

## Voice Blogging versus Text Blogging: Effects of Blogs on Korean EFL Learners' Oral Proficiency

Na-Young Kim  
(Hanshin University)

Kim, Na-Young. "Voice Blogging versus Text Blogging: Effects of Blogs on Korean EFL Learners' Oral Proficiency." *Studies in English Language & Literature* 44.1 (2018): 175-197. This paper examines the effect of blogs on EFL learners' oral proficiency. 194 Korean EFL learners participated in this study. They were third- or fourth-year college students taking a speaking class to improve their oral proficiency at the school of information technology. For the experiment, they were divided into three experimental groups and one control group: voice and text blogging (n=47), voice blogging (n=47), text blogging (n=52), and control (n=48). There were fifteen blog sessions in total. During the experimental period, the voice and text blogging group posted both voice- and text-blog entries. The voice blogging group uploaded only voice-blog entries, while the text blogging group produced their text-blog entries. Oral proficiency pre- and post-tests were administered before and after the experiment based on ACTFL OPI. Individual interviews were conducted at the end. Paired samples t-tests were run to compare pre- and post-test scores. One-way ANOVAs were employed to compare group differences. Content analysis method was applied for qualitative analysis of interview data. Findings revealed that participants in all groups improved oral proficiency. Particularly, the voice and text blogging group outperformed the voice blogging group and the control group. Interview results turned out to be positive. Pedagogical implications were suggested for EFL teachers. (Hanshin University)

**Key Words:** blogs, voice blogging, text blogging, EFL learning, oral proficiency

### I. Introduction

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) has facilitated foreign language

learning by providing natural and genuine linguistic inputs (Kim, 2017). It has also promoted interactive communication activities using target languages. According to Warschauer (2001), CMC involves two dimensions: modality (textual or aural) and time (synchronous or asynchronous). Text-based CMC includes email, text blogs, text chat, and other textual interaction on the Internet. Voice-based CMC involves voiced email, voice blogs, voice-chat, and other aural communication on the internet.

Previous studies have shown that CMC motivates foreign language learners to engage in meaningful communication using the target language and results in effective language acquisition (Hanson-Smith, 2001). Fotos and Browne (2004) suggested that CMC technology shifts language learning from a teacher-centered approach towards a learner-centered one, allowing learners to take control of their own learning content and learning process. Research has indicated that well-designed CMC activities encourage the learners to notice and modify their own output content and structure, increase motivation, reduce anxiety, facilitate learner autonomy, and foster cooperative and collaborative learning (Pellettieri, 2000). Furthermore, CMC provides a safer, more relaxed, and less stressful environment for language learners (Hanson-Smith, 2001) by enabling the learners to express their thoughts and ideas at their own pace beyond the boundaries of time and space.

A blog, one of the asynchronous CMC tools, has gained increasing notice since 1998. As a short form of web log, it serves as a publicly accessible personal journal. According to Sun (2009), blogs have changed the way people interact on the Internet. Blogs has allowed people to connect, communicate, and collaborate online, as an example of social software. While traditional websites contain a static and limited scope of content reflecting the website developers' ideas, blogs provide their readers with diverse ideas and questions, and thus, help develop collective intelligence. Bahce and Taslaci (2009) claimed that blogs have been used to not only post messages to a web page but also teach a foreign language.

Because learners of a foreign language can easily update and frequently publish their journals using their target language, foreign language teachers have applied this

user-friendly technology to their classroom instruction and language learning (Campbell, 2003). With the advancement of blogs, foreign language learners now have opportunities to not just use their target language for communication purposes but experience peer collaboration and interaction (Huang, 2015). Easily created and frequently updateable blogs have enabled the foreign language learners to become instant publishers online.

Particularly, as Sun (2009) suggested, blogs have created additional opportunities for foreign language speaking practice. In an English as a foreign language (EFL) context in which the demand for improving English speaking proficiency is high but opportunities for speaking practice are limited (Kim, 2017), blogs have been found to be the ideal solution to the pedagogical problem because they can provide a real audience to the learners as well as increase authentic output opportunities. In particular, Huang (2015) claimed that voice blogs should be integrated into the EFL curriculum.

However, studies on the effect of blogs on foreign language education is still in its infancy (Sun, 2009). Furthermore, little research has been studied related to the effect of voice blogs on foreign language learning and teaching (Huang, 2015). The questions are to what extent blogging is effective and how EFL learners perceive blogging for language learning. This study, therefore, aims to explore the application of blogs, both voice blogs and text blogs, for providing speaking opportunities that are rare in EFL curriculum. The following two research questions have guided this study:

1. To what extent is voice blogging, compared to text blogging, effective in English oral proficiency improvement?
2. How is blogging perceived by Korean EFL learners?

## II. Theoretical Background

### 2.1 Oral Proficiency in EFL Learning

English has been acknowledged as a global common language for a long time. Particularly, as adopted for global business, English language has been widely spoken to communicate with foreign colleagues, clients, or business partners (Kim, 2017). It is no wonder, then, that English proficiency has become mandatory to get a job or to get promoted at work (Jeon, 2010). Therefore, in English as a foreign language (EFL) environments, most companies have evaluated their job applicants' or their employees' English proficiency via standardized oral tests and job applicants and employees in this setting have been asked to send their oral proficiency test score to the companies (Derakhshan, Tahery, & Mirarab, 2015).

As demands for oral proficiency standards grew, institutions like American council on the teaching of foreign languages (ACTFL) undertook some projects to define foreign language learners' level of oral proficiency. Hence, ACTFL oral proficiency interview (OPI) was developed based on ACTFL proficiency guidelines (Shin, Kim, & Kang, 2010). Among several English oral proficiency tests, ACTFL OPI has been viewed to be more valid than other tests (Jeon, Kim, Kim, Shin, & Lee, 2010). In her study, Kim (2017) reported that OPI test encouraged EFL learners to improve their actual oral proficiency, increase their belief in English language, enhance their interest in English learning, and boost their confidence in English speaking. Shin, Kim, and Kang (2010) also suggested that OPI has earned positive reviews from Korean EFL learners.

Because official English proficiency tests including OPI became high stakes tests and a crucial factor in their future (Kim, 2009), language learners in Korean EFL settings register English academy classes, take extra English lessons, and even learn English abroad so as to prepare for and take the tests (Jeon, 2010). Interestingly,

they still do not have sufficient information regarding OPI test and they are not yet certain about how to prepare for the test (Shin, Kim, & Kang, 2010). Even though the demand for oral proficiency tests is increasing, test preparation still focuses on practicing pronunciation or memorizing language forms. Considering that the test was developed to assess oral proficiency for real world applications (Kim, 2017), there is a big gap between the purpose of testing and test preparation.

In EFL contexts, test-specific strategies are mainly taught to raise proficiency test scores rather than improve language proficiency itself (Jeon, 2010). Furthermore, according to Chern (2010), freshman English is a mandatory course in EFL college curriculum, but classes are usually large and meet on average for just two hours per week. The curriculum is primarily focused on textbook reading, vocabulary, or grammar, providing few opportunities to practice English speaking (Huang, 2015). Therefore, foreign language learners often lack of opportunities to put their knowledge they have learned into practice in authentic environments (Ho, 2003). The lack of language practice in authentic learning environments with real audience is one of the major difficulties in EFL fields (Chen, 2011).

For most Korean EFL learners, it is also difficult to practice speaking in their target language owing to limited class time and large class sizes (Kim, 2017). In Korea, while the demand for improving their oral proficiency is very high (Kim, 2009) as most universities and companies in Korea have sought to improve learners' speaking proficiency by encouraging them to undergo official English proficiency tests and by setting standards for evaluating their speaking proficiency levels (Jeon, Kim, Kim, Shin, & Lee, 2010), learners' opportunities to use English language as a real communication tool is very limited.

To remedy these limitations in EFL curriculum, language professionals have used educational technology to increase learners' output opportunities and improve their language proficiency (Kim, 2017). According to Kleiman (2004), advanced technology can be used to prepare for the test and to increase test scores. With significant advances in Internet-enabled multimedia technology, educational

technology innovations have taken hold in EFL fields. As a matter of fact, one of the major goals for incorporating advanced technology into language learning is to improve standardized test scores.

Bahce and Taslaci (2009) suggested that blogs can be the ideal solution to the EFL pedagogical problem as they provide a real audience to learners by exposing them to other people from different backgrounds and circumstances, encourage the learners to use their target language for communication purposes, and engage them in peer collaboration and active interaction (Huang, 2015).

## 2.2 Blogging in EFL Learning

Blogs have been used in language education with their interactivity, multimedia features, and ability to support autonomous and cooperative learning. According to Sun (2009), blogs have served as a powerful tool for global conversation as learners can read other bloggers' blogs, link to the blogs, and reference them in their blogs. Bloggers have a strong interconnectedness with their audience, and that is, these worldwide blogs enable language learners to interact with real people outside the classroom (Campbell, 2003). For these reasons, language teachers have applied blogs to their classes as blogs feature easy-to-use interface, frequent update, and interactive comments (Oravec, 2002).

Research has lent support to the claim that blogs effectively facilitate language learning and teaching (Bloch, 2007). Particularly, blogs have been said to be beneficial for improving grammatical correctness, language complexity, and fluency (Pellettieri, 2000). The public feature of content created using blogs ensures that appropriacy and accuracy become more important to the language learners. If learners are aware that their postings will be read by others, they will be more careful before posting. In other words, blogs empower learners to become more analytical and critical (Oravec, 2002).

An automatic date-stamping feature for each post can be also useful for language

learning (Bahce & Taslaci, 2009). Both language teachers and learners see clearly when the learners turned in their assignments with the automatic date-stamping function of blogs. Furthermore, the archiving of blog entries by date or theme locates the message the teachers and learners are looking for. An automatic archive of the past posts facilitates learners' reflection on content and fosters the development of metacognitive strategies by monitoring their learning progress on the blog (Sun, 2009).

According to Bahce and Taslaci (2009), blogs are motivating for language learners and are also a useful supplemental aid to the teachers as teachers can create, edit, and delete their teaching materials using blogs. Learners' blog outcome can replace traditional acts of passive information consumption with acts of active information creation. When teachers put English materials with links to their online websites, learners have chances to read related articles. Blogs can encourage the learners to explore more English websites and lead to autonomous language learning (Campbell, 2004). Moreover, blogs make learners freer to express their own ideas and arguments than classroom-based participants are. As an asynchronous CMC tool, they provide safe, relaxed, and stress-free environments for language learners (Hanson-Smith, 2001). Therefore, foreign language teachers use blogs so as to organize comfortable learning environment.

By publishing their own blogs and receiving comments from others, foreign language learners use the target language freely and work collaboratively with others (Bahce & Taslaci, 2009). By sharing their postings with others, learners can comment and peer edit others' postings. With the advancement of blogs, foreign language learners now have opportunities to not just use their target language for communication purposes but experience peer collaboration and interaction (Huang, 2015). In addition, through blogging, the learners take ownership of their virtual space and the posting they publish. According to Campbell (2004), language learners particularly tend to write more carefully when they recognize that their articles are going to be published online for authentic readers and the readers can comment on

their postings. Blogs, therefore, help the learners build a sense of ownership as well as unique online identity. The learners' approach to their own products engenders a sense of social responsibility, taking their task seriously by publishing their own blogs (Bahce & Taslaci, 2009).

However, Huang (2015) and Sun (2009) pointed out that studies on blogging are in infant stages and not yet explored. In this realm, the current study focuses primarily on learning opportunities that blogging can provide for extensive language practice outside of class. By reporting on the integration of blogs into EFL courses, this study examines the effect of blogs on EFL learners' oral proficiency and their perception of language learning experiences afforded by blogs.

### **III. Method**

#### **3.1 Participants**

A total of 194 Korean EFL learners participated in the current study. They were third- or fourth-year college students at the school of information technology in Korea. Their major was computer and software engineering. All participants enrolled in an English speaking class because it was mandatory for their graduation. As an instructor-led course designed to improve the students' English oral proficiency, the class was focused on teaching vocabulary, explaining idioms, or introducing expressions for English speaking. It was held once a week. Each was about three hours in length.

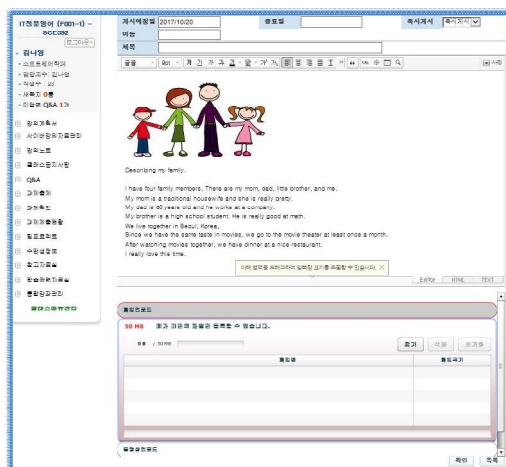
Participants were chosen from eight classes under the same course title and the same curriculum format. They were divided into three experimental groups and one control group: voice and text blogging group (n=47), voice blogging group (n=47), text blogging group (n=52), and control group (n=48).



## 3.2 Data Collection and Procedures

The purpose of this study was to provide insights how blogs should be integrated with educational activities as resources for both teachers and learners. For the experiment, participants were divided into three experimental groups and one control group at random. Three experimental groups created a personal blog, posted their thoughts and experiences, and published them on the cyber campus offered by the university. This online place is a 3D environment where learners can meet and share their information, and synchronously or asynchronously communicate and collaborate (Prasolova-Førland, Sourin, & Sourin, 2006).

With some basic file-uploading tools, the cyber campus provided a calendar and data-management functions. Once the participants set up a blog, they had right to set up, edit, and delete their own postings as an administrator of that blog. It was possible to tune up some functions such as formatting, commenting, publishing, archiving, and etc. The cyber campus also allowed both the participants and the researcher to track each participant's blog history. Names of bloggers, number of blogs, and number of responses to others' blogs were displayed.



(Figure 1. Blogs)

During the first class meeting, the purpose of blogging was introduced by explaining that this blog project was an after-class activity to improve their language skills. Because the participants had only a three-hour English speaking class each week, out-of-class opportunities for additional and extensive speaking practice were necessary. The researcher of the current study described and illustrated the blog functions to the participants and familiarized them with the functions. For the participants, the university's cyber campus was a user-friendly cyberspace to keep blogging because it has frequently been used in other classes as well.

For the experiment, the voice and text blogging group was required to post both voice- and text-blog entries. Before making voice-blog posts, participants in this group wrote scripts and produced text-blog posts first. The voice blogging group uploaded only voice-blog entries, while the text blogging group posted their text-blog entries. Script writing was not allowed for the voice blogging group. Participants in experimental groups recorded or typed their journals through their smart phone or laptop computer and then published their blogs.

Participants in three experimental groups were asked to log into the cyber campus and create their own blogs once a week. The participants had to upload fifteen blog entries in total. To help the participants find a topic, a list of pre-selected topics was given. The topics selected for blogging (e.g., family, friends, school, and etc.) were taken from OPI test prep books so as to meet the demands of participants' practical goal of taking the speaking class. In each class meeting, the researcher spent 5–10 minutes to discuss the participants' progress in blog posting. In order to inspire other participants, good examples were selected and shown to the class.

This study used a pre-post test design to examine the effects of the use of blogs in EFL speaking class. Therefore, there were oral proficiency pre- and post-tests before and after the experiment. Since ACTFL OPI has been viewed to be more valid than other oral proficiency tests (Jeon, Kim, Kim, Shin, & Lee, 2010) and earned positive reviews from Korean EFL learners (Shin, Kim, & Kang, 2010), participants took oral proficiency pre- and post-tests on a basis of ACTFL OPI test.

The tests contained describing, narrating, and persuading tasks on practical, social, and professional topics. A total of fifteen tasks were included and the time allocated was about 20 minutes in each test. Participants recorded their voice using their own smart phone, converted their oral performance to recorded files, and submitted them to the researcher.

The participants' oral performance on pre- and post-tests was rated by two trained raters based on the criteria of the rating scale in ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 and scored on a scale of 0 to 100 points. This criterion-referenced assessment consisted of four major categories including functions and global tasks, context and content, accuracy, and text type. The inter-rater reliability reached .88.

In order to obtain a broad perspective on participants' blogging experience, four participants from each group were selected. The current study adopted stratified sampling so as to "ensure the representative presence of particular subgroups of the population under study" (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 120). A total of twelve participants from three experimental groups were interviewed at the end of the experiment and they were asked about their views on the blogging experience. The interview questions were to gather information related to the participants' perception of language learning experiences afforded by blogs. Of the twelve interview participants, six were male and the other six were female; six were third-year and six were fourth-year students. They came from the same field of study (computer and software engineering). The interviews were administered individually in Korean, the participants' first language, to allow them to express their ideas freely and fully. Each interview lasted about ten minutes. All of the interviews were recorded and later transcribed verbatim in Korean for further analysis.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

The collected data were computed with SPSS 21.0 software. Quantitative data were analyzed with descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations.

Paired samples t-tests were run in an effort to compare pre- and post-test scores. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVAs) were employed to compare differences among groups. For the post hoc test, Scheffe tests were performed so as to find out which group is superior to the other. P values was set at .05.

Qualitative analysis was also performed to examine participants' blogging experiences. Individual interviews to explore how they perceive blog-based language learning were analyzed using content analysis method to understand the phenomenon under study (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992).

## IV. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Effects on Korean EFL Learners' Oral Proficiency

The first question of this study was to what extent blogs are effective for oral proficiency improvement. There were a total of fifteen blog sessions. In order to examine the effects of the use of blogs, there were oral proficiency pre- and post-tests before and after the experiment. Table 1 represents the results of descriptive statistics and paired samples t-tests.

(Table 1. Changes between Pre- and Post-test Scores)

	Pre-test (n=194)		Post-test (n=194)		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Voice and Text Blogging	68.09	11.87	80.85	7.44	7.819	.000*
Voice Blogging	64.11	8.41	73.47	8.04	13.521	.000*
Text Blogging	69.74	9.19	77.18	8.79	6.371	.000*
Control	69.17	13.66	75.14	8.11	3.754	.000*

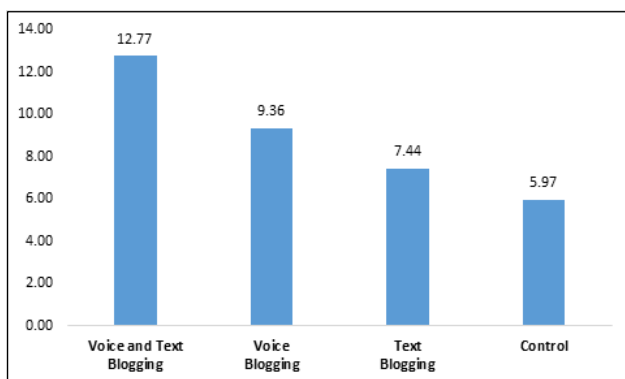
\* p<.05

Interestingly, all four groups showed significant mean differences between the oral

proficiency pre- and post-tests. There were significant changes in oral proficiency for the voice and text blogging group ( $t=7.819$ ,  $p=.000$ ), the voice blogging group ( $t=13.521$ ,  $p=.000$ ), the text blogging group ( $t=6.371$ ,  $p=.000$ ), and the control group ( $t=3.754$ ,  $p=.000$ ).

To be specific, as for the voice and text blogging group, the mean score was 68.09 on the oral proficiency pre-test, whereas 80.85 on the post-test. The voice blogging group also scored higher on their oral proficiency post-test ( $M=73.47$ ) than they did on their pre-test ( $M=64.11$ ). In terms of the text blogging group, the pre-test mean score was 69.74 and it increased significantly to 77.18 on the post-test. The control group scored 69.17 on the oral proficiency pre-test but it jumped to 75.14.

It is remarkable to note that the mean score difference between the oral proficiency pre- and post-tests for the control group was 5.97, smaller than three experimental groups: voice and text blogging group ( $MD=12.77$ ), voice blogging group ( $MD=9.36$ ), and text blogging group ( $MD=7.44$ ), as displayed in Figure 2.



(Figure 2. Mean Differences between Pre- and Post-tests)

Findings indicate that all groups including the control group improved their oral proficiency during the experiment. By taking the similar test again, the practice

effect could have occurred. In other words, the control group's oral proficiency improvement can be attributed to increased exposure to and familiarity with test instruments, formats, and items (Kim, 2016). Although some evidence of a practice effect was observed, the three experimental groups had a greater increase in mean scores from the oral proficiency pre-test to post-test than did the control group, indicating treatment effects for the intervention. This practice effect may not be a major issue if the control group just served as a basis for a group comparison.

This study employed four groups. There were three experimental groups (i.e. voice and text blogging group, voice blogging group, and text blogging group) and one control group. To ascertain participants in all four groups were homogeneous before the treatment, the data collected at the oral proficiency pre-test were first analyzed. Table 2 shows descriptive statistics and ANOVA results on the pre-test.

<Table 2. Homogeneity Test – Oral Proficiency Pre-test>

Voice and Text (n=194)		Voice (n=194)		Text (n=194)		Control (n=194)		F	p
M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
68.09	11.87	64.11	8.41	69.74	9.19	69.17	13.66	2.577	.055

There was no significant mean difference among the four groups for the oral proficiency pre-test ( $p>.05$ ), as can be seen from Table 2. This result indicate that three experimental groups and one control group were homogeneous at the start of the current research in terms of English oral proficiency.

<Table 3. Group Comparison on the Oral Proficiency Post-test>

Voice and Text (n=194)		Voice (n=194)		Text (n=194)		Control (n=194)		F	p
M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
80.85	7.44	73.47	8.04	77.18	8.79	75.14	8.11	7.204	.000*

\*  $p<.05$

In an effort to compare the effects of voice and text blogs after the treatment,

another one-way ANOVA was performed. As shown in Table 3, a statistical significance was found on the oral proficiency post-test among the four groups ( $F=7.204$ ,  $p=.000$ ). That means the use of blogs differently affects participants' oral proficiency. For the post hoc test, Scheffe tests were administered to find out where the differences occurred.

(Table 4. Results of Scheffe Post Hoc Tests on Oral Proficiency)

	MD	SE	p
Voice and Text Blogging > Voice Blogging	7.38	1.68	.000*
Voice and Text Blogging > Text Blogging	3.67	1.64	.173
Voice and Text Blogging > Control	5.71	1.67	.010*
Text Blogging > Voice Blogging	3.71	1.64	.166
Text Blogging > Control	2.04	1.63	.666
Control > Voice Blogging	1.66	1.67	.802

\*  $p<.05$

As seen from Table 4, there were significant group differences observed in terms of participants' oral proficiency. A statistically significant difference was found between the participants involved in voice and text blogging and those in voice blogging ( $p=.000$ ). And also, there was another significance found between the voice and text blogging group and the control group ( $p=.010$ ). To be more specific, participants who engaged in voice and text blogging significantly outperformed those in voice blogging. The mean difference between two groups was 7.38. The voice and the text blogging group also performed better than the control group, with the significant mean difference of 5.71. However, there were no significant differences between the voice and text blogging group and the text blogging group ( $p=.173$ ). In terms of participants in the text blogging group, they did not significantly outperform the participants in the voice blogging group ( $p=.166$ ) as well as those in the control group ( $p=.666$ ). Likewise, the control group did not significantly perform better than the voice blogging group ( $p=.802$ ).

For the experimental period, the voice and text blogging group posted both voice-

and text-blog entries. The voice blogging group uploaded only voice-blog entries, while the text blogging group produced their text-blog entries. To be short, participants in all experimental groups improved their oral proficiency after engaging in blogging. Findings of this study lend support to the claim that blogs effectively facilitate foreign language learning (Bloch, 2007). As blogs create additional opportunities to produce foreign language output (Sun, 2009), they have been found to be a solution to the pedagogical problem.

In an EFL context in which opportunities for productive skills are limited (Kim, 2017), blogs not only provide a real audience to the learners but also increase authentic output opportunities. According to Pellettieri (2000), blogs are beneficial for improving grammatical correctness, language complexity, and fluency. Owing to the public feature, learners become more careful, analytical, and critical before posting their blogs considering appropriacy and accuracy of the content created (Oravec, 2002). An automatic archive of the past posts also facilitates learners' reflection on content and fosters the development of metacognitive strategies by monitoring their learning progress on blogs (Sun, 2009). In line with this, Huang (2015) claimed that blogs should be integrated into the EFL curriculum.

Particularly, in the present study, voice and text blogging turned out to be more effective than voice blogging only or no blogging. This supports previous research, suggesting that script writing before recording plays a secondary role when learners are actually recording their voice. Before making voice-blog posts, participants in the voice and text blogging group wrote scripts and produced text-blog posts first, while those in the voice blogging group were not allowed to write scripts before recording. Ho (2003) suggested that scripts prompt learners not only to gain language input but also to activate the language for output. According to Sun and Yang (2015), as EFL learners write scripts before recording, they revise their scripts and rehearse several times until they are satisfied with their own performance. In this process, they can gain oral fluency. Hence, both voice and text blogging should be integrated together.



## 4.2 Effects on Korean EFL Learners' Perceptions of Language Learning

The aim of this study was also to find out Korean EFL learners' perception of blog-based classes that connect outside world to the language classroom. In order to investigate how EFL learners perceive blogs for language learning, individual interviews were conducted and analyzed using content analysis method.

Responses of the participants in all experimental groups were positively observed. Above all, participants who engaged in blogging had more faith in their oral proficiency improvement. They showed positive attitudes towards the use of blogs to improve their oral proficiency. Lee from the voice and text blogging group commented on his increased oral proficiency, saying that “I think both voice and text blogging are very helpful for English speaking. Before I recording my voice, I had to draft my scripts first. Without script preparation, I would not have been able to say anything in English. I wrote down my scripts and posted the text-blog entries, which I think also helped my writing improvement. After the text blogging, I was able to engage in voice blogging more fluently and naturally, which resulted in my oral proficiency improvement.”

As Sun (2009) suggested, blogs create opportunities for foreign language output. They have been found to be the ideal solution in EFL fields, by providing a real audience and authentic output opportunities to learners. Choi from the voice and text blogging group mentioned that “I believe blogs are beneficial for English language learning. They promote English speaking and English writing among students who don't have chance to speak and write English on a regular basis. With these increased opportunities, blogs help me feel comfortable and thus make me speak and write more fluently. I am pretty sure that I perform better in English speaking and writing on blogs than in traditional face-to-face situations. I think my listening and reading ability has also improved while responding to my classmates' blog entries.”

As Hanson-Smith (2001) reported, the use of blogs in the present study also offered safe, relaxed, and stress-free environments. They made the participants feel

freer to express their own arguments, providing comfortable EFL learning environment. With a decrease in anxiety, the participants experienced peer collaboration and interaction, as Huang (2015) suggested. By publishing their own blogs, sharing their postings with others, and giving and receiving comments, foreign language learners practice their target language and work cooperatively with other learners (Bahce & Taslaci, 2009). Lee from the text blogging group stated that “I seldom write in English. English writing on blogs, therefore, increased my opportunities to practice English writing. By giving and receiving feedback, I worked collaboratively with my classmates. I shared my postings with them. I also commented and edited their postings. It really helped reduce my English anxiety.”

Combined with a decrease in anxiety, an increase in confidence in all blogging groups was also found. According to Derakhshan, Tahery, and Mirarab (2015), being confident in foreign language speaking is important to EFL learners. Confident foreign language learners are likely to speak more in their target language and communicate more actively. Kim from the voice blogging group commented that “At first, I was afraid of blogging. It was a challenge for me to record my voice and post my voice blogs. Because of my poor English, I was not able to express myself. I felt nervous and I was worried that my classmates would judge me, pick out my faults, laugh at me, or be unsatisfied with my performance. However, while blogging, my classmates and I encouraged each other to speak English. We expressed thoughts and ideas together and share our own stories in English. This experience made English learning fun and enjoyable. More importantly, I became confident with myself. I feel self-confident to communicate orally and I think I can do much better in speaking English.”

Additionally, a large increase of motivation was also observed. Kim from the text blogging group stated that “I think text blogging enables me to be more motivated in English learning. English writing on blogs encouraged me to interact and communicate with others. Because I was aware of the fact that my blogs were going to be published and my classmates leave comments on my postings, I carefully

wrote my journals. This built a sense of ownership and responsibility. I became more motivated in writing. Blogging encouraged me to use English more and led to autonomous English learning.” According to Bahce and Taslaci (2009), blogs are motivating for language learners and learners’ blog outcome can replace traditional acts of passive information consumption with acts of active information creation. As motivation is a major factor in foreign language learning, it is crucial to keep learners interested by providing a motivating experience. From the interview, blogs turned out to involve motivational factors as they inspired learners' motivation in English learning. That is, blogging is an effective factor to motivate EFL learners. Interview results reveal that blogging has a pedagogical value. Findings in this study is in accord with a number of previous studies (Bahce & Taslaci, 2009; Hanson-Smith, 2001; Huang, 2015; Pellettieri, 2000; Sun, 2009), suggesting that well-designed blogging activities allow learners to increase motivation, reduce anxiety, facilitate learner autonomy, and foster cooperative and collaborative learning, with increased opportunities to use the target language.

## **V. Conclusion**

Foreign language teachers have applied blogs to their classroom instruction and language learning (Campbell, 2003). With the advancement of blogs, foreign language learners now can practice their target language for communication purposes and experience peer collaboration and interaction (Huang, 2015). By reporting on the integration of blogs into Korean EFL courses, this study aimed to explore the application of blogs, both voice blogs and text blogs, for providing Korean learners of English with opportunities to use English in authentic situations.

Major findings are as follows: First, participants in all experimental groups (voice and text blogging group, voice blogging group, text blogging group) and the control group improved their oral proficiency. However, group comparison results revealed

that voice and text blogging were more effective in oral proficiency improvement than voice blogging or no blogging. Interview results indicated that, through blogging activities, participants were able to have more opportunities to practice their target language, increase their motivation and confidence, reduce their stress and anxiety, become autonomous, and learn how to work cooperatively and collaboratively.

Considering that studies on the effect of blogs on foreign language learning is still in its infancy (Sun, 2009) and little research has been studied especially related to voice blogs (Huang, 2015), this study provides insight to what extent blogs are effective and how EFL learners perceive them for their English learning. Given that EFL environments in which the demand for English proficiency is high (Bae, Green, Randy, & Hayashi, 2016) but opportunities for practice are limited (Kim, 2017), results of the current study open up new possibilities for blog-based EFL learning, focusing on output opportunities that blogging can provide for extensive language practice.

Pedagogical implications can be made for EFL teachers. Given that it is difficult to encourage EFL learners to produce language output owing to limited class time and large class sizes (Kim, 2017), blogs can enable them to use the target language and put their knowledge they have learned into practice in authentic environments with real audience. As Huang (2015) claimed, blogs should be integrated into the EFL curriculum as an after-class or out-of-class activity to provide opportunities for additional and extensive language practice and thereby improve their English proficiency. Furthermore, seeing that voice and text blogging were more effective than voice blogging only, script writing before recording can play a secondary role when actually recording (Ho, 2003). Teachers should consider that while learners write and revise their scripts and rehearse several times, their oral proficiency can improve. Therefore, both voice and text blogging should be encouraged together for EFL oral proficiency improvement.

## Works Cited

- Bae, Daekweon, Green, Randy, and Hayashi, Hideo. "Roles of Perceived Needs for English of Adult EFL Learners and Differences in Social Contexts between Korea and Japan." *Studies in English Language & Literature* 42.4 (2016): 163-187. Print.
- Bahce, Aysel, and Nazmi Taslaci. "Learners' Perception of Blended Writing Class: Blog and Face-To-Face." *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education* 10.4 (2009): 188-202. Print.
- Bloch, Joel. "Abdullah's Blogging: A Generation 1.5 Student Enters the Blogosphere." *Language Learning & Technology* 11.2 (2007): 128-41. Print.
- Campbell, Aaron Patrick. "Weblogs for Use with ESL Classes." *The Internet TESL Journal* 9.2 (2003): 33-35. Print.
- Campbell, Aaron Patrick. "Using Live Journal for Authentic Communication in EFL Classes." *The Internet TESL Journal* 10.9 (2004): 55-61. Print.
- Chen, Howard Hao-Jan. "Developing and Evaluating an Oral Skills Training Website." *ReCALL* 23.1 (2011): 59-78. Print.
- Chern, Chiou-Lan. *Overview of General English Curriculum at Tertiary Level in Taiwan*. Paper Presented at the 4th Conference on College English, Foreign Language Center, National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan. 2010. Print.
- Derakhshan, Ali, Farahnaz Tahery, and Nasrin Mirarab. "Helping Adult and Young Learners to Communicate in Speaking Classes with Confidence." *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 6.2 (2015): 520-25. Print.
- Downe-Wamboldt, Barbara. "Content Analysis: Method, Applications, and Issues." *Health Care for Women International* 13.3 (1992): 313-21. Print.
- Fotos, Sandra, and Charles Browne. *New Perspectives on CALL for Second Language Classrooms*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004. Print.
- Hanson-Smith, Elizabeth. "Computer-assisted Language Learning." *The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*. Eds. Ronald Carter and David Nunan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. 107-13. Print.
- Ho, Yen-Kuang. "Audiotaped Dialogue Journals: An Alternative Form of Speaking Practice." *ELT Journal* 57.3 (2003): 269-77. Print.
- Huang, Hsin-Chou. "From Web-based Readers to Voice Bloggers: EFL Learners' Perspectives." *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 28.2 (2015): 145-70. Print.
- Jeon, Jihyeon. "Issues for English Tests and Assessments: A View from Korea." *Language Assessment in Asia: Local, Regional or Global*. Eds. Young In Moon and Bernard Spolsky. Seoul: Asia TEFL, 2010. 55-82. Print.

- Jeon, Jiheon, Jongkuk Kim, Hyunju Kim, Dongil Shin, and Byungmin Lee. "Learners' Perceptions on English Speaking Assessment." *Korean Journal of Applied Linguistics* 26.1 (2010): 57-89. Print.
- Kim, Na-Young. "Effects of Voice Chat on EFL Learners' Speaking Ability according to Proficiency Levels." *Multimedia-Assisted Language Learning* 19.4 (2016): 63-88. Print.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Effects of Different Types of Synchronous CMC on EFL Learners' Writing Ability Improvement and Perceptions of English Learning." *Multimedia-Assisted Language Learning* 20.3 (2017): 33-61. Print.
- Kim, Tae-Young. "The Dynamics of L2 Self and L2 Learning Motivation: A Qualitative Case Study of Korean ESL Students." *English Teaching* 64.3 (2009): 49-70. Print.
- Kleiman, Glenn M. "Myths and Realities about Technology in K-12 Schools: Five Years Later." *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education* 4.2 (2004): 248-53. Print.
- Mackey, Alison, and Gass, Susan M. *Second Language Research: Methodology and Design*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005. Print.
- Oravec, Jo Ann. "Bookmarking the World: Weblog Applications in Education." *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 45.7 (2002): 616-21. Print.
- Pellettieri, Jill. "Negotiation in Cyberspace: The Role of Chatting in the Development of Grammatical Competence." *Network-based Language Teaching: Concepts and Practice*. Eds. Mark Warschauer and Richard Kern. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 59-86. Print.
- Prasolova-Førland, Ekaterina, Alexei Sourin, and Olga Sourina. "Cybercampuses: Design Issues and Future Directions." *The Visual Computer* 22.12 (2006): 1015-28. Print.
- Shin, Dong-il, Na Hee Kim, and Suk Joo Kang. "Korean Examinees Perceptions of Testing Spoken English: A Move toward Proficiency." *Studies in English Language & Literature* 36.2 (2010): 263-88. Print.
- Sun, Yu-Chih. "Voice Blog: An Exploratory Study of Language Learning." *Language Learning & Technology* 13.2 (2009): 88-103. Print.
- Sun, Yu-Chih and Fang-Ying Yang. "I Help, Therefore, I Learn: Service Learning on Web 2.0 in an EFL Speaking Class." *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 28.3 (2015): 202-19. Print.
- Warschauer, Mark. "On-line Communication." *The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*. Eds. Ronald Carter and David Nunan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. 207-12. Print.

Na-Young Kim  
King Jeongjo College of Liberal Arts, Hanshin University  
137 Hanshinda-Gil, Osan-Si, Gyeonggi-Do, 447-791, South Korea  
Email: [alicekimyoungkim@gmail.com](mailto:alicekimyoungkim@gmail.com)

Received: December 18, 2017 / Revised: January 30, 2018 / Accepted: February 08, 2018