuk kita orang**<He keeps persuading us>to blog. **Dia buat kami faham apa faedah yang kami akandapat**<He made us see the benefits we can gain through this activity>. **Kami sibuk fikir apa orang akan cakap pada kami**<We were just thinking of what others would say about us>We had a discussion. We asked for our friends’ help to edit our work before we

post it. **Kami kena usaha**<We need to put the effort to improve our English>” (Interview)

The role of a leader is very significant and Adib played his role well. Although they used to group together in other activities, their lack of language competency became a barrier for them to be active bloggers since they did not want their weaknesses known by others especially the other classes.

For the other three categories, Delivery of Post, Expression within Post and Contribution to the Learning Community, Alpha 2 scored the average of band 3 which is good. The following extract in Figure 4.20 indicated that their posts still have few grammatical errors and also spelling errors such as:

“I think reading should be made more interesting so that it can attracts more student to read. We should use our knowledge in technology to make it as interesting as watching television and playing games.For example, make games animation using proper dialogue or create English quiz in today's favourite game” (2A2, Blog Post, Alpha 2, April 18, 2012)

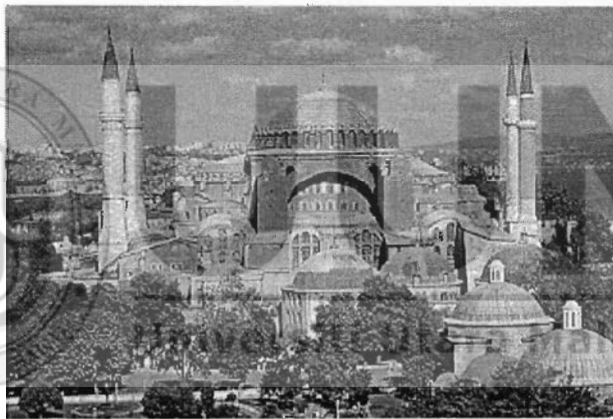
“Reading are sometimes will be more good if the school can organized a competition that can encourage the student to reads a lot more books that will get them a special reward and also can help them to improved their essay and grammars” (2A3, Blog Post, Alpha 2, April 18, 2012)

The group members also gave opinions and ideas that are stated clearly with occasional lack of connection to the topic. According to 2A4, “*this happens normally during virtual supervision. We are just carried away by the discussion.*”

A world of wonders



The Great Wall Of China, China



Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, Turkey

A World Of Wonders

I had read an article about the world of wonder in Star and I found that it was very interesting and had really aspired me. This article tells about a boy who has a really deep interest in the world wonders and loves to gather all the pictures of the world wonders from the tin of Milo powder.

One of the part in this article that I found really interesting is when the boy told about how he start to have interest in this wonders. It happened when he was about six and seven years old in the late 70s. He saw a poster about the world of wonder and started to get excited about it. I also get to know a few wonders in the world by reading this article such as Niagara Falls and the Great wall of China. It did have increase my knowledge about the world of wonder. In my opinion, that what makes it interesting.

Figure 4.20. Students' Blog Posts (Alpha 2, June 13, 2012)

Figure 4.20 Continued

alpha2
AQIL :FIRST COMMENT ~ HAHahaha

alpha2
FARIS: MILO POWDER??

alpha2
AQIL :MILO?? BUT I LIKE TO DRINK HORLICK
HOHOHOHO ~(-_-)~

Alpha2
ADIB: It quite such a good article for me.... Because the article told us that we should never easily to give up to achieve our interest deep in our heart and try to accomplished no matter how much effort that we had to do.

alpha2
FARIS: MILO POWDER IS SUCH A MAGIC POWDER THAT YOU CAN DRINK

alpha2
AQIL :I HOPE THE BOY CAN EXPLORE MORE WONDERFULL PLACES

alpha2
AQIL :THE ABOVE COMMENT IS FROM ME
THANK YOU ;)

alpha2
DARWEEN: To me,it was very interesting because I have same hobbies like him but he knows more about the wonder in world than I. I will take him as my idol.

alpha2
ADIB: Quit joking around. be more serious, guys.

alpha2
DARWEEN: It quite such a good article for me.... Because the article told us that we should never easily to give up to achieve our interest deep in our heart and try to accomplished no matter how much effort that we had to do.
You're spamming my sentences so quit doing that dude!
As a 16 years old boy. I found this article was really interesting. This article have give us a lot of moral values like "Never to give up" and "Where there is a Will, There would be always have a way" so my advice to all the people that have read this article, do not easily giving up to what we do in everdays live or in the future.

alpha5
AQIL :I from Alpha 5 and I do not understand with all your comment because it did not have any connection with an article above except HFZ.

OK back to article, I have read article above and it seem like it is interesting article because that boy has such a good dream which need many patient because he must gather tin of milo powder to get such beautiful picture. Besides, it seem like this article give us some information about some interesting and beautiful place to us.

PS: fix my language. XD

The extract in Figure 4.20 showed the example of how these boys could easily astray from the topic. Adib as the team leader put the effort to pull back the group members on task, “*Quit joking around. be more serious, guys.*”

Frequently, the group blog posts showed that there were attempts made to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group members. They did not merely agree with what the other group members' response but they also tried to direct the discussion as what Aqil did in Figure 4.21. He tried to rationalize with the group members when he wrote, " *I have give you enough time to read and understand the story, I think it is also suitable for us, why not?*". The extract showed his effort succeeded to get their attention to continue discussing the article.

We Will Plan Big Things >> Aqil

I go through this story. It is a bit long but you will never regret if you read this. The short story is titled " We Will Plan Big Things". You can d it online on <http://killauthor.com/issuefifteen/mary-stone/>

The writer is Mary Stone.

The story describe about a relationship between 2 women (no name given). They are too happ[y] to be in each other hands. They realized that all these time, they were both too busy with their boyfriends until they rarely spending time together.They also realized that most of the time, their boyfriends make decisions for them untill they cannot make even a simple decision on their own. Finally the two women know that whatever happen, their friendship will never end and they have each other to rely on. They started to plan their future together.

Read this. I think the girls in our class should read this, especially those girls who have boyfriends :))

alpha2
I think you read a wrong story...this is for girls...aloooo (Faris)

alpha2
Ahaks..ahaks..ahaks....are you sure this is for us? (Darween)

alpha2
I have give you enough time to read and understand the story, I think it is also suitable for us, why not? (Aqil)

alpha2
May be this helps us to understand about girls better.The question is, are men controlling their girls too much when we are in a relationship?(Adib)

alpha2Ahaks...so, we still discuss this, right? Okey...If I have a girlfriend(do I have one?..ahaks..) I will not control her, I will let her do what I like but she must respect me (owwhh) (Faris)

Figure 4.21. Students' Blog Posts (Alpha 2, February 10, 2013)

The students also interacted freely with their group members. Generally, at the initial stage of this programme, Alpha 2 was afraid to show their poor writing ability to

their friends, feeling afraid to be laughed at. It was evident that, through the group support, with a highly motivated leader, the group gradually felt comfortable blogging, even during face-to-face sessions. During Phase 1 of the study, they felt that they were being observed by the teacher as well as their classmates. This hindered them from sending any entry to their blog. When they were in Phase 2 of the study, they managed to post entries and comments during in-class sessions. They managed to overcome the feeling of embarrassment to be laughed at because all students in their class are using English their blogs. Like the other groups, during in-class discussion, they used their first language, Bahasa Melayu to discuss the articles read and they felt comfortable with it.

The members of Alpha 2 felt insecure to post in their blog because they thought the other students would laugh at what they would write. The group consisted of 4 boys who were talkative and active but they were too self-conscious about what people might say about them. They felt comfortable if only the teacher commented on their posts. They knew that they were lacking in terms of language ability compared to the other groups. It was not a problem for them if the other groups from their class read their blog, what matters to them was the fact that their blog could be accessed by the other classes,

“Teacher, the girls from the other classes sure **gelak baca blog kami. Hilang macho macam ni teacher, duk kelas pandai, English ke laut**<laugh at our blog. *We were in a good class but our English is poor*>” (Faris, Interview).

The group members were afraid to be laughed at if the other students read their blog. To solve their problem, they asked their classmates to check their sentences before posting them. During in-class discussion, they felt disturbed by teacher’s presence

because they felt that the teacher was monitoring them and tried to find fault in their posts. In addition, they had very low self confidence and kept forcing others especially Adib who acted as their group leader to initiate the group blogs. Their low self-esteem also made them reluctant to let others reading their blogs.

In summary, the findings from FSU online assessment analysis, researcher's observation notes and students' responses during the interview sessions showed that students responded differently to the use of blogs in their second language learning. Most of them needed the prompts and needed to be initiated by others in order to participate in the blogs. Their group cooperation enabled them to respond to their friends' posts in less than 24 hours in both supervision setting. The students were also conscious about their blog posts and they tended to check on their sentences before posting them in their blogs. The group leaders as well as the other group members kept reminding each other to discuss the reading materials they had chosen, thus making most of their posts relevance to the topics. Still, for virtual supervision, there were times when the students sent posts that were off topic. The students also felt comfortable to use their blogs as platforms for them to collaborate with each other but most of them would prefer to have only their classmates as the audience, not the other classes because they were not confident of their language competencies and they were afraid of being laughed at.

4.3.4 Challenges in Blogging

For face-to-face sessions, the researcher's role as the teacher cum researcher involved jotting down the lesson progress based on her observations on the students during teaching and learning sessions. For virtual supervision, her observations were

based on students' blog posts and the feedback given from the oral interview. The interview sessions were carried out 3 times; 2 weeks after Phase 1, at the end of Phase 1 and at the end of Phase 2.

The part of this discussion evolved around the themes emerged from my observation during face-to face supervision and also from the interview data.

i. Use of L1

For Phase 1 and Phase 2, I noticed that in-class discussions were carried out in Bahasa Melayu and Kelantanese dialect. When they were asked to present their group reading materials to the rest of the class, they used English but during question and answer session, again, they ended up using their mother tongue. In one of her observational notes during Phase 1, the researcher wrote down:

“The students sat according to their groups and discussed the article taken from the class library. Throughout the discussion, they were using Kelantanese dialect. I tried to encourage them to use English, their responses were they felt shy and they did not really understand what their friends wanted to convey. Then, the students posted in their own respective group blogs” (Observation Notes, April 4, 2012)

Her observational notes during Phase 2 were:

“During in-class discussion, all groups except for Alpha 1 still preferred to use their mother tongue. When I walked near the group, I noticed the group became quiet and they just kept looking at each other and smiled. When I moved away from their group, they continued with their discussion. Alpha 1 was using a mixture of English and Bahasa Melayu for their discussion”(Observation Notes, March 15, 2013)

This was parallel to their responses during the interview:

“My group members feel more comfortable to use Kelantanese dialect. **Faham artikel lebih cepat**<*We can understand the article fast*> and the

other group members **pun senang nak faham**<*also easy to understand the discussion*>”(1A1, Interview 2)

“Hard to get the cooperation from my group members. Although we use Bahasa Melayu in our class discussion, we manage to understand the texts well and the meaning is easily communicated”(5A3, informal Interview).

Their aim was to read the article and to get the gist of the meaning fast so that they could start blogging. This was supported by 2A1 when he said, “*The same problem as the other groups. We tried to use English but it ended up laughing*” (Interview 2). The same problem was shared by 5A1 “*Even during in-class discussion, we use Bahasa Melayu*” (Interview 2).

The data showed that the students were reluctant to use English during face-to-face discussion although they used English for their collaboration in blogs. The use of blogs as a platform for them to use English to interact with each other should be well manipulated by teachers.

ii. *Shyness and Lack of Confidence in Using English*

This indicated that they were not confident with their language ability and they felt fear of being laughed at. This made them feel uncomfortable to blog. Still, as stated by A2A, they tried to find ways in order to make sure their posts would not make others laugh at them such as editing their sentences first. This was another reason for them not to have enough time to post in their blogs.

The students felt comfortable to have their friends reading their posts but there were students who were worried that others might highlight the grammar errors they might

have in their posts and they were uneasy with the fact that the other students from the other classes could assess their blogs.

“I like teacher to read my post and also my group member...ok...no problem...they know me but not other class. We are Alpha class, but our English not that good. Sure teacher...sure...they will laugh at me” (2A1, Interview 1)

His view was supported by another group leader, “*Teacher, just our class okay, not Beta or Gamma*”(5A1, Interview 1). They liked blogging but the use of English made them too careful about their posts, “*Teacher, I like blog but feel shy la. I try but sometimes fail to post in my blog. Too careful kot*” (5A1, Interview 1) and the response given by 4A1, “*Okay, feel a bit shy la, but okay...I can practice to use English. Let them la. I know my friends will not laugh, but I just don’t want them to look down at us, but teacher, kami akan buat jugak<we will continue blogging>*” (4A1, Interview 1). Group Alpha 4 did not want others to look down at them.

As for group Alpha 1, they were willing to share their blog with others and they do concern about what other students might say about their language competency. 1A1 said,

“I feel okay, teacher, better if you check our sentence before we post, **rasa yakin sikit.<feel more confident>**. It’s okay for us if other students want to read our blog”(Interview 2).

The students just wanted to make sure that what they posted in their blogs would not embarrass them.

Instead of feeling shy and not confident, the students were rather positive as they stated that they would still blog. This was also supported by others,

“...too shy, but teacher we try our best, we will post more” (2A1, Interview 1)

“I feel more free to write when I know only you read, teacher. We think a lot about our grammar” (2A1, Interview 1).

“**Susah jugak**<*Rather difficult*> teacher, my group **memang**<*really*> conscious about the outside readers.**Memang nampak**<*We can see the effects of blogging*> effect **dia blog ni**. We read more and we use English more, **tapi malu tu tetap adalah**<*but we still feel shy*> because people know we are not good in English although we are Alphanians” (2A1, Interview 2)

The students were conscious that others might laugh at their grammar mistakes, thus, they felt more comfortable if the teacher was the only one could read their group blog.

iii. *Reluctant Group Members*

In relation to shyness and lack of confidence in using English, some students were reluctant to post in blogs. One of the reasons was that some members liked to pin point others' grammar mistakes by posting expressions that might disturb other group members such shown in the excerpt in Figure 4.22, taken from Alpha 5 blog post.

5A3 :You guys ! OH MY ENGLISH -_- [Farique Kompius]

5A1: Farique, we make mistakes and we learn it. As Einstein say, people who never make mistakes, will never make a new thing.
~ GARFIELD ~

Figure 4.22 Students' Blog Post (Alpha 5, June 2012)

The group leader played his role well by giving a positive response to 5A3. During the interview, the group leader mentioned that,

“And...my group members sometimes refused to post in our blog because there is somebody in my group who likes to pin point grammar errors written by the other members” (5A1, Interview 3)

“The boyslain sikit<are different> teacher. We enjoy the program. Something new to us but to read and understand the text especially during in-class sessions **tumegang tensioning la**<is really tensioning>. And we have our ego tu. **Tak suka group member duk**<We do not like the group members to> highlight grammar errors **dalam**<in> blog” (5A1, Interview 2).

The problem of reluctant group members were also faced by Alpha 2,

“Some of my group members **macam tak mahu**<are reluctant to> participate in blogs. Even during in-class discussion, they prefer to use Bahasa Melayu. **Memang I kena** <I really have> to monitor them and encourage them to join in the blog discussion. If not, **orang yang sama akan diskus**<the same members will be in the discussion>” (2A1, Interview 3).

In this situation too, the role of group leader is important to make sure everybody participated in the blogging activities.

iv. *Freedom of Sharing*

Group Alpha 5 viewed blogging as a fun activity as they can share their reading activities with others. “*We like it, teacher. We can share our reading and nobody care whether the grammar we use is correct or wrong. We just write and discuss*” (5A1, Interview 1)

Most groups felt more comfortable if only their blogs could be accessed by their classmates. After telling them the advantages of having others to read their posts such as making them more confident to use the second language and they could be the ambassadors to promote reading among their peers as well as they could show

the others that the opportunity to use English was vast as long as they wanted to, the researcher could see they were more willing to post.

“This is Phase 2 of the program. I met them again. Surprisingly they were happy when told that the program will continue for 3 more months. They will sit for their big exam this year, SPM. I expected that they will be reluctant to join the program again, but I was wrong”(Observation Notes, February 26, 2013)

v. *The Role of the Group Leader*

Group leaders played a vital role in this program. They had to monitor their group progress especially during virtual supervision. Although the use of L1 during in-class discussion was allowed, they had to monitor the group member’s posts and comments to make sure they were using English. The group leader were also needed to guide the group on the technique for a quick reading since this was an extensive reading program, not an intensive reading.

Firstly, they had to make sure English was used in their blog post although they used Kelantanese dialect in their in-class discussion,

“Use of Kelantanese dialect? **Biar kan je** <*I just let them*>, faster and easier for us **nak faham teks tu** <*to understand the texts*>. Still, we make sure everybody uses English in our blog” (1A1, Interview 2).

In addition, the group leaders were also expected to give encouragement to their group members. “*I kept telling my group members, do not find the meaning of every word, it’s okay to understand the text in general*” (2A1, Interview 2). They also put the effort to persuade their group members to be active in the group discussion,

“I tried to **pujuk** <*persuade*>my group members to just go on with the task although you <the teacher>are around but they just cannot do it. So, **kami sambung** <*we continue*> discussion **bila** <*when*>teacher leave our group **la**” (4A1, Interview 2)

For, group Alpha 5, the group leader took a different approach,

“With these boys, I become a firm leader. **Dia orang pun dah tahu**<They already know>. I keep calling them, **tanya**<ask about> reading progress, **tanya kenapa tak masuk blog lagi** <ask why do not they post in the blog yet>, **ingatkan** <remind the>) to join the discussion” (5A1, Interview 2).

Furthermore, they reminded the group members to be on task, as mentioned by 2A1,

“As for the group members **yang suka nak komen** <who like to comment on>language use **tu**, I advised him to focus on ideas sharing, **tak perlulah nak** <there is no need to>focus **pada** grammar **ahli lain** <on the language use by other member>” (2A1, Interview 2).

Their role helped to keep the group members focus on the tasks that they needed to complete.

During Interview 3, the group leaders were asked about the general trend in their blog posts in which the number of posts was more during virtual supervision compared to face-to-face sessions. The themes emerged were presented below.

i. Time Constraint

According to 5A1, during the face-to-face sessions, they had

“...not enough time. We need to read, discuss, **kadang-kadang**<sometimes> present and blog about the text. And slow internet connection, teacher” (Interview 2).

The student also mentioned about the slow internet connection (refer to point iii).

According to them, during virtual supervision,

“We have enough time to draft, check and recheck our work **sebelum**<before>**post dalam blog**<we post in our blog>. It helps us to feel more confident with our blog post” (3A1, Interview 2).

During virtual supervision, they had ample time to draft what they planned to post in their blogs.

ii. *Feeling Conscious with the Other Groups and Teacher's Presence*

The students were conscious of the other groups since some of the boys loved to go to the girls just to tease them.

“Group Alpha 3 was irritated when their friends for Alpha 5 came near them and tried to listen to their discussion. Alpha 3 members asked Alpha 5 not to be near their group, “Go back to your group,” (3A2). When I asked why did they do that, 3A1 responded, “**Tak boleh teacher, the boys tu nak gelakkan apa yang kita nak tulis la tu. Nanti baca dalam blog we all je lah, nak gelak pun kita tak nampak**” *<The boys just wanted to laugh at what we are writing in our blog. They can always read our blog later and they can laugh then because we did not see them>*” (Observation Notes, February 26, 2013)

They also felt that their group members were waiting for their responses in blogs.

“I can feel my friends are waiting for my post. I feel they are watching me. Actually, they are busy with their work too. At home, I can take my own time to read, draft, check **dengan**” *<with>* Google translate and post” (1A1, Interview 1).

Not only their friends affected them in class, the teacher's presence also made the students feel more careful about posting their entries in their blogs.

“I feel you are watching us. I feel afraid to type because you will see my mistakes there and then. I don't have enough time to edit before I post, **banyak masa untuk discussion**” *<more time spent on discussion>*” (3A1, Interview 3).

Her opinion was supported by A4A, “Teacher, you are there. I feel tensed because I know you are watching us” (4A1, Interview 3) and 5A1 who mentioned,

“Sometimes, we really need you to be with us so that you will be able to help us in our discussion. But I know you noticed that when you are around, the group will be quiet...everybody is afraid to voice out their opinion” (Interview 3).

The teacher's presence seemed to affect them although in their blog posts, it was not revealed. The analysis of their blog posts showed that they consistently responded to postings in less than 24 hours, demonstrated good self-initiative, frequently posts topics that are related to discussion content, prompted further discussion of topic and frequently attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group as well as they interacted freely. When they were interviewed, they expressed what they actually felt during both supervisions. Obviously the presence of the teacher cum observer affected them. They felt uncomfortable and they felt that they were being closely monitored. 3A1 mentioned,

“We like to have you around us to help us with discussion and blogging but **memang rasa tak yakin**<*we feel lack of confident*> to express ourselves freely. My group members **memang akan senyap**<*would be quiet*> when you came near us during discussion and **memang akan main-main dan tak nak blog** <*they refused to blog*> because they are afraid you will read the posts **terus** <*immediately*> in class.” (3A1, Interview 2)

iii. *Slow internet access*

“That is why we prefer blog from own places. **Cepat lagi** (It's faster)” (4A1, Interview 2) Her point was shared with 3A1,

“The internet **ganggu proses kami nak blog**<*connection sometimes interrupts us*>. That's **la** why sometimes, we will draft our ideas on papers first before we post because we do not want to forget the ideas we want to blog” (Interview 2).

2A1 disagreed with this, “No...no...*the line is okay but we are slow, we write the sentences first, then we correct it*” (Interview 2)

The class was allotted 1 hour per week by the school for the face-to-face sessions. The time was enough for the students to read, discuss and blogs if there was no

problem of internet connection. The researcher jotted down her observation of group

Alpha 1:

“Today the internet connection is rather slow. I checked on the wifi-detector, it functions well. The technician in-charge of the computer lab said that internet connection had a problem along this week and not only our area affected. The group members jotted down their points on papers. They passed the paper to one another. They kept writing on the paper and the group was quiet. I went near them and asked what they were doing. The answer given by 1A1 was, “Teacher, this is our blog. Line slow **sangat hari ni**<*the internet connection was slow today*>. **Dia orang pulak cepat habis baca dah siap bincang pun**<*The group members have finished reading and discussing the article*>. So, we decided to have paper blog.” The so-called “paper blog” was only a piece of A4 paper which they put on the middle of the table after they wrote down the responses. They kept referring to the article and then write on their “paper blog”. The concept was just like the real blog. They wrote in English and when they asked questions orally, they used Bahasa Melayu. Each group member took turn to take the paper and wrote down responses to what their friends had jotted down.

“**Kalau tak sempat blog, nanti ketua kumpulan akan type balik what we have written ni** in our blog, **idea tak hilang. Tapi kalau sempat, kita orang akan terus copy balik dalam blog sekarang la.** <*If we do not have time to blog, our group leader will type in our blog based on what we have on our paper blog. Our ideas will be there. But, if we still have time, we will post in our blog now*>” (Observation Notes, March 14, 2013)

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The ideas of “paper blog” inspired by Alpha 1 attracted the other groups to do the same for the session. The researcher allowed the students to write on their “paper blog” but at the same time, the group member still tried to post in their blogs what they had prepared on papers.

When the researcher further asked about their entries during virtual supervision which shared the same criterion with their posts during face-to-face supervision as the analysis of CSU indicated, the response given was:

“We contacted each other via WeChat, Whatsapp or just send messages to each other to make sure everybody was online at the same time. It is my role as the team leader is to make sure my members read the article and contribute to our group discussion. Anything we are not sure of, we

contacted each other before we post in our blogs. We also keep reminding each other about the purpose of this blog so that we will not be discussing other things.” (5A1, Interview 3)

To sum it up, the students did not have enough time to read and understand the article, to discuss, to construct sentences and to post in blogs during face-to-face sessions; they also felt uncomfortable to be monitored by the teacher and watched by their classmates when they wanted to post in their blogs. Furthermore, they felt conscious of their sentence construction and they had the tendency of asking their group members than to be independent when they wanted to construct the ideas for their posts.

During face-to-face discussion, the researcher failed to make the students use English, instead, they preferred to use their mother tongue. This might make blogs a useful way to promote the use of English among the students. While blogging, some girls were not confident to use English and they felt fear of being laughed at. The students also wanted others to initiate the discussion. Still, they collaborated well with each other especially during in-class discussion although they were using their mother tongue. Class interruptions such as a prefect meeting or attending co-curricular meeting disturbed the flow of the program.

From the students’ responses, several themes emerged such as feeling shy due to their language competency and afraid to be laughed at by their friends, and reluctant group members. All these reflect the students’ emotion when they were in the program. As the students of the best class of form 4 in this school, they really felt conscious about their ability and competency to use English. They did not want to expose their weaknesses to the other students. This was expressed by 2A1:

“Tak mudah teacher<It’s not easy>. Bila semua tahu program ni, sibuk dia orang nak tahu apa kami baca, apa kami tulis<When the other students know about this program, they want to know what we read and write>. We cannot just write. **Memang kena edit, sebab kelas lain boleh baca blog kami**<We have to edit our work because the other classes can read our blog>. Personally, if only my group members and you read the blog, I feel **selesa**<comfortable> to write. We are the Alpha students, our English **sepatutnya**<is supposed to be> good **kan**<right>?” (Interview 1)

The team leader for Alpha 4 also agreed with what expressed by 2A1. He said,

“**Ahli kumpulan I kata**<My group members said> they are nervous. **Nampak macam senang, baca, bincang**<It looks easy, we just read, discuss> and post in the blog. When we did it then only we realized, **alamak, ada orang lain boleh bacalah**<we have readers>. Then we start to slow down, keep editing our work before we post in our blog. **Tu yang tak sempat masa**<That’s why we do not have enough time>” (Interview 1).

Alpha 1 shared different view about blogging. All the 4 girls in the group enjoyed the activity. They liked sharing links they found the interesting articles with their friends and did not really care whether other students were reading their entries or not. As expressed by the team leader, 1A1:

“We searched for articles online. We shared the links and we decided to read one article only and discuss the article in all aspects. The other students? We don’t really care **lah**. We just write and we are happy to use English **masa**<during>discussion” (Interview 1).

The responses indicated that, time is the main factor for them not to be actively blogging during face-to-face session. Again, the slow internet connection at the computer lab, especially when another computer lab was used by another class, hindered the students to post their entries during the sessions. Another problem faced by most of the groups was the use of L1 during in-class discussion. The students preferred to use Bahasa Melayu as the language medium during their discussion. It indeed sped up their understanding of the texts. The researcher tried to join in their discussion by using English but the group became quiet and they kept

exchanging glances among themselves. They kept giving signals to one another to proceed with the discussion. As mentioned during the first interview, students felt uncomfortable with the teacher's presence although this was not mirrored in their blog posts. They wanted the teacher to be there and provide them with the assistance when needed, but not to go around and monitoring their discussion especially when they wanted to write on their blog entries as well as give comments.

In addition, the students' responses showed the importance of a leader in a group. The leader needs to take the initiative to monitor the group members' progress, their contribution to the discussion as well as their comments in the blog entries. Some students felt irritated when they peers started commenting on the structures and vocabulary used or even grammar errors, if there were any in their blog posts.

After two phases of the main study for about 6 months, the students started to see the benefits of using blogs in their learning process. The girls' groups kept giving the positive feedback about the program but there were several boys who opted to be neutral about it. During interview 3 with the group leaders, when asked in general how blogs affected them, these were the responses given:

“We love blogging and we are using more English now. **Memanglah secara oralnya tak ada**<*we did not improve orally*>improvement but **dalam**<*in*>group blog, we try our best to use English, **berterabur grammar pun tak apa**<*regardless the grammar use*>”

(2A1, Interview 3)

“One of my group members**memang**<*actually*> not in the favour of sharing his thought about reading. He is more focus on exam drilling. I **dah tanya dia**<*have asked him*>, for him, blog is not challenging enough but he still join in the blog discussion. **Kami bertiga okay**<*The three of us are okay*>. We just read, discuss and post in our blog”

(5A1, Interview 3)

“Read more yes, talk more no, write more yes. Full spirit to read English texts and I like it when friends start to introduce the websites that have interesting articles. Easy for me to read”

(3A1, Interview 3)

“It’s a challenge. I am eager to find good websites **untuk dapatkan**<to get> materials. We are happy because we have the power to choose the reading materials. **Banyak**<Many> interesting articles **yang kami baca**<we have read>”

(4A1, Interview 3)

“This program gives us a new learning experience. We learn many new words, we read about many interesting issues and we share with our friends. We become more responsible because we are reading **bukan untuk diri tapi untuk group, tu yang best**<not for ourselves but for our group, that is the best part>”

(1A1, Interview 3)

The students did not deny the benefits they gained from the program but there were several issues that needed teacher’s attention such as to deal with groups of students who were too conscious of their language ability and the reluctant group members.

4.4 Summary

This chapter discusses the findings of this study. The details of the data gathered from the students’ blogs, interview and the researcher’s field notes were presented in detail to show the students’ participation in their group blogs and their nature for their blog posts.

In conclusion, the students had mixed feelings about the use of blogs in their extensive reading program. Students with high language competency (Alpha 1) felt more comfortable and confident to blog compared to the ones with lack of competency (Alpha 2). The teacher’s observational notes are directly related to the students’ interview. The findings from the FSU online assessment analysis, researcher’s observational notes and students’ responses during the interview

sessions showed that students responded differently to the use of blogs in their second language learning. Most of them needed the prompts and needed to be initiated by others in order to participate in the blogs. Their group cooperation enabled them to respond to their friends' posts in less than 24 hours in both supervision setting. The students were also conscious about their blog posts and they tended to check on their sentences before posting them in their blogs. The group leaders as well as the other group members kept reminding each other to discuss the reading materials they had chosen, thus making most of their posts relevance to the topics. Still, for virtual supervision, there were times when the students sent posts that were off topic. The students also felt comfortable to use their blogs as platforms for them to collaborate with each other but most of them would prefer to have only their classmates as the audience, not the other classes because they were not confident of their language competencies and they were afraid of being laughed at.

Bales' Interaction Process Analysis indicated that students use all the codes in both supervisions but with different frequency. They covered all the five categories; asking question, attempting to answer, showing positive and negative reactions and sometimes diverging from the topics discussed. The use of all the codes showed the students' cooperation and collaboration in their blogs discussion. They also managed to use English in their blog discussion. Although there were grammar errors, all the posts were comprehensible

The students' blog posts, their reactions and responses given during the interview and my observation notes revealed the students' experience during the two phases of the study. Even though each group had different experience in the programme, they

shared some commonalities among them. The data indicated that they liked the blogging aspect in their extensive reading classes. They performed the task given (to read English materials, to discuss the materials in depth and to relate the issues to their own life experience) and they showed improvement in the tasks during Phase 2 of the study. They loved the opportunity to find their own reading materials and shared them with their group members. In addition, the programme provides them with the opportunity to use language outside the formal English classes. In fact, they felt more comfortable collaborating with their friends through writing rather than direct discussion since they did not have to pronounce the words, which I noticed one of the major reasons for them not to use English in class. Still, the data also pointed out some drawbacks encountered by the students in the programme especially the issues related to lack of confidence to write in their blogs, feeling uncomfortable with teacher's presence during face-to-face sessions, uncooperative group members and the slow internet connection at school. Generally, the use of blogs for teaching and learning the second language became a constructive learning experience for the students.

In the next chapter, the researcher will discuss the implications of the study findings to second language teaching and learning processes specifically for extensive reading.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study was set out to examine the nature of students' blog posts during face-to-face and virtual supervisions as well as to identify the interaction patterns in both supervisions. Qualitative method using observation, document analysis of students' blog posts and students' interviews was utilized in this study to extract comprehensive data that could answer all the research questions. The data were analysed by using FSU Online Assessment (2002) and Bales IPA (2002). Results gained from the study enable the researcher to draw conclusions about the data collected and make recommendations for future research.

This chapter is organized into four sections: 5.2 provides an overview of the major findings; 5.3 discusses the contributions of study in the field and implications of the research for teachers, students, school administrators and researchers; 5.4 includes some limitations of the study and 5.5 provides recommendations for future research; and finally 5.6 offers some concluding remarks.

The researcher shall first discuss an overview of the major findings.

5.2 Overview of the Major Findings

Generally, the findings are discussed below regarding the advantages of blogs for collaborative learning for an extensive reading programme. In addition, the themes emerged from the analyzed data related to the first and the second reserach questions are also discussed.

In the Malaysian context, most students do not feel comfortable to speak in their second language. They are afraid to be laughed at by their friends and prefer to be passive listeners in class, instead of becoming active students. The development of a variety of interactive computer technologies introduced since mid 1980s created potentially valuable tools for teaching and learning across the curriculum. In relation to this, blogs were used in this study as a tool for students to use English to collaborate with their classmates during an extensive reading programme and the blogging activities were limited to the reading activities.

Blogs provide equal opportunities for students to participate in their group discussion regardless their personalities. Thus, in this study, blogs provided a medium for students to share their reading materials, their reactions and their experience regarding the materials. The students described the articles, related to their life experience and expressed their ideas and feelings and shared them with their friends. This study also explored how the use of blogs as a medium for the students to share about their reading materials and activities with their friends could impact their learning, engagement and participation in ESL extensive reading lessons.

Therefore, rather than using papers or books as journals to write about their reading only for their language teacher, the students get involved in a more natural communication with their friends using blogs and they may support, extend or challenge the ideas written by the group members.

5.2.1 FSU Online Assessment: Nature of Students' Blog

In relation to the first research question which is the nature of blog posts during face-to-face and virtual supervisions, the students preferred virtual supervision rather than face-to-face supervision. They sent more postings and made more comments virtually without the teacher's supervision. With regard to "Promptness and Initiatives", the students responded promptly in less than 24 hours in both settings which demonstrated good self-initiative. The students noticed that even though they were not directly monitored by the teacher when they blogged from their own places, they were still monitored by the teacher virtually.

For the second category of FSU Online Assessment, "Delivery of Posts", the students scored an average of 3 with the description of "Few grammatical or spelling errors are noted in posts". The grammar errors spotted for both supervisions basically were Subject-verb-agreement, verb to be, modal verbs, articles, and spelling.

The next category, "Relevance of Post" showed that the students frequently posts topics that are related to discussion content and prompts further discussion of topic for both supervisions.

The fourth category of the analysis, "Expression within the Posts" showed the different average scores gained by the. The average of 4 marks was given for face-to-face supervision that describes the students to express opinions and ideas in a clear and concise manner with obvious connection to topic.

Whereas for virtual supervision, the average mark of 3 was given to the blog posts that describes the students to state opinion and ideas clearly with occasional lack of connection to topic. The last category of FSU Online Assessment, “Contribution to the Learning Community” showed that the students frequently attempted to direct the discussion and to present viewpoints for consideration by group and they also interacted freely among the group members. Although they were conscious about what they posted in their blog, during the Phase 2 of the study, the students carried out the discussion in an easy and relaxed manner. The posts in their blogs indicated the students started to use more English as their responses were getting longer compared to Phase 1 when they first started the program.

In relation to the conceptual framework as cited in Figure 1.1, students would collaborate more with each other when they were given the appropriate contexts which included learners, teacher as well as the classroom contexts (Yampinij, Sangsuwan and Chuathong, 2012). By having blogs as their communication tool, the knowledge was constructed during the students’ collaboration. The existence of teacher and their group leaders also acted as the More Knowledgeable Others (Vygotsky, 1978) for the students as they could always get the information about the things they did not understand.

However, from the researcher’s observation, during in-class discussion, the students still preferred to use their native language although in their blog posts they used English expressions to collaborate.

These findings of this study resonate with Di Zhang's (2009) and Jarrell and Freiremuth (2005) studies which claim that most students opted for blogging interaction than face-to-face interaction because it is a more comfortable learning environment for them. Furthermore, Jarrell and Freiremuth (2005) argue that most students preferred online discussion because it provided time for them to consider the ideas to share, prolonged communication between students and made them feel more at ease compared to face-to-face communication.

5.2.2 Bales' Interaction Process Analysis: Interaction Patterns

With regard to the second research question which is to examine the interaction patterns in both settings, the study revealed that blogs could serve as a platform for collaboration for the ESL students. The specific aspects of blogging that helped my instructional goals were tools in blogs such as commenting and giving feedback. Bales' Interaction Pattern analysis (IPA) of the students' blog posts revealed that in terms of the Social Emotional area (Positive Reactions), the students showed positive reactions and acceptance by agreeing with each other and they also showed understanding by cracking jokes and laughs. The opportunity to choose their own reading materials provided the students with the chances to choose the topics of their interests which helped them to collaborate easily in their blog discussion which directly enhanced their knowledge construction (Yampinij, Sangsuwan and Chuathong, 2012).

In the Task Area (Answer), they gave opinions, evaluated their friends' answers and shared their personal information. In relation to Task Area (Questions), they asked

for orientation, information and repetition in the topic related to the articles read and they also asked for personal information from their friends.

Finally, in terms of the Social Emotional Area (Negative Reactions), they were observed disagreeing with one another and at times showed passive reactions. Virtually, they were found to diverge from the topic under discussion.

5.2.3 Blogs as a Vehicle for Small Group Collaboration

The current result is in line with the result of Williams and Jacobs (2004) who showed that 77% of the students stated blogs increased their interaction with each other. This finding is substantiated by research on computer supported collaborative learning, the online courses that has reported that online interaction provides a comfortable learning environment for many people who flourish in non face-to-face communication. Jones (2006) found out that the students felt comfortable with blogging interaction because they did not have a favorable view of face-to-face peer-responding sessions.

After the first phase of the main study (three months), the students were more engaged in class discussions inside the classroom since they had the opportunity to collaborate with each other outside the class. They could always relate to their discussion in the blogs to get more clarification from their group members. The students were more active in the blog discussion compared to the face-to-face in-class discussion. They spent more time discussing the reading materials and felt free to voice out their opinions regarding the reading activities. In addition, the students had more opportunities to use English while discussing with their friends in their

respective blogs compared to in-class discussion where they opted to use their mother tongue to discuss.

One of the main components in the conceptual framework is social network serves as a communication tool. The findings of the study show that the students used their blogs to communicate with each other freely. Although they knew they were monitored by the teacher, they still had the tendency of diverging from the tasks when they were communicating in their blogs. This proves that blogs are a good platform for the students to collaborate.

5.2.4 Blogs Allow Feedback in an Interactive Manner

Blogs are open for public access which means the students' work can be accessed by others instead of by their teacher only if they used journals. The public access made the students aware of their audience, which affected their posts in their group blogs. The public nature of blogs allows the students to receive feedback from threaded comments not only from their group members within the classroom, but also the blogs provided a window for comments from across other classrooms. The commenting aspect of blogging supported the collaboration process of the students because they posted entries, received feedback and comments in order for them to discuss their selected reading materials. As Lowe and Williams (2004) claimed, blogs are interactive as students respond to any given entry with a comment, ongoing threaded discussions can take place both within classroom settings, across other classrooms, and other learning environments and resources.

The feedback the students received gave them an opportunity to think and reflect critically on what they wanted to post because their posts would reflect their language competencies and their personality as well as attitude towards the issues discussed. The feedback and comments also provided them with support to keep searching for interesting reading materials to be shared with their group members and to give relevant comments about the articles chosen. The researcher found that the postings in the blogs entries and comments encouraged the students to collaborate more with their group members as this was not a personal blog but their group blog. They could also access other resources to get reading materials that enhanced their learning opportunities.

The findings also showed that some students would act negatively towards their group members' comments, not on the ideas discussed but more on the language use. They felt irritated when their errors in constructing sentences or spelling were commented by their group members.

There are similarities between the attitudes expressed by the students in the present study and those described by Ducate and Lomicka (2008) who found that the students ignored comments post in their blogs when they viewed the comments negatively. Yang (2009) also noted that the majority of participants did not find comments useful and some did not even read their peers' comments. In the present study, the students had the same level of language competency and this made them feel irritated when their group members started pointing out their grammar errors. They seemed to enjoy interacting through blogs but some students preferred the teacher to tell them their mistakes and guiding them, instead of their own peers. This

is perhaps, a washback effect of the so-called “spoon-feed” system which is applied in most Malaysian primary and secondary schools (Thang, 2009).

This study indicates that although Asian students are claimed to be more teacher-centred, they can change the position if the learning environment is supportive and encouraging. This finding reiterated Thang and Azarina’s (2007) claim that teacher-centredness may be influenced by the cultural values of Asian and does not mean a lack of ability to learn autonomously. The students in this study could voice out their feeling towards each other because they chose the group members to work with and they used to work together as a group before. In other words, their friendship has been built for quite some time.

In most cases, students responded positively to their group members’ posts and comments. They agreed with their group members’ view and when they expressed their disagreement, they posted a statement or a question to get the confirmation from the other group members. This pattern occurred in both supervisions. This finding is parallel with what Williams and Jacobs (2004) suggests that peer feedback creates a virtuous cycle, providing information and also improving attitudes toward blogging (Yang & Chang, 2012).

5.2.5 Blogs Create Discourse Community

The findings of this study also revealed that blogs helped to create a discourse community for my students specifically among their group members. This is supported by earlier studies which claimed that blogging can be a powerful tool for building a classroom community (Supyan et. Al., 2002; Campbell, 2003, Nelson and

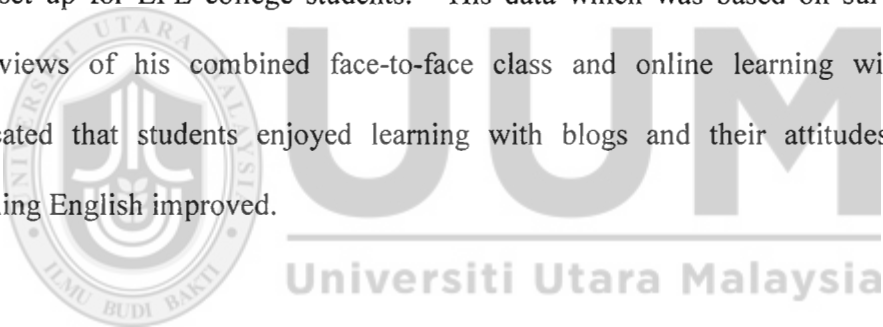
Fernheimer, 2003) and ownership of their learning (Campbell's, 2003; Zain & Khoo, 2009; Tekinarslan, 2008; Park, Heo & Lee, 2011; Ozkan, 2011). The students in this study had ownership of their blogs, therefore became the owners of the content as found in Campbell's (2003) research on blogging and collaborative learning. The researcher found that most of the students in the class took pride in their blogs and added visual associations to communicate ideas and decorated their blogs with interesting features. For all of the students in the class, blogging was an effective platform for collaboration and a space for them to use more English to interact with each other.

Discourse community through the use of blogs exists because the students take responsibility for their learning and actively seek knowledge to be shared with their group members similar to the definition of learner autonomy by Sinclair and Thang (2009). Other studies have found out that blogs contribute to build a sense of community as well as to better understand the learning content (Ellison & Wu, 2008; Halic, Lee, Paulus & Spence, 2010; Chu, Kwan & Warning, 2012).

Students felt comfortable with their blog discussion. They disagreed with their group members' opinion but most of the time they came to an agreement at the end of their discussion. Nadzrah and Kemboja (2009) found out that blogging gives more benefits to students in terms of sharing their writing in an interactive social environment. They also highlighted that blogging offers a useful learning environment that gives the students a chance to create a strong sense of community in which they can participate actively while learning. The findings also further support the idea of students collaborating to read in a non-threatening and fun

environment in which teachers and students are supportive and encouraging towards each other (Supyan, Nooreiny and D’Cruz, 2002:69).

For both face-to-face and virtual supervisions, the students performed similar tasks. Most frequently, they gave their personal information about the topic discussed. This finding corroborates the ideas of Glogoff (2005) that stated that blogging provided opportunities for students to interact in meaningful ways that extend instruction in the virtual classroom and he found out that the most introverted students fully participated in online forum discussions. These findings also further support what Campbell (2004) found out about learner attitudes toward a blog that he developed and set up for EFL college students. His data which was based on surveys and interviews of his combined face-to-face class and online learning with blogs indicated that students enjoyed learning with blogs and their attitudes toward learning English improved.



A possible explanation for this might be the students created the feeling of belonging to their group blogs. They were willing to share their personal views by relating the issues discussed to their personal experiences with their group members (Yampinij, Sangsuwan and Chuathong, 2012). They had a platform that they were in control of to express their views while expanding their knowledge with the help of their group members (Vygotsky, 1978).

5.2.6 Blogs Develop Ownership of Content

Blogging activity was also found to provide a context in which the students were developing their knowledge and use of English, specifically with the respect to reading and writing. The requirement of extensive reading program provided the context for the students to exercise their reading skills as they need to express their view and relate the reading materials to their own life experiences to be the base for their blog discussion. They searched, selected their own reading materials and created the discussion with the group members. They determined what they wanted to write and how best to express it.

The practice mirrored the real-life reading and writing situations as students were not required to read only the listed prescribed materials and there was no instructional sequence to follow. Blogging activity thus allows the students to be the owners of their reading and writing activities. Zain and Khoo (2009) supported this by stating that students read and write for a purpose, not “to answer questions as part of a language test or exercise” (p30).

This finding of the present study was similar to the finding of the study conducted by Tekinarslan (2008) who claimed that blogs encourage students by giving them the responsibility to perform better tasks. Thus, the students participating in the present study were given individual responsibilities to make sure their group members participate actively in their blog discussion regardless the setting they were in.

The students liked the idea of using blogs in learning the targeted language because they could manipulate the technology to access vast reading materials and also to collaborate with their peers outside the English lessons. This is consistent with the

findings of Park, Heo, and Lee's study (2011), which revealed that learners considered blogging as self-directed and they were aware of the personal learning benefits blogging provided.

Students also preferred searching and choosing their own reading materials rather than being assigned to because they could discuss something that was appealing to them. They were also free to choose their own topics. The importance of students' being able to make choices about their writing, both on subject matter and mode, is a recurring theme in the literature (Bruning and Horn, 2000; Elbow, 2000; Azemove, 2002; Walker, 2003). Similar results indicating that blogging topic of interest matters to students can be found out in the study conducted by Freeman and Brett (2012). In relation to the extensive reading program, the students had the choice of what they wanted to write about the reading materials they had chosen. This finding is also parallel to what Ozkan (2011) found that students felt responsible regarding their reading tasks as they developed a sense of ownership about regulating the discussion in their blogs which indirectly developed their self-confidence. To be responsible for their own learning also indicated positive indications for both motivation and achievement.

Although face-to-face discussion is regarded as the most desirable for collaboration (Chandler, 2001), but for these students, they felt more comfortable contributing in their group blogs, in the asynchronous environment because it allows them to get involved regardless their personalities and their linguistic competencies. Rather than having to perform within a specified time frame, students can read and respond at their own pace (Hayes, 2006). In commenting on blog posts, students carried out

what the teacher asked them to do in classroom which were to point out something they like about the reading materials they dealt with and also the issues raised by the articles. They could also agree or disagree with their group members as well as provide suggestions and connect the articles to relevant information or even their own life experience. In self-generated learning environment, the students cum the writers and readers had opportunities to learn the values of word choice, organization and sentence structures to enable their friends understand the message conveyed.

5.2.7 Blogs Create Motivation to Read and to Collaborate

The issue to make the students read the second language materials extensively is always discussed in previous literature and to make them use the language during in-class discussion is also complicated. Ryan and Deci (2000) saw motivation as self-regulation of energy, persistence, and focus in all aspects of activation and intention. Motivation can be intrinsic, arising from the individual's needs for competence, and relatedness. Motivation can also be extrinsic, but influenced by degrees of choice or autonomy. Activities that encourage direct participation from students fare best and can be accepted at some level as a matter of one's electing to do so (Dörnyei, 2000; Ryan and Deci, 2000; Shernoff et al., 2003). Meanwhile, low motivation refers to a sense that one is not competent to do it, or one's expectation that the outcome will not be valued (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Through this blogging program, students have the authority to choose their own reading materials and discuss with their own group members. When they have some kind of authority in their learning, they became more motivated to read.

Another aspect that leads for the students' motivation to read L2 materials and to use the language to collaborate relates closely with their interest. The topics for the reading materials must suit the students' interest. Teachers also need to create a comfortable and safe environment for the students to involve extensively in this kind of program. A possible explanation to create this kind of learning environment is supported by Hidi and Renninger (2006) who described a four-phase model of interest development.

Phase 1: Triggered situational interest ~ when a person's attention being caught by a novel, somewhat familiar, or otherwise attractive element in the environment. Students at this phase normally think reading L2 materials and also to be involved in on-line collaboration with their peers are difficult, and that they are not very good at it. They need feedback that guides them and also instructions that are specific and easily understood that enable them to see their own improvement such as reading more L2 materials and also participating in their blog discussion.

Phase 2: Maintained situational interest~ supported by some level of meaningfulness and personal involvement. Students at this phase always try to figure out what the teacher requires them to do and they attempt to fulfil it. They need feedback that supports their task achievement.

Phase 3 and 4: Represent increasing degrees of positive feeling, knowledge, and valuation of the activity. Each of the phases may be short or long-lived; one may transition into the next Phase three students think they are already independent in their learning. They do not just repeat what they know, but they learn to shape their knowledge and learning into their own forms. While Phase four students perceive the

learning activity and process not as a burden. These students have high self-efficacy and are at ease with the collaboration with their group members.

Feelings of competence, autonomy, and relatedness are inter-related to the development of interest. Lipstein and Renninger (2007) observed that students said their motivation for writing is often influenced by both their teachers and their classroom experience. The nature of that interest prompts them to set goals for their writing, use effective writing strategies, and ask for feedback that will help them improve. The findings from the present study show that when the students are interested in the subject matter discussed, they will write long responses in their blogs. The presence of teacher regardless during face-to-face or virtually also plays an important role to ensure students' participation on their blog discussions.

It is a challenge for teachers to design and carry out activities to raise the students' interest to be more at productive phase (Lipstein & Renniger, 2007). Teachers encounter challenges not only to guide the students on mechanics of writing but also how to make them want to write (Brunning & Horn, 2000). The same researchers came out with suggestions that are closely related to blogging which are to recognize and create motivation-enhancing conditions for learning. They proposed:

- i. creating a classroom environment that supports positive attitude about learning especially writing by providing frequent and varied opportunities for students to be involved in the activities.
- ii. letting students to take ownership of their writing by affirming the conditions for writing as an authentic process of communication

- iii. providing a supportive context for writing by teaching students through instruction and feedback to set challenging but reasonable goals and to develop writing strategies to meet them; and
- iv. establishing a positive emotional environment in which students may develop positive attitudes about writing because they feel safe and feel some degree of control.

Although the research was on motivation in writing, this is directly related to blogging since the students collaborate with each other through writing. Thus, if teachers manage to create a conducive learning environment for students to write and make them see the importance of writing in communicating meaning, the students will participate actively in their blog discussion. Having the responsibility of their own learning will make the students feel the need to contribute to their group blogs.

5.2.8 Students' Perception Regarding the Use of Blogs

In carrying out this study, one aspect that was indirectly covered was the students' perceptions of the inculcation of blogs in their learning process and how they impacted the students' participation in the collaboration. Students believed that the use of blogs could impact their learning and participation both inside and outside the classroom. The findings of this study favoured the use of blogs in second language class. The students agreed that blogs motivated them to read more English materials collaboratively, improved interaction with their group members, increased interest to read L2 materials, improved reading skills, provided a room to express feelings towards reading and created a platform for them to use English outside their formal language class. These findings confirmed earlier studies on the positive acceptance

of blog or online learning. (Nadzrah and Michan, 2003; Mohamed Amin Embi, 2004; O'Donnell, 2006; Yuksel, 2009; Nadzrah, 2009)

The students reported that the use of blogs allowed them to spend more time dealing with activities using English. When they discussed their reading materials, they expressed their opinion and experiences with their group mates, they were indirectly encouraged to generate global comprehension of the reading texts, sum up what they had read to give emotional response to context (Widodo, 2008). Vygotsky (1978) argued that it was indispensable for students to interact with others so they could naturally develop and extend their linguistic knowledge.

Traditionally, classroom teaching was based on a methodological model which focuses on the teacher as the input and knowledge provider while students would just perform the tasks assigned. Manipulating technology, specifically as in this study with blogs, brought some changes from the traditional teaching method and at the same time increases the quality of students' learning. In this era of technology, students should not be taught by using an obsolete model in which they become the receptive agent. Instead, they should be exposed to use, select and organize the information. Thus, teachers can make full use of the media to enable students to participate more actively in their interaction with their friends, rather than solely become the knowledge recipient.

5.2.9 Issues and Challenges in Blogging among ESL Students

There are a few issues which surfaced during blogging activities that may provide challenges when setting up blogging activities in L2 classrooms. They are reluctant group members, the teacher's presence, L1 interference and time factor.

5.2.9.1 Reluctant Group Members

Even though blogging could provide speedy feedback, sometimes the students were reluctant to blog because of time constraint especially when the program was implemented in class. They were reluctant to blog because they were not comfortable with the presence of the other groups as well as the teacher. They felt that they were being monitored and others were laughing at what they wrote. This caused conflicts in the students because they wanted to share about their reading materials with their group members but they did not want the other classmates and the other students from the other classes to read their entries.

Although instructions were given on what they should include in their blogs at the beginning of the program, several participants still hesitated to post in their blogs. Another potential reason, mentioned by participants in the survey and the interview, is that they did not like the fact that their blogs could be accessed by other classes. They were conscious about the audience. They felt shy to be laughed at by their friends as they were lacking of confidence to use the language. They also did not like the fact that some of their grammar errors were highlighted by their group members. Therefore, a supporting environment in the class generally and in their groups specifically is important for the students to develop self-acceptance. Fonseca-Mora & Toscano-Fuentes (2007) states that students' different personal

goals, needs and beliefs act as catalyst for their interest and involvement in any learning experience. Teachers play a vital role here as to identify the students' needs, interests and learning goals and channeled them properly for the program.

It is the fear of being laughed at and looked down by their friends that make many students feel nervous to participate in face-to-face discussion. The students think more about what others might feel about them. This is similar to the study done by Vemuri, Ram & Kota (2011). However, the current result is not in line with the result of Vemuri, Ram & Kota (2011) who found out that the fear of failure is noticed more miserably in girls than in boys resulting in lowering their confident levels. In the present study, Alpha 5 and Alpha 2 were groups consisted of boys. These two groups showed their anxiety to post in blogs during Phase 1 of the study due to their lack of language competency and performance.

Still, researcher found out that, there are also students who were reluctant to engage in the program. They felt uncomfortable knowing that the other students from the other classes could access their blogs. They were not confident of their language competencies and felt shy that they would be laughed at. Blogging can also be time-consuming for students when they had to post in their blogs from their own places for the virtual supervision. In addition, it is also time-consuming for teacher to read all the students' blog posts.

5.2.9.2 Teacher's Presence

On the other hand, there were students who felt uncomfortable with teacher's presence, feeling that they were being monitored and they became more conscious of

what they wrote in their blog posts as they felt that the teacher was looking at their progress.

One of the elements of the conceptual framework is teacher context. The findings of the present study indicated that teachers need to analyze basic characteristics of the students to use in sharing learning experience on blogs. This is important since different students have different learning preferences and personalities. The teacher has to act as a coach. When the students face any difficulty or are in the lower zone of proximal development, teachers need advice and guide them.

The teachers' involvement in students' blog discussion can be flexible. She can monitor the students' progress with minimal intervention and making sure students post and comment on their group members' entries, to stay on track, respect others' views, and others. She can also opt to participate in the blog discussion. The researcher found a participatory role to be suitable as the students felt that teachers were monitoring their discussion virtually and this is contrast with the Campbell (2007) who found out ESL students from Asian cultures tend to be reluctant to express views that disagree with the instructor. Earlier studies have shown that teachers' comments are helpful in promoting students' comprehension and higher level thinking (Lu & Jeng, 2006; Hew, Cheung & Ng, 2010). The students were reluctant to proceed with their in-class discussion when the teacher was around because the teacher kept asking them to use L2 but in blog discussions, they managed to interact using the targeted language with the teacher.

During virtual supervision, sometimes the students stated the opinions and ideas clearly with occasional lack of connection to topic as the group members diverged from their topic of discussion. Teachers need to be aware of this and this is the time for the teacher to join in the online group discussion if she happens to be online at that time. Students needed to realise the teacher's presence although physically they were not at the same place. As stated by A1B, *"I like to have teacher when we are online, I feel I am monitoring by her."* This suits with Vygotsky's theory that serves as a foundation of constructivism which is the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO). The MKO can be a teacher, other adults or the students' peers who has better understanding or a higher ability level than the students themselves. The presence of the MKO is needed in collaborative learning as the students need to have the feeling that they are being guided and monitored.

Regardless the presence of teacher to monitor their progress, the students collaborated with each other through their group blogs. Obviously, they always asked for repetition and confirmation from their group members although when they were giving their personal opinion. This shows that the students were on task in both types of supervision. There are similarities between the students' attitudes expressed by Barrios (2003) in his study that said blogs could be a space for the students to express their thoughts on an assigned homework such as a class reading assignment that could be followed by blog postings on the thoughts of each student or a group of students. Since all the students involved in this study had average language competency, they kept asking each other for confirmation with the hope that their friends supported their views.

In addition to the existing codes and categories by Bales (2002), the researcher added another code which was code 13 which describes the post that does not relate to the topic. The researcher decided to add in the code and category after discussing with her colleague because it is vital to see if the presence of teacher had any effect on the students' patterns of discussion. The code was used 14 times in both supervisions and the figure was obvious (10 times) during virtual supervision. This result may be explained by the fact that the students felt more comfortable when they could blog on their own and they had the tendency to communicate freely with their group members. That might be the reason for them to diverge from the topic. During face-to-face sessions, the students might feel conscious that they were being monitored. Thus, they tried to be on task as close as possible. From the analysis done, there was no obvious difference in categories in the posts for both supervisions: face-to-face and virtual especially during the second phase of the study. This indicated the presence of teacher did not affect the students' participation generally. The students also participated in their blog discussion regardless the presence of their group members but the group leader played an important role to encourage them to participate.

The next section is the discussion on the significance of the findings.

5.3 Contributions and Implications of the Study

The researcher believes that the results of the study may prove to be useful not only for the students, but also for the teachers, the school administrators who are involved in setting up interactive computer programmes and researchers in the field of study. Students may now use blogging for educational purposes and not just for social purposes. At the secondary level, students need to have some degree of autonomy because they have to be self-motivated to read outside the classroom to enhance their language proficiency.

At present, English periods in Malaysia secondary school allocate 200 minutes of instruction weekly all the teaching of the four language skills; reading, writing, listening and speaking as well as the literature components. Therefore, being able to interact among the students outside of the formal classroom setting by using blogs, supplement to reading instruction and practice.

Teachers may use these findings to establish best practices in extensive reading using blogging. However, it is vital for teachers to take into account students' readiness for autonomous learning. Thus, it is significant for teachers to guide the students especially at the beginning of classroom instruction. The concept of More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) in which students need guidance from teachers or even peers who have slightly superior or more knowledge of the subject to help learning to expand and enhance the students' Zone of Proximal Development can be applied to motivate students to read extensively through the use of blogs in collaborative learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

Another unique criterion of the use of blogs in collaborative learning is that it emphasizes on the needs of learner inquiry and critical reflection on their reading

process and activities, through self, peer and guided questioning. The students also shoulder the responsibility to encourage their respective group members to keep on reading. This aspect of the study is vital as very few reading programs focuses on collaborative reading. To the researcher's knowledge, not many studies have been conducted on ESL secondary school students to find out their reading problems as well as to understand the process the students' experience when using blogs in English lessons. Most of the previous studies focused on the online discussion (Fleming, 2008) and collaborative problem-based language learning using online forum (Mardziah& Tan, 2008). In contrast, this study explored the phenomenon subtly when the use of blogs is integrated in collaborative learning in an extensive reading program.

This research has certain implications for teachers (5.3.1), the school administrators (5.3.2) and implications for future research (5.3.3).

5.3.1 Implications on Teachers

5.3.1.1 A Teacher's Roles

Teachers play the major role to initiate the extensive reading program by using blogs as the platform for students to collaborate among themselves. The way teachers present material to their students and the steps followed to involve learners in language learning influence learners' belief about their ability to participate successfully in any language task (Foncesca-Mora& Toscano-Fuentes, 2007). Firstly, if teachers plan to use technology as a medium for students to collaborate and to practice more of the targeted language, they may want to consider some specific details before they start using it. Teachers and students need to be exposed to the technology skills. Teachers must also ensure that support and assistance are

available when the students are in need. This will ease the teaching and learning process using blogs as the medium for the students to collaborate since they will not encounter the technical problem in the learning process.

Teachers play an important role to foster students' positive attitudes about writing (Elbow, 2000; Fisher & Frey, 2003). Elbow (2000) proposed that teachers should not focus solely on the traditional approaches to teach writing in which they gave more attention on grammar and technical writing aspects. Instead, they might consider to focus more on audience and response, who is the reader and what is the reason for writing. When students have a wide range of experiences with different audience and purpose, they will be more motivated to write (Haneda & Wells, 2000). In this present study, the group blogs provide the students with this kind of audience, friendly, accepting readers as well as readers who question and evaluate. Elbow also suggested that a more productive approach is to have students write from their own experience and perceptions, then read, and then write again, learning in the process that not just any interpretation or opinion is acceptable, and that reading and writing are progressions of social negotiation for meaning. Students' group blogs serve as a platform to practice writing, provide opportunities to choose the ways to express opinions, and the possibility to exchange ideas with readers.

In addition, in this present study, students decide the articles their groups want to read and discuss and they also decide to which posts they want to respond. This is related to their interests in what they read in their blogs. Here, the strength of using blogs in teaching and learning the second language is obvious as blogs provide the combination of reading, thinking, and writing which leads to interaction and

collaboration among the students. Since they have the power to choose their own reading materials, they tend to choose the ones that can attract the other group members to give feedback on their posts. Thus, the students are engaging in information exchange cognitively and affectively. Moreover, even students who are less confident, pessimistic, and students who struggle with speaking and writing, gain benefits from blogging.

As a blogger herself, it helped the researcher to assist the students to create and use blogs. During the pilot study, the students were exposed to blogs and the features. They also had the hands-on experience on blogging. The students were also familiar with social interaction through different medium such as *wechat, facebook and whassapp* but they used their mother tongue to interact with their friends. Their interaction was also not monitored by any superior. By using blogs, the students applied their knowledge in social interaction but in a controlled situation and it was monitored by their superior, their teacher. In this particular study, the students used English as the language medium to collaborate with each other.

5.3.1.2 Blog setup and Management

Previous studies showed variety of ways to organize and use class blogs. Teachers may set blogs as a means of communication with students to make any announcements, to provide any explanations regarding their lessons, and to give supplementary materials for the students.

Teachers may use class blogs as a single blog that has instructional material, teacher's comments and also student posts or it can be individual students blogs

linked to the main class blog. Teachers can decide whether the blogs are open to any reader to access or may limit the readers to only the class by using password. Furthermore, teachers give a code of ethics to students as a reminder such as guarding personal information, being thoughtful of what they want to comment and post and being appreciative of other students' work. This present study divides the students into small groups and each group has their own blogs. They appointed their own group leaders. Each member has the password to their group blogs and they are responsible to update the posts and also to decorate their blogs. The students can read the blogs of the other groups but for the purpose of this study, the researcher did not encourage them to post comments on the other groups' blogs, instead, they just focused on their own respective group blog. Their English teacher cum researcher has the password to all the group blogs. This enables her to monitor the group progress easily.

The decision to use blogger.com is to the students' advantage because most of them are familiar with the features of the blogs. They helped each other to update their blogs as well as to decorate their blogs.

Teachers can put the effort to review students' writing to monitor the content and correct the structures before it is published. Initially, the researcher of the present study also monitored the students' work before they published, gradually, the students worked with their group members. For the rest of the program, the students collaborate with each other in order to participate in their group blogs. It is vital for teachers to ensure students are comfortable with their group members to make them feel committed to their group.

The new method of learning the second language by using blogs may be a positive attraction for many students, but it also becomes a burden for some especially when they know only their class is doing blogging and their blogs can be read by the students from the other classes. Students who are exam-oriented also admitted that blogging helps them to use the language more but it does not help them much in their examination because the program does not require them to give long responses or comments since the focus is more on collaboration by using the language and also to encourage them to read more English materials.

The advent of new approaches in teaching meant adaption, adoption and changes will take place in classroom practice. Blogging requires a higher level of teacher and student investment in the technology and also adjustment the teaching and learning process. The combination of choice and positive support helps the students to build self-confidence as well as to help students develop a sense of responsibility to participate in their blog discussion. As comments on both the survey and interviews revealed, this particular school has limited availability either in a computer lab—which was reported not having enough computers for all students- or the internet access which sometimes failed to connect. In schools where computers are scarce, having limited access in school may not be sufficient to support students' interest in blogging, even if it is being encouraged by teachers.

5.3.1.3 Reading Materials

Teachers can provide reading materials to the students including glosses, preview vocabulary to activate students' background knowledge to the gist of the texts. Still,

it is better to let the students select their own reading materials and decide what they like to present and lead the discussion the way they choose. Sheu (2004) found out that students were not happy when they read the materials provided by teachers. In the present study, during face-to-face session, the students can choose the materials provided by teacher in their class library. They were not assigned to which material to read. During virtual supervision, they had to find their own reading materials and shared with their friends. This is a contradiction of what Leung (2002) had done when she faced the difficulty to find appropriate reading materials for her students until she was referred by her friend to a Japanese teacher to get the reading materials. The finding from the present study is similar to what Sheu (2004) found out that by giving students freedom to choose reading materials has a positive impact on students' attitude toward reading.

Thus, it is advisable to let the students choose their own reading materials but to begin an extensive reading program, at the initial stage, teachers need to provide reading materials that can cater to students' interest. These echo those of Nishino (2007) findings and suggest that providing interesting materials at a suitable level of difficulty contribute to students' motivation to read in L2 (Leung, 2002).

Social constructivists emphasize on a need to transform language learning process from teacher-centered to an approach in which learners are actively involved in the construction of knowledge. By having the opportunity to choose the reading materials to be read, it can easily cater to their interest. Social constructivists believe that humans learn by social and communal activities whereby meaning is shaped and knowledge is constructed through discussion with peers and teachers, and through

reflection (Higgs and McCarthy, 2005). The collaborative nature of blogs means that the students can build their knowledge together with their peers and they have the responsibility of their own learning.

This study also indicated how blogs can be an effective platform for students to collaborate in their reading program. The students cited the websites that were the sources for their reading materials. There were abundant of sources available on the internet. Based on the findings of the study conducted by Tekinarslan (2008), some students plagiarize directly by using copy-paste method. At the initial stage of this study, the students also tended to do the same process but after exposing them to ways to paraphrase and reconstruct, they started to use their own words to express their views.

5.3.1.4 Rubrics on Writing Blogs

Moreover, teachers need to provide specific rubrics on writing one's own blog and on commenting on others' blogs, especially when they want to posts negative comments (Ellison & Wu, 2008). This will serve as a guideline for the students on what to write and what should be avoided in their blog posts.

Prior to the program, students must be given the guidelines for their blog discussion. The list of what is acceptable and unacceptable posts and comments should be provided and explained clearly to them (Campbell, 2004).

5.3.1.5 Build Rapport with Students

In addition, it is important to build rapport within groups and the whole class (Churchill, 2009). As supportive class environment is needed to enhance class discussion (Dallimore, Hertenstein, and Platt; 2004), teachers need to create a supportive class for students, both physically and virtually. Make the students realize that they are being monitored although the blogging activities are done from their own places. Teachers need to take the initiative to join the group discussion when the students are on-line.

In addition, the number of members in one group must be considered carefully. This will make sure the group members feel the responsibility to contribute to their blog group discussion, rather than becoming a “sleeping partner” to their group.

5.3.1.6 Instill the Confident to Use English

Teachers also need to instill students' confidence to use English. Based on the interview coding, there were a lot of feeling “shy”, not “confident”, and “fear of being laughed at” indicators. Teachers need to keep prompting the students to use the language. Asian students are not familiar with the concept of collaborative learning with peers or group discussion (Campbell, 2004). The study carried out by Campbell showed that the traditional face-to-face classroom is a threatening environment to adapt. The students' enthusiasm and positive reaction shown in this study suggest that it might be beneficial to use online discussion to introduce the collaborative teaching and learning concept.

The findings from the present study showed that the students felt more secured to express themselves in blogs discussions compared to during face-to-face interaction because they “have more time to plan for their responses” and they did not feel embarrassed of being laughed at for their wrong pronunciation. Thus, teachers can use blogs as a platform for students to collaborate with their peers in using the targeted language.

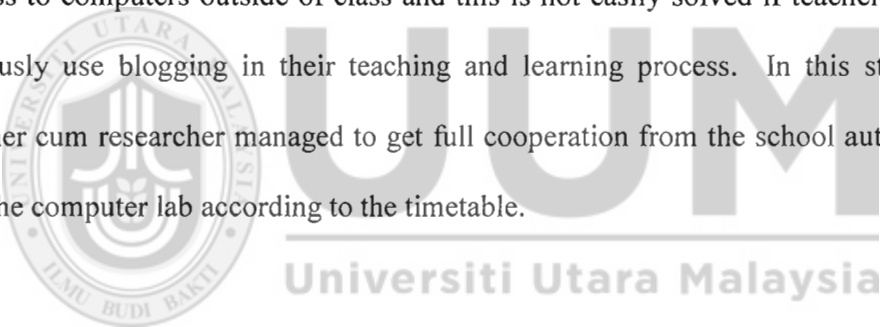
Undoubtedly, computer technologies possess potential weaknesses but teachers can always manipulate the strengths to create a comfortable medium for students to put their second language in use. Still, teachers need to remember not to ignore the students who are too self-conscious about their linguistic competency and about what they would say about them. The findings from the study carried out by Holmes (2000) on intercultural communication of Chinese students show that students have ideas but they do not have enough time. The data gathered from the present study indicates that some students were too conscious of their language use and kept restructuring their sentences before they managed to post in their blogs. Teachers need to identify these students and keep encouraging them to explore the language, use the language as they will be able to learn and improve in the targeted language by making practicing the language.

5.3.2 Implications for the School Administrators

School administrative support is vital for teachers in making sure the success of this program. Resources must be easily accessible by the students. Teachers need adequate support frequently to set up blogs and monitor and maintain it. They may abandon the blogs if they need to spend too much additional time and effort although

blogging has many advantages for their students. Blogging must be valued because it involves not only the combination of teachers' preparation and instructional plans but also the effort to ensure students' access to computers and the support and cooperation by school administrators.

School authority should also update the ability of internet connection that will allow the program to be carried out more effectively. However teachers found out that the availability of computers during school time is another factor that needs a serious consideration because it has to be scheduled for class availability that limits the regularity of use. In addition, for some students they face the problem of lack of access to computers outside of class and this is not easily solved if teachers plan to seriously use blogging in their teaching and learning process. In this study, the teacher cum researcher managed to get full cooperation from the school authority to use the computer lab according to the timetable.



5.3.3 Implications for Future Research

This study identified the nature of students' blog posts during face-to-face and virtual supervision. The five elements of students' blog posts were evaluated in these categories: promptness and initiatives, delivery of posts, relevance of posts, expressions within the posts and contribution to the learning community. The elements were compared to see if there is any difference between the students' posts when they were monitored face-to-face and when they were virtually supervised by their teacher. This study was limiting inasmuch as it only investigated one class of a secondary school students. Future research may want to include several classes or

several schools and examine differences based on the students' language competencies, available resources and teachers' technology skills.

In addition, this study also helped to identify the interactional patterns of students' blog posts based on 19 codes used by Bales Interactional Process Analysis. New studies could focus on the different codes or look at the emergent themes from the posts done by the students, instead of using the existing ones. The comparison of the themes emerged when the students blog from different settings then can be carried out.

Moreover, some researchers question whether blogs used in educational settings are really blogs because students often write to prompt others to respond rather than writing from their own interests and also because they are being prompted by teachers to write. Furthermore, generally, they don't contribute unless they are required to do so, and they stop blogging as soon as the program ends (Richardson, 2003; Downes, 2004;). In addition, the nature of school setting restricts time and accessed to the internet. Still, blogs can provide for students a space for interaction, reading and writing than allow all the students to participate rather than becoming passive students in class, and that promotes the evolution of communities of learners as both readers and writers (Downes, 2004; Richardson, 2006b). Another field to venture in the future is what blogs can provide for students, and what effects this platform which is text-based and interactive may have on their motivation to write.

Next, the other students from the other classes should be allowed to read and to comment on the students' posts as to make the students feel the bigger sense of

audience. This will make them more alert of their posts and they will be more careful of the language use. The involvement of other students, not only their own classmates will create the real life situation for the students to apply their language use. The present study allowed the other students from the other classes to read the blogs but not to comment.

This study also identified the students' attitudes and perceptions about the use of blogs in using blogs for their language learning. Additional research could also be done to include the rural and urban area students or the students with different language competencies and compare their perceptions. This type of analysis was not possible in this study because the researcher also acted as teacher teaching the class. However future research with different schools or classes may also face problems due to time constraints and the students' availability. Future researchers may also want to further investigate factors that affect students and teachers' attitudes and perceptions. Although there are many studies done in the use of blogs in assisting teaching activities, new studies could focus on the capabilities of newer technology and the investigation of how the use of this technology could affect learn.

Data from the survey, the interviews, and the class observation suggested that blogging helps develop students' confidence to collaborate by using the targeted language in their blog discussion but this study does not examine to what extent the students feel confidence using English during their in-class discussion where they have to participate orally instead of using the written mode of collaboration. So whether or not their confidence to use the language during the blog discussion transfers to face-to-face discussion is yet to be investigated.

The data sources confirmed students' active participation in the blogs. The writer is free to post an entry about their reading material and the readers have the opportunity for to directly ask the writer about the post and also state their observations and comments. The networking capability of blogs also enables readers to engage with each other. The future research might want to look at the nature of readers' feedback, and effects of the feedback on the writers.

Finally, the nature and effect of teachers' engagement with their students' posts as well as their students' interaction with others' blog posts might be explored to get the further in sight of this phenomenon.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

This study examined the researcher's experience and the students' experience with the use of blogs in an ESL extensive reading programme at a secondary school. For an in-depth study, the researcher chose two groups consisted of 4 students each which represented the other 3 groups with the total of 20 students. The number of blog posts for their groups was used as the criteria selection.

Firstly, this study has limitations on generalizability of the findings. It is useful to note that the purpose of this study is not to generalize but to provide an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon. Secondly, the study may have an issue of generalizability of findings because the context will not be similar, but can be transferable to other contexts depending on degree of similarity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, the researcher provided a description of the students as

participants, a discussion of her experiences and a description of the setting in order for the other researchers who are interested in this field can replicate the work by making comparison to their own context.

It is recommended that future research should be conducted in a larger context with more participants. Another limitation is that the study only lasted for 24 weeks, with students blogging once per week, face-to-face and virtual supervisions alternately. Future studies can be designed for a longer duration not only to generate more data, but to probe students' attitude going through the experience using blogs in their language learning. A longitudinal study can provide a thorough understanding of blogging activities.

Finally, the present research used the existing codes from FSU Online Assessment and Bales' Interaction Process Analysis to analyse the students' blog posts. The open coding was applied only for observational notes and interview transcripts. Future research can use open coding to analyse the students' blog entries to be more flexible in the findings.

5.5 Concluding Remarks

What has motivated the researcher during the process is the knowledge and experience gained as participant and observer in creating blogs for an extensive reading programme. This research opens up a new way of seeing and understanding her teaching and students' learning. Although the researcher was a long time practitioner of ESL instruction and did use technology for teaching and learning, some findings surfaced when the use of blogs was integrated in an extensive reading

programme caught her interest. Firstly, the researcher became aware of the problems related to technology use such as getting the students to create their group blogs. She thought with her expertise using technology she could quickly handle any problem related to technology use. When she implemented this programme, then only she realized that she needed the help from the school administrations and other teachers to make the programme a success.

In addition, pertaining to academic aspects of the course the researcher became more aware of the ESL students' feelings in relation to self-confidence and trust that affected their participation in in-class discussion and also in their blog discussion. The findings also confirmed the positive outcome in using blogs for researcher's intended instructional goals for her extensive reading programme as for the students to collaborate with each other and prompt one another to read more of English materials. Generally, her expectations were justified for using blogs as a pedagogical tool to encourage students' collaboration for an extensive reading programme.

This study proved that blogs could be adapted as a teaching and learning instrument. In designing a program using e-learning tools such as blogs, teachers need to reduce the barriers such as the absence of administrative support, lack of students' participation, unattractive materials and deficiencies in assessments (Rhema and Milliszewska, 2010; Al-Adwan and Smedley, 2012). The present study encouraged the students' active participation in the extensive reading program. The students chose their own reading materials, discussed in their groups and reflected their reading development in the blogs. The students used their understanding and expressed their own opinion and constructed their own knowledge. This indicates the use

the constructivist nature of the blogs. Students mentioned their feelings and expectations about the reading course in their blogs. This allowed the teacher to receive her students' feedback to review the program.

The study illustrates certain ways in which a blog can make a difference in a second language class, as perceived by a sample of teenage bloggers. In this study, the majority of participants became aware of positive changes, including learning experiences after blogging. In examining the benefits of blogging in the learning process, majority of the participants believed that blogging is valuable in acquiring specific knowledge, expressing thoughts and opinions, and expanding one's interests. The students in this study also realized that by using blogs in their language learning, they become more self-directed regardless whether they were face-to-face or virtually monitored by the teacher.



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APPENDIX 1

Example of FSU Analysis

Practical Example of Edelstein & Edward (2002) FSU
 “Assessing Effectiveness of Student Participation in Online Discussions”

Category	Below Average = 1	Average = 2	Good = 3	Excellent = 4	POINTS
Promptness and Initiative	Does not respond to most postings; rarely participates freely	Responds to most postings several days after initial discussion; limited initiative	Responds to most postings within a 24 hour period; requires occasional prompting to post	Consistently responds to postings in less than 24 hours; demonstrates good self-initiative	
Delivery of Post	Utilizes poor spelling and grammar in most posts; posts appear "hasty"	Errors in spelling and grammar evidenced in several posts	Few grammatical or spelling errors are noted in posts	Consistently uses grammatically correct posts with rare misspellings	
Relevance of Post	Posts topics which do not relate to the discussion content; makes short or irrelevant remarks	Occasionally posts off topic; most posts are short in length and offer no further insight into the topic	Frequently posts topics that are related to discussion content; prompts further discussion of topic	Consistently posts topics related to discussion topic; cites additional references related to topic	
Expression Within the Post	Does not express opinions or ideas clearly; no connection to topic	Unclear connection to topic evidenced in minimal expression of opinions or ideas	Opinions and ideas are stated clearly with occasional lack of connection to topic	Expresses opinions and ideas in a clear and concise manner with obvious connection to topic	
Contribution to the Learning Community	Does not make effort to participate in learning community as it develops; seems indifferent	Occasionally makes meaningful reflection on group's efforts; marginal effort to become involved with group	Frequently attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group; interacts freely	Aware of needs of community; frequently attempts to motivate the group discussion; presents creative approaches to topic	
Total Points					

For an assignment provided by the facilitator in which students are to post responses regarding how gender affects maturity, the following student responses/posts might occur within a developing threaded discussion:

Student A:

Boys who mature late would have a double whammy—not only are they behind other boys, but way behind the girls too. Early maturing boys would likely be more confident, less self-conscious, etc. Most adolescent girls are so self-conscious, no matter when they mature. I guess I matured on time, although I didn't have the genes for a "full figure," so I felt like I was behind, and was envious of the more "shapely" girls the boys stared at. I would say that the late maturing girls have a harder time early on. Early maturing girls most likely feel better about themselves early on. However, this exposes them to older boys who will exploit them, and experiences they are not emotionally prepared for. Has anyone had a similar experience?

Student B:

Negative consequences for early maturing girls appear to be more severe than for early maturing boys. Girl problematic behaviors include depression, eating disorders, and early sexual activity due to their early physical development. Early maturing boys perceived themselves more positively and had more successful peer relations. However, overall, the research states that late maturation for late adolescents has an overall positive impact on their body image, and senses of identity. Took me several years to accept my body and maintain a positive self image.

Student C:

I think this like everything else is relative.

Applying the rubric "Assessing Effectiveness of Student Participation in Online Discussions," the objective scores for each of the students are as follows:

CATEGORY	Student A	Student B	Student C
Promptness and Initiative	4	2	3
Delivery of Post	4	2	3
Relevance of Post	4	3	1
Expression within the Post	4	3	2
Contribution to the LC	4	3	1
TOTAL	16	13	10

The facilitator would determine the range of acceptable participation for each of the modules within a course. For example, scores of less than 10 might indicate that the student is participating below an acceptable standard, and strategies for improvement might be presented in order to improve the student's contribution to the threaded discussion and ultimately, the learning community.

Reviewing the scores that the students obtained, it is clear that Student A, who received a total of 16, is participating in all categories to a high degree. Furthermore, it would be assumed that this student is achieving the learning outcome of effective contribution to learning community development.

Student B is participating at a more average degree, with a total score of 13. The facilitator may opt to contact the student to reiterate the need for grammatically correct postings which are free of spelling errors and to prompt the student to post in a more timely fashion.

With Student C, who had a total of 10, a less than acceptable participation is noted in at least two of the categories: Relevance of Post and Contribution to the Learning Community. The facilitator would be obligated to address concerns with the student and may need to develop strategies to assist the student in becoming a more engaged and successful e-learner.



APPENDIX 2

Bales' Interaction Process Analysis "Revised and Expanded"

CODE	CATEGORY
SOCIAL	EMOTIONAL AREA : POSITIVE REACTIONS
1	Shows solidarity, raises others' status, gives help, reward
2	Shows tension release, jokes, laughs, shows satisfaction
3	Agrees, shows passive acceptance, understands, consurs, complies
TASK	AREA : ATTEMPTED ANSWER
4	Gives suggestions, direction, implying autonomy for other
5	Gives opinion, evaluation, repeats, analysis, express feeling, wish
6	Gives orientation, information, repeats, clarifies, confirms
6.1	Gives personal information
6.2	Gives topic-related information
6.3	Gives technical information
TASK	AREA : QUESTIONS
7	Asks for orientation, information, repetition, con firmation
7.1	<i>Asks technical information</i>
7.2	<i>Asks for topic-related information</i>
7.3	<i>Asks for personal information</i>
8	Asks for opinion, evaluation, analysis, expression of feeling
9	Asks for suggestion, direction, possible ways of action
SOCIAL	EMOTIONAL AREA : NEGATIVE REACTIONS
10	Disagrees, shows passive rejection, formality, withholds help
11	Shows tension, asks for help,, withdraws out of field
12	Shows antagonism, deflates other's status, defends or assets self
*Categories	In italics are addition to the original Interaction Process Analysis.

APPENDIX 3

QUESTIONNAIRE 1

Date: _____

Please put a tick (/) at the appropriate box and provide the answers at the provided space

Sila tanda (/) untuk jawapan anda dan tulis jawapan di ruangan yang disediakan.

Form :

Age :

Gender :

English Grade for PMR :

1	Do you use a computer at your school on at least an occasional basis?		
2	Do you use a computer at home on at least an occasional basis?		
3	Do you use the internet, occasionally?		
4	How often do you go online? a. Several times a day b. About once a day c. 3-5 days a week d. 1-2 days a week		
5	Do you ever find your reading materials for English? a. Newspapers b. Magazine c. Internet d. Class Library e. School Library		

	f. Other sources (please state) _____ _____ _____		
6	Do you blog? (If you don't blog at all, skip questions 7-11)		
7	What type of blogging software do you use? a. Live Journal b. MySpace c. Blogger d. Xanga e. Others (Please state) _____ _____ _____		
8	Do you blog a. under your own name b. by using a pseudonym		
9	Do you ever post any of the following on your blog? a. Text, in the form of essays, articles or written entries b. Photos c. Video d. Audio e. Images other than photos, like drawings, graphs, or clipart		
10	Where do you usually blog from a. home		

	b. school c. someplace else (Please state) _____ _____		
11	Do you allow comments on your blog?		
12	Do you think it is beneficial to use blogs in a class? Why? a. b.		
13	Are you interested to read English materials?		
14	When do you normally read English materials? a. When I have accessed to the materials b. Only when assigned by teachers		
15	Which one do you prefer, a. extensive reading or b. intensive reading? Why? _____		
16	What are the topics that you are interested to read? a. Sports b. Entertainment c. Stories d. Encyclopedia e. Social Issues d. Others (Please state) _____ _____		

APPENDIX 4

Questionnaire Post Pilot Study

1. How do you feel reading English articles extensively without having to answer comprehension questions and do the summary of the articles as you normally do in your reading class? Why?

Apakah perasaan anda membaca artikel Bahasa Inggeris tanpa perlu menjawab soalan kefahaman dan melakukan rumusan seperti yang biasa anda lakukan dalam kelas anda? Mengapa?

2. Do you like to use blogs to share about your reading experience with your group members? Explain.

Adakah anda suka menggunakan blog berkongsi pengalaman membaca dengan ahli kumpulan anda? Huraikan.

3. Do blogs help to improve your language competencies? Please explain.

Adakah blogs membantu mempertingkatkan kemahiran bahasa Inggeris anda? Jelaskan.

4. List the problems you faced during the programme.

Senaraikan masalah atau halangan yang anda hadapi sepanjang program ini dijalankan.

5. How did you overcome the problems encountered during the programme?

Bagaimana anda mengatasi masalah-masalah yang dihadapi sepanjang program ini?



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APPENDIX 5

PILOT STUDY: DISCUSSION ON THE FINDING

1.0 Questionnaire Findings: Pre-Pilot Study

Two sets of questionnaires were used as research tools in this pilot study. Both sets of questionnaires were adopted and adapted from Jones (2006). She used the questionnaires to study how students responded to the use of blogs for writing processes. Thus, some adaptation was made to the original questionnaires to suit the purpose of the present study which focused on the use of blogs for collaborative learning in an extensive reading programme. The second part of the questionnaire which was on the students' writing ability was deleted since the focus of this study was on students' collaboration and extensive reading. The first Questionnaire was to establish perceptions about students' interest in reading L2 materials extensively, their in-class collaboration and interaction by using English as their second language and also their background knowledge of the use of blogs in their second language teaching and learning processes. The second set of the questionnaire was given at the end of the pilot study to elicit students' feedback on their experience using blogs in a second language extensive reading program and the challenges they faced during the program.

As the primary concern was to examine the students' interest in L2 extensive reading, their field of reading interest and their background knowledge about the use of technology in relation to the second language learning, 100 questionnaires were distributed to form 4 students of a secondary school. The samples were 57 girls and 43 boys from 4 classes. All 100 questionnaires were returned but 7 were

rejected because of incomplete responses. Thus, 93 questionnaires were analyzed. The sample questionnaire is enclosed in Appendix 3.

This questionnaire consists of 16 questions. They are open-ended questions as well as Yes or No responses. The questionnaire is divided into 3 parts namely the students' demographic information, the field of their reading interest and their background knowledge about the use of technology in relation to the second language learning. The Malay translation was provided for all questions to make meaning clearer to the students. The Malay translation was checked by one experience English teacher and also another expert Malay Language teacher. There is a need to translate a questionnaire "if one or more targeted populations is known to need a different language from the one in which the questionnaire is designed" (Harkness & Schoua-Glusberg, 1998: 88).

1.2 Topic of Interest

When asked about the topics appealed to their interest, the students listed down the topics they liked. Table 3.4 shows the topics preferred by the students.

Table 3.5

Topics Preferred by Students

TOPICS	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Sports	43	44%
Entertainment	78	80%
Narrative/Stories	84	87%
Social Issues	97	100%

All students (100%) preferred to read about social issues. They loved to know what was happening around them. Narrative or Stories were chosen by 87% and this was

followed by entertainment which was opted by 78% of the students. While 43% of them liked to read about sports. Based on these, with the help of a few colleagues from my school English Department, I searched for the reading materials to be placed in the class library for the students to read.

1.3 The Use of Blogs

The response for their background in blogging showed that 78 (80%) out of 97 students felt that they had some experience with blogging and 19 others (20%) claimed to have the basic knowledge about blogs. They reported that they read blogs that are related to their interests such as entertainment, and sports. Only 23 out of 97 (24%) students had their own blogs. They also frequently used internet connection in their daily lives whether by using computer, laptops or mobile phones. 85 out of 97 (88%) stated that they were online on daily basis and they used social media such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. The other 12 (12%) students stated that they were controlled by their parents and they got the access to internet only at school when they entered computer lab and also during weekends.

The findings showed that although the students were familiar with technology, they did not use blogs on their daily basis. Most of them did not favour reading English materials except during their formal reading class.

In the next session, the findings from post pilot study questionnaire will be presented. The findings gathered from the students' blog posts, the field notes during in-class observations and the interviews were also presented to support the students' written responses in the post pilot study questionnaire.

1.4 Questionnaire Set 2: Post Pilot Study Questionnaire

The second set of questionnaire was given at the end of the pilot study to elicit the students' feedback on their experience using blogs in their extensive program. The questionnaire consists of 5 open-ended questions.

Questionnaire 2 (Appendix 4) was to gather the information and feedback on the students' experience of using blogs in English lessons (Research question 4). The researcher asked students to answer five questions pertaining their experience reading English articles, without having to answer questions regarding the materials and also to write the summary of the articles as they normally did in their reading classes; their perceptions and experience of using blogs to collaborate with friends and the problems they encountered when blogs were embedded in their lessons.

Question 1: How do you feel reading English materials extensively without having to answer comprehension questions and do the summary?

From the feedback, most students wrote they felt "happy", "interested", "eager" to read L2 materials without having to answer the comprehension questions and to come out with the summary of the passages like the routine for their reading class. One of them from group Alphanian 1 (1PS2) stated that, *"it was like a routine, to read and to find the answers to the questions and later do the summary."* Another student from group Alphanian 3 (3PS4) wrote, *"I feel relaxed and I enjoy myself reading the articles. I don't have to open my dictionary. I just read and we discuss about it in our group. I can ask my friends things I do not know in the text. It's fun reading, no pressure, I like."*

Question 2: Do you like to use blogs to share about your reading experience with your group members?

All but three students or 9 out of 12 students enjoyed themselves using blogs in the reading program. From their responses, several themes emerged.

Feeling confident

As stated by a student (1PS2) from group Alphanian 1 when asked about the use of blogs in their reading program, “It’s great!!!” His view was supported by his group member, 1PS3 who mentioned that blogging made her feel more confident to write in English,

“Blogging buat I rasa yakin to use English with my friends sebab semua orang guna English dalam blogs.” (1PS3, Alphanian 1, Questionnaire)

<“Blogging makes me feel confidence to use English with my friends because all students use English in writing blogs.”>

The use of blogs also helped shy students to interact with their friends without feeling afraid to be laughed at for their limited language competency as stated by 3PS3 from group Alphanian 3,

“I am a shy girl. In class, biasanya (normally) I will not speak English sebab takut my friends akan gelak punyalah (because I am afraid to be laughed at by my friends)” (3PS3, Interview).

Blogs served as a platform for students to use English with their friends. Another student built his confidence to use the language in blogs after he read his friends’ posts and comments. 2PS4 from Alphanian 2 stated that,

“I know I am not good to use English. When I read my friends’ posts and comments, barulah saya tahu yang they face the same problem as me. They just write and I tahu ada salah. I feel okay and happy to use the language dalam blog.” (2PS4, Alphanian 2, Questionnaire)

<“I know I am not good to use English. When I read my friends’ posts and comments, *then only I know that* they face the same problem as me. They just write and I *know there are errors*. I feel okay and happy to use the language *in blogs*.”>

Promote Collaboration

The students enjoyed reading the materials and shared with their friends without having to answer comprehension questions regarding the texts and come out with a summary of the text as they normally do in their reading lessons. 2PS3 from Alphanian 2 wrote,

“I can share my reading with my group members. No need to think and search for answers for comprehension questions and write summary after that.”

Since extensive reading encourages students to read a lot of reading materials and students are not required to understand every single line of the article read, the pressure to the students was lessen.

On the other hand, there were also the negative comments that reflected that the use of blogs in their teaching and learning process made them feel “*frustrated*”, “*discouraged*” and “*worried*”.

Wasting Time

Several students were not blog-friendly. They attempted to write a post but to no avail due to technical problems. This was expressed by 2PS2 from Alphanian 2:

“There are time when I cannot get my blog...I try and try for several time but I cannot. I waste my time to get it open. I am worry if I am the less active member in my group. I am learning about blog from my friends although sometimes I feel like giving up.”

(2PS2, Alphanian 2, Interview)

Poor Command of English

Students felt embarrassed to use English in their blogs because they thought that their command of English was very poor. They felt conscious and kept reminding the researcher not to tell the others about this program. 1PS1 from Alphanian 1 wrote,

“My English is terrible. I prefer not to share.”

The same view was expressed by 3PS4 from Alphanian 3,

“I feel tension, my friend will laugh at me, English not that good. Don’t tell other class, okay. I don’t want them to read our blog, **malu** (*shy*)” (Questionnaire).

The students gained confidence to use English in their blogs because they felt that they were not monitored by anybody. Some students felt that they liked the idea of using blogs, what discouraged them was the use of English in writing their posts and comments. In one of my field notes, I jotted down:

“The students kept asking me if there was any possibility for them to use their mother tongue in their blog. They enjoyed the blogging process. They decorated their blogs by adding elements that I did not teach them such as background music and the stickers. I could see that they enjoyed the blogging process. What hinders them to be active in the blogging process is the use of English. I wish they just write, ignore the grammar errors and keep collaborating through the use of blogs.”(Field notes, February 23, 2012)

Blogs Improve English Competencies

All students (100%) gave positive responses by stating “Yes” to the first part of the question. They stated several ways on how blogs can help to enhance their English language proficiency.

Blogs focus more on discussion not grammar

“It (The blog) is a place for us to use English fully. Nobody comments on our grammar because we focus more on the discussion.” (1PS3, Alphanian 1)

The students gave more focus on the content of the discussion rather than highlighting their friends' mistakes. They kept sharing their views about reading materials.

Immediate Feedback

By using blogs to collaborate with their group members, students do not have to wait for English lessons to get the input in English and also to put their language into practice. As responded by a member from Alphanian 2,

“We do not have to wait for English class to use English, even now the relief teachers want to take us to computer lab because they also know we are doing blogs now.”

(2PS2, Alphanian 2)

His view was supported by 3PS4,

“I can update my blog and post comments using my hand phone, the different is that now I am using English. That is great.”

(3PS4, Alphanian 3)

From the students' responses, the researcher found out that the use of blogs did contribute positively to the students' learning of L2. They had more chances to use the language outside the classroom and with the easy access of the internet they felt free to post in their blogs.

Problems Faced During Blogging Activities in an Extensive Reading Programme

For the final part of the writing assignment, the students highlighted the problems they faced during the reading and reading activities. The most common problems faced by the students were:

i. Low internet connection especially when the lessons were in the morning.

The two school computer labs with 50 computers used only one school internet connection. The internet connection was also shared with a teacher's room which was located beside the computer labs. Thus, when many users used the same source of internet connection, the service became slow.

“Internet very slow, have to wait and wait. I think it waste our time.”
(1PS4, Alphanian , Questionnaire).

When the class was carried out in the morning, both computer labs were occupied by students. Computer lab A was used by these 12 students while computer lab B was used by the other class for teaching and learning process. The large number of internet users might be the cause for the slow internet connection. This was also shared by another student,

“Fast line connection for afternoon class, morning class it is slow. We spend more time to discuss the article, not to blog.” (3PS2, Alphanian 3, Questionnaire).

The students had to spend their time talking about the article rather than sending their posts and comments in blogs. My field notes also indicated the problems faced by the students.

“They (the students) have to spend a long time to get the internet connection. It is one aspect that I need to improve before the main study. Luckily the article they chose is interesting. They spent more time discussing the article than to blog. Alphanian 2 group was frustrated just now. They tried to post in their blogs but after they waited for a while the computers were unable to access the internet connection. I could see their frustration.” (Field notes, February 5, 2012)

ii. Reluctant Group Members

Although all these 12 students volunteered to be in this program, there were still several students who felt reluctant to post actively in their blogs. The reasons given were not feeling comfortable to use English in blogs and also fear of being commented on their language use. The feedback given by the students showed this.

“I wish I can write in Bahasa Melayu. It’s more fun and I can say what I want to say easily” (1PS1, Alphanian, Interview).

“My English is terrible. I prefer not to share” (Questionnaire).

Another student did not really keen on posting his post because his group member loved criticizing the other members’ posts by highlighting the use of ungrammatical sentences or wrong word choice.

“I have to check and recheck before I post. My first post was commented by my friend, wrong spelling, wrong tense. Now, I have to ask my other friends first before I post” (3PS4, Alphanian 3, Questionnaire).

iii. Group members didn't give immediate feedback after the posts.

Another problem faced by the students was not getting immediate feedback from their group members. They were used to the other social applications such as WeChat and WhassApp in which they normally got the immediate feedback from their friends. As for blogging, the students were not required to be online synchronously. Therefore, there were possibilities for them not to get the immediate feedback from their group members.

“My post was only commented by one friend and that's it. It is just like one question and one answer. I prefer WeChat,” (3PS2, Alphanian 3, Questionnaire).

Another student wrote,

“I get the comments to my post after 3 days. By that time, I am reading another article, not in the mood to discuss the first article anymore,” (2PS4, Alphanian 2, Questionnaire).

iv. Influence of the Mother Tongue (Kelantanese dialect)

The field notes revealed that during the in-class discussion, students were reluctant to use English. They used Bahasa Melayu (their first language) throughout the discussion. When one group representative presented in front of the class about their selected reading materials, they managed to deliver it in English although there many fillers and interjections such as “mmm” and “aaa”. When the researcher asked the rest of the students to ask the presenter any questions about the article presented, the session took place in 3 languages-English, Bahasa Melayu and their Kelantanese dialect. The researcher tried to prompt them to use fully English but the class went silent and they kept exchanging looks and pushed each other to speak and the slot ended with laughter. When the researcher just ignored the language they used during

the discussion, the class became livelier when most of them participated and exchanged ideas.

“My attempt to prompt them to use English during face-to-face discussion failed. They felt really comfortable using their Kelantanese dialect to discuss the reading article. From my observation, the 3 groups were on task. They did not stray from the task given but they refused to speak in English. When I was near their groups and encouraged them to use English, the discussion stopped, the group became quiet. I am happy to see them reading the article, getting the gist of it and sharing it with their friends. They were just reluctant to speak in English. Still, I could hear a few English words.” (Field notes, February 23, 2012)

Among the responses given about the problems faced by the students during the pilot study were slow internet connection, reluctant group members and delayed feedback. They also felt uncomfortable when their friends commented on the sentence structures and vocabulary use rather than the issues in the reading materials they were supposed to discuss in their blogs. Another problem raised was about the use of L1 during face-to-face in-class discussion.

Overcoming the Problems

The students stated the ways in order to solve the problems stated previously. For slow internet connection, 1PS4 from Alphanian wrote,

“I prefer doing the blog at home, the connection is faster.”

Another student wrote,

“School authority should provide a better internet server. This one is too slow, we need to have a better one,” (2PS2, Alphanian 2).

The students liked to be in the program but the slow internet connection affects their interests to blog actively.

For reluctant group members, all the three group leaders (Alphanian 1,2 and 3) agreed that, *"We advised our group members to join in actively."* The researcher also noticed that the group leaders played their roles in encouraging the group members to write in their blogs.

The students also became more conscious when their posts were commented on the grammar use instead of the content. 1PS4 from Alphanian 1 wrote, *"I become more conscious when I want to post or to comment. I read my draft several time before I post it on blog."*

Similarly, in the filed notes the researcher wrote,

"I have highlighted to all the participants, do not hunt for their friends' grammar errors but focus more on the content. Still, there are students who cannot stop pin pointing their friends' spelling mistakes-which I think more of typo errors and grammar mistakes."(Field notes, February 23, 2012)

Finally, for the use of L1 during face-to-face discussion, 3PS1 wrote,

"Difficult to control the use of Bahasa Melayu during discussion, as a group leader, I let them use the language as long as they talk and give some ideas during discussion" (Alphanian 3).

As mentioned earlier in the researcher's field notes, the students prefer to use their mother tongue to discuss with their friends during face-to-face sessions but they attempted to use fully English in their blogs.

Having to check their blog entries, the researcher noticed that for the first week, the average post was 3 entries during in-class session and they used short sentences. The researcher also noticed they drafted on papers first and kept asking their friends whether their sentences were correct or not. Again, they were more comfortable conversing using their mother tongue.

“Alphanian 1: they drafted on papers first and referred to their friends before posted in their blogs. 1PS2 even showed her draft to her friend in Alphanian 2 to check on her sentence. 1PS3 even came and showed me her sentences before she posted them on blogs. When I said, it’s okay to make mistakes, her respond was, “no teacher, **nanti kena gelak**<*I will be laughed at*>” (Field notes, February 23, 2012)

The students spent time editing what they wanted to post. During the virtual supervision, when the students blog from their own places, the sentences were still short but there were time when they were not on the topic. They diverged from the main discussion related to the article read to talk about something else which was not relevant to the article. The students also started using Bahasa Melayu in their posts,

“**Futsal jom petang ni. Orbit pukul 5**<*Let’s go for futsal game this evening. Meet at Orbit at 5*>.” (2PS3, Alphanian 2).

After going through the data and reading all the students’ comments, the researcher took the effort to meet the school administrator to discuss the problems faced by students as the administration was informed earlier about the program. From the discussions, the school administration agreed to provide the computer lab with the wireless wi-fi detector which enabled students to connect to the main wi-fi from the school office. This made the internet connection become faster.

In addition, to solve the problems of reluctant group members, for the main study, the teacher highlighted the importance of blogging which would help the students to improve their English tremendously. The teacher also informed the students that their participation in blogging would be counted and evaluated and their group performance was based on all group members’ participation.

Next, the students in the pilot study mentioned that they did not give the feedback immediately because they did not know when their group members posted in the blogs. For the main study, the group members were asked to send messages via mobile phones to each other once they posted in their blogs as a notification to others.

Moreover, the teacher highlighted the purpose of blogging in which they were supposed to share information, not to criticize each other. The team leaders for each group shouldered the responsibility to monitor the group members' posts and comments. The guidelines for the students to follow in posting their entries and comments in blog were provided (Appendix 6). The participants for the main study were also given hands-on experience before they started the main project. As for the use of L1 during the in-class discussion, the students were also to use L2 as much as possible during but not to the extent they stopped participating.

The pilot study made the researcher realized the importance of close monitoring on the students' progress for this program. Although the students did not feel comfortable with the teacher's presence, they became more conscious about their progress in the program when they realized that the teacher was reading their blog posts. Teacher must also monitor the students' posts continuously as not to let them be out of tangent. In addition, from the pilot study, the researcher realized that the students' individual personality also influenced their participation in this programme. Thus, the researcher had to create a conducive environment for the students to work together and feel at ease with their group members and also the larger audience they had, rather than having only their teacher read their written work. A session was

carried out with them explaining the benefits they would gain from the project. They were also given the opportunity to choose their own group members to make them feel comfortable to collaborate throughout the program (see 3.10 Participants). For the main study, the students would have the face-to-face sessions once a week for one hour duration for them to discuss reading materials and post in their blogs and for the second week, they would be monitored virtually by the teacher. It was also agreed that to make the discussion more subtle, in a week, only a member would post and the other members would start discussing on the issues raised.



APPENDIX 6

Consent Letter

ZURAINEE BINTI ARIFFIN
UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA

Purpose of the Project:

I am Zurainee binti Ariffin, a doctoral candidate in Universiti Utara Malaysia would like to get the cooperation from the students to carry out my study entitled, "BLOGS ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING FOR COLLABORATION IN A SECOND LANGUAGE EXTENSIVE READING PROGRAMME".

The primary focus of the study is to study how blogs can be used in an ESL extensive reading program.

Nature of Participation: You will be using a group blog to discuss your reading materials and share your reading experiences. You will blog in two different settings; face-to-face and virtual sessions. I will be looking at how you use the blog, and I want to find out your nature of interaction and also the patterns of your blog interaction.

No names or other identification will be involved in fact, the teacher will have you create a screen name which she will keep a record of. That's to protect you. The blog will be accessible on the Internet, but only members of your class can post or comment. Some students will be interviewed concerning their use of the blog. I may ask you questions from time to time and have you reflect about your experience in using the blog. I will have you complete a survey at the beginning of the class, and I may ask to interview you at some point about your participation on the web log.

Participation is Voluntary. Your participation is strictly voluntary. That means you don't have to do this if you don't want to. If you decide not to do this project or if you decide to quit later on, it will not influence your relationships with the teacher or the researcher.

Confidentiality. I'll do everything I can to keep your information and identity confidential. In presentations and publications, we will use pseudonyms instead of using names of real names. All interview tapes will be destroyed after a three year period.

Benefits. This study provides a safe environment in which students can talk about their thinking and questions about reading and writing in a thoughtful way. The use of the Internet and other communication technology is becoming more important. You could learn more about technology. You might enjoy exploring this tool and your learning in deeper, more complex ways. You may better understand how and why they learn. It may also help you to develop better metacognitive skills.

Questions. If you have any questions about this research study, please feel free to contact me at 0139081515 or you can meet me personally.

I have read and understand the consent letter and agree to participate in this study

Name

Signature

Phone Number: _____



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APPENDIX 7

The Do's and Don'ts in Blogging

Adopted from

<http://www.tributemedia.com/blog/some-dos-and-donts-of-blogging>

INTERACTIVITY

Create events to bring interactivity to your blog. You could also ask your readers to comment or to give any suggestions related to your articles. Make sure the articles chosen cater to your audience's interests.

PICTURES

Be careful about the pictures you want to use. Don't believe that if an image can be picked up easily from the Internet (via Google images for instance) you would be to use it freely on your blog. This is not true. Just make sure you give proper credit to the owners of the pictures and make sure the picture is relevant to your article.

BAD LANGUAGE

Bad language should be avoided at all cost. Any form of defamation, strong language, criticism, or even downright critical opinion of a friend is never appropriate.

If you have nothing nice to say, don't say anything at all – this goes without saying but if you particularly disagree with something someone has said or something they support that you don't, holding your tongue (or should we say typing?) is always best. Even if you don't mean to come off as offensive, words put online always have the potential to misconstrue what you actually meant.

COMMENTS

Don't be afraid to open your blogs up to comments. It allows users to interact with your blog and offer differing opinions which is actually a good thing. Do make sure and moderate the comments. Any comments that contain strong language or are inappropriate should be removed right away.

Leave a friendly comment – it always feels nice when someone leaves a kind compliment on your posts so pay it forward to the rest of the community. A thoughtful comment that shows you've read the blog post

Honesty is the best policy – be yourself and above all, be truthful.



APPENDIX 8

Interview 1

1. Would you like me to change your group members according to my selection?
Why?

Adakah anda hendak menukar ahli kumpulan mengikut pemilihan cikgu?Kenapa?

GROUP	RESPONSE	THEME
ALPHA 1		
ALPHA 2		
ALPHA 3		
ALPHA 4		
ALPHA 5		

2. How do you feel blogging now?

Apa perasaan anda mengenai blog sekarang?

GROUP	RESPONSE	THEME
ALPHA 1		
ALPHA 2		
ALPHA 3		
ALPHA 4		
ALPHA 5		

3. How do you solve the problems when the internet line at school becomes slow?

Bagaimana anda menyelesaikan masalah apabila sambungan internet di sekolah menjadi perlahan?

GROUP	RESPONSE	THEME
ALPHA 1		
ALPHA 2		
ALPHA 3		
ALPHA 4		
ALPHA 5		

4. Do you feel comfortable to share what you read with your friends online?

Adakah anda merasa selesa berkongsi apa yang anda telah baca dengan rakan-rakan anda secara atas talian?

GROUP	RESPONSE	THEME
ALPHA 1		
ALPHA 2		
ALPHA 3		
ALPHA 4		
ALPHA 5		

5. What do you do to make sure everybody in your group participate in the blogging activities?

Apa yang anda lakukan untuk memastikan semua ahli kumpulan mengambil bahagian dalam aktiviti blog?

GROUP	RESPONSE	THEME
ALPHA 1		
ALPHA 2		
ALPHA 3		
ALPHA 4		
ALPHA 5		

6. How do you normally find the articles to read?

Bagaimana biasanya anda mencari artikel untuk dibaca?

GROUP	RESPONSE	THEME
ALPHA 1		
ALPHA 2		
ALPHA 3		
ALPHA 4		
ALPHA 5		

7. Do you realize that the other classes are reading your blogs?

Adakah anda menyedari pelajar-pelajar dari kelas lain membaca blog kumpulan anda?

GROUP	RESPONSE	THEME
ALPHA 1		
ALPHA 2		
ALPHA 3		
ALPHA 4		
ALPHA 5		

APPENDIX 9

Interview 2

1. How is your group progressing?

Bagaimana group anda sekarang?

GROUP	RESPONSE	THEME
ALPHA 1		
ALPHA 2		
ALPHA 3		
ALPHA 4		
ALPHA 5		

2. What do you think of the article chosen by your friends?

Bagaimanakah anda melihat bahan bacaan yang dipilih oleh rakan-rakan anda?

GROUP	RESPONSE	THEME
ALPHA 1		
ALPHA 2		
ALPHA 3		
ALPHA 4		
ALPHA 5		

3. Do you read the article thoroughly before you respond to your friends' posts?

Adakah anda membaca artikel tersebut secara menyeluruh sebelum memberi respon kepada rakan anda?

GROUP	RESPONSE	THEME
ALPHA 1		
ALPHA 2		
ALPHA 3		
ALPHA 4		
ALPHA 5		

4. How do you make sure that your group members participate in blogging activities although the teacher is not around to monitor?

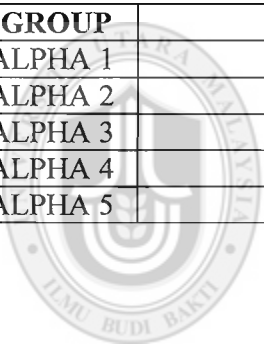
Apakah yang anda lakukan bagi memastikan ahli kumpulan anda menyertai aktiviti blog walaupun guru tidak ada untuk mengawasi anda?

GROUP	RESPONSE	THEME
ALPHA 1		
ALPHA 2		
ALPHA 3		
ALPHA 4		
ALPHA 5		

5. Do you prefer to join you in the discussion or do you prefer to blog just within your group members?

Adakah anda memilih untuk guru bersama dalam diskusi blog anda atau adakah anda memilih untuk berdiskusi sesama ahli kumpulan sahaja?

GROUP	RESPONSE	THEME
ALPHA 1		
ALPHA 2		
ALPHA 3		
ALPHA 4		
ALPHA 5		



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APPENDIX 10

Interview 3

1. How do you want readers of the blog to view your writing?

Bagaimana anda mahu pembaca blog anda melihat hasil tulisan anda?

GROUP	RESPONSE	THEME
ALPHA 1		
ALPHA 2		
ALPHA 3		
ALPHA 4		
ALPHA 5		

2. How useful is the blog discussion forum in encouraging your class participation?

Bagaimana perbincangan blog mempengaruhi penyertaan anda dalam kelas?

GROUP	RESPONSE	THEME
ALPHA 1		
ALPHA 2		
ALPHA 3		
ALPHA 4		
ALPHA 5		

3. Could I sit with you as you blog? Did you think aloud as you write your post?

Bolehkah cikgu duduk bersama anda semasa anda blog? Adakah anda berfikir secara kuat semasa anda menulis blog?

GROUP	RESPONSE	THEME
ALPHA 1		
ALPHA 2		
ALPHA 3		
ALPHA 4		
ALPHA 5		

4. As you read the blog, what patterns do you notice during face-to-face and virtual supervision? Are there any differences? What do you like? What are the things you do not like?

Apabila membaca blog, apakah polar interaksi yang anda dapati semasa blog dalam kelas dan semasa pemantauan maya? Ada sebarang perbezaan? Apa yang anda suka? Apa yang anda tidak suka?

GROUP	RESPONSE	THEME
ALPHA 1		
ALPHA 2		
ALPHA 3		
ALPHA 4		
ALPHA 5		

5. What are your suggestions to improve this program?

Apakah cadangan anda untuk memperbaiki program ini?

GROUP	RESPONSE	THEME
ALPHA 1		
ALPHA 2		
ALPHA 3		
ALPHA 4		
ALPHA 5		



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APPENDIX 11

Observation Checklist (adopted from Yaacob, 2006)

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST (adopted from Aizan, 2006)

Date : _____

Time : _____

No. Of Students: _____

Time	Reading Materials	Extensive Reading	And Blogging
		Teacher Does	Students Do



OBSERVATION CHECKLIST: VIRTUAL SUPERVISION

Date :

Time :

Time	Extensive Reading and Blogging
	Teacher Does

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED :

SOLUTIONS



APPENDIX 12

Coding Manual for Interview

Adapted from William G. Wargo (2013)

<http://www.academicinfocenter.com/qualitative-data-analysis-coding-of-transcripts.html>

When **transcribing interviews** both coders followed the format⁵ in order to ensure ease of analysis:

1. at the top of the first page, enter the code name of the participant
2. at the top of the first page, enter the date the interview was conducted
3. create a one inch margin on the left column
4. create a two and a half inch margin on the right column
5. double-space throughout the text
6. number all lines
7. number all pages

The guidelines used to increase the accuracy and confidence of the findings:

1. The transcripts were typed double-spaced, with consecutive line numbers included for the whole manuscript. Page number were included. The right margin two inches wide was made to enter the themes.
2. At the top of the first page of all transcriptions a number was assigned.
3. The transcripts were read and referred to the recording on tape to confirm the accuracy of the .
4. As the transcript was read, the theme was identified by shading or underlining the meaningful unit and it was written in the right margin..

5. A spread sheet was created to analyze the themes from each participant and discover the frequent and recurring ones. On the spread sheet the themes from each of the transcriptions were transferred.

1. Column 1, Number of each theme
2. Column 2, Name of each theme
3. Column 3, Name/code number of the first participant
4. Columns 4 through xx, Names/code numbers of subsequent participants

When analyzing the themes from all other participants, the prior themes were given the focus. If the themes already exists, the page number/line number under the participant's name was entered. If a new theme was discovered, it was entered at the end of columns 1 and 2.

Example of Spread Sheet

Theme Number	Theme Name	Alpha 1	Alpha 2	Alpha 3	Alpha 4	Alpha 5
1	Lack of confidence	p1L4	P5L6			
2	Reluctant group member		P5L2			
3	Do not want to be laughed at					
4	Lack of time					

Alpha =Name of the group

p = page

L = line

APPENDIX 13

Transcription Conventions

(Adopted from Yaacob, 2006)

Bold	-	Bahasa Malaysia
< <i>italic</i> >	-	English translation
()	-	Non-verbal behavior
(pause)	-	Pause for a few seconds
XXX	-	Unclear conversation
[-	Overlapping speech

Note: Unless otherwise stated, all translations are by the author of this thesis.



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