Using the Process Writing Approach based on Padlet Application (PA) to Enhance EFL Argumentative Writing Competence

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Abstract

This research looked at how using a process writing technique using the Padlet application (PA) influenced the argumentative writing of undergraduates majoring in English as a foreign language (EFL). Sixty students in their fourth-year in English language and translation major made up the study's subjects. Then, they were randomly assigned to one of two groups (N=30 total): the experiment group or the control group. Participants' ages varied between 19 and 20. There was no attempt to control the subjects' sex identities. Quasi-experimental techniques were used to gather quantitative data in this study through pre- and post-tests. The Padlet app and a process writing methodology were used to instruct the experimental group in argumentative text writing, while more conventional methods were used to instruct the control group. For two and a half months, researchers worked with EFL majors to find ways to strengthen their argumentative writing. The experimental group's performance in writing argumentative prose using the process writing approach based on the Padlet application was substantially higher than that of the control group, as determined by an independent sample T-test. The students were also quite enthused about utilizing Padlet application.

Keywords: Process Writing Approach, Padlet Application, Argumentative Writing Competence, virtual platform, collaborative learning.

1. Introduction

Writing is a powerful tool for communication that enables individuals to express themselves, persuade others, and change perspectives. (Anom et al. 2012) assert that writing assignments can boost students' enthusiasm for learning a new language and their ability to express themselves in that language. Writing is considered one of the four

primary abilities that EFL students should acquire. The ability to articulate one's thoughts, opinions, emotions, and ideas in writing is critical for success in both school and the workforce. At the college level, writing skills are typically taught in stages over multiple semesters. The instruction begins with training students to write in various styles, including narrative, descriptive, report, explanation, and analytical exposition. Subsequently, students will learn to write English expository essays and present logical reasoning using various methods of development, such as examples, details, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, and division and classification. Finally, they will learn academic writing techniques to help with any schoolwork.

It has been a long-standing issue for EFL educators and researchers that students are not improving their English writing skills as much as their listening, reading, and speaking abilities. Writing is often seen as a talent, and EFL students are encouraged to invest time, effort, and focus to develop this skill (Mohamed A. Elkot and Rabea Ali, 2020). The writing process involves several steps, including considering the task and audience (rhetoric), involving the reader, developing a voice, constructing meaning, and composing a formal text (Rahmat, 2019). However, academic writing can be especially challenging for EFL students and instructors need to be innovative in their approaches to education to find solutions or mitigate the difficulties (Pujiawati, 2018). The current research aims to investigate how well EFL students can master unity and coherence to improve their academic writing skills in English.

Success in college is believed to require transferable skills, such as communication, problem solving, and argumentation, which can help students succeed in any major (Barrie, 2006; Shavelson, 2010; Hyytinen et al., 2019; Hyytinen et al., 2021a). Argumentation is considered the most crucial general ability (Andrews, 2009; Mäntynen, 2009; Wolfe, 2011; Wingate, 2012). Throughout their college experience, students are challenged to argue and write arguments in various assignments and exams (Wolfe, 2011; Wingate, 2012). The ability to effectively argue and convey one's point of view is important not only for academic success, but also for overall education (Asterhan and Schwarz, 2016; Iordanou et al., 2019; Kuhn, 2019). The findings of studies on general competence often fall into distinct categories.

Reasoning not only helps students complete their work but also supports their education (Asterhan and Schwarz, 2016; Iordanou et al., 2019; Kuhn, 2019). Studies on generic competence typically focus on the importance and students' perception of different skill sets (e.g., Barrie, 2006; Tuononen et al., 2019; Virtanen and Tynjälä, 2019). However, this approach is not sufficient for university instructors who need to balance teaching subject-specific information and promoting

transferable skills. A more in-depth understanding of students' proficiency levels in each general skill, such as argumentation, is beneficial for developing instructional tools for educators.

Nowadays, we are surrounded by numerous electronic devices, making it challenging to keep up. Technology has become a common teaching tool or learning aid in classrooms, with some evidence suggesting that using technology, such as apps, can be an effective way to learn a new language (Haris et al., 2017). Web 2.0 technologies, like social media, can enhance classroom instruction by providing real-time, personalized learning experiences that engage even the most passive students (Jaganathan, 2016). These tools enable students to collaborate, work together, and share knowledge. Padlet is a free, multimedia-friendly wall that can be used for instant whole-class participation and evaluation (Fuchs, 2014). This research focuses on using Padlet as a Web 2.0 application to teach students the art of descriptive text creation.

Collaborative writing activities using tools like Padlet can help students improve their writing skills, as shown in several studies (Lestari, 2017; Taufikurohman, 2018; Harlena et al., 2020). These studies, however, only focus on the impact of collaborative writing or Padlet on students' writing abilities. Interactive media such as Padlet has the potential to engage students and make them excited about learning, as it enables users to share multimedia materials such as images, videos, papers, and sounds related to a topic (Algraini, 2014). Web 2.0 technologies like Padlet offer opportunities for students to collaborate on projects, share knowledge, and connect with each other, thereby becoming actively involved in their education. However, it's important to note that Padlet is just one of the many tools available, and teachers must find the ones that are most effective for their individual students and classes.

The objective of the study is to explore the impact of using the Padlet-based Process Writing Approach on the argumentative writing performance of students majoring in EFL at College of Science and Arts, Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. The study aims to determine the effect of the Padlet app on students' writing skills and to analyze the level of unity, coherence, and organization in their writing after the intervention. The study makes two hypotheses:

1. There will be a substantial difference between the control and experimental groups' mean scores on the post-test of argumentative writing.

2. The experimental group's pre- and post-test scores on argumentative writing will be significantly different after being exposed to the Padlet-based Process Writing Approach.

Significance of the Study

1. Incorporating the Padlet app into English language instruction is important for curriculum designers to consider.

2. Education developers and policymakers could benefit from incorporating the process writing technique using the Padlet app into teacher education programs.

3. Educators can acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to implement strategies that enhance students' emotional and cognitive engagement while learning a foreign language by making use of the Padlet app.

4. Language instructors can help reduce their students' anxiety levels and create a more relaxed learning environment by using the Padlet app.

5. The Padlet app can raise students' awareness of the process writing method, provide opportunities for practice and reinforcement, and give students the ability to self-regulate their writing skills.

Review of Related Literature

Upper-level college students often struggle with fundamental argumentation skills, such as integrating statements and evidence, presenting multiple perspectives, and adapting their writing to specific assignments (Hyytinen et al., 2017, 2021b; Breivik, 2020). This is due in part to a lack of understanding of what constitutes an argument (Breivik, 2020) and the difficulties associated with identifying rhetorical contexts and their associated expectations (Roderick, 2019).

The ability to argue persuasively is a critical aspect of academic success in higher education (Prata et al., 2019) and should be encouraged in college students, particularly regarding controversial topics related to their major (Fan & Chen, 2021; Glassner, 2017; Lazarou et al., 2016). Those who are skilled at argumentation are more likely to think critically and logically, elaborate on multiple perspectives, integrate them, and draw conclusions (Valero Haro et al., 2020). Beyond college, the ability to argue persuasively continues to be important for effective engagement with societal and professional issues (Heitmann et al., 2014).

The use of technology can significantly enhance a student's writing. Padlet is one of many free online tools available for teaching writing, and it functions as a repository for various types of information (Arfiani et al., 2021). On the Padlet board, teachers and students can post images, text, links, videos, audio recordings, and files. It can also be used to facilitate group study and enhance interaction between teachers and students as the course progresses. Research by Ellis

(2016) suggests that incorporating Padlet into the classroom can increase students' interest and motivation to write. Padlet serves as an electronic "wall" where teachers and students can share and view information and ideas in real-time, making it a useful tool for classroom collaboration.

The Process Approach to Writing Instruction

The process approach to writing is a widely accepted method that emphasizes the iterative and recursive nature of writing. This approach views writing as a non-linear and cognitively demanding activity that requires various stages of preparation, translation, and revision (Graham & Perin, 2007; Nagin, 2006; Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006). The writing process for students involves setting goals, generating ideas, organizing thoughts, and then translating those ideas into written form. The focus is on the student as the active agent in the writing process, with the teacher serving as a facilitator and providing guidance and feedback.

Writing is viewed in the process approach as a recursive action that does not take place in a linear sequence and needs cognitive process, highlighting the significance of a recursive procedure of pre-writing, drafting, reviewing, and amending Hyland (2019). The writing exercise begins with pre-writing, during which students come up with ideas connected to the subject and correctly structure them to fit the needs of the text. Prior to the exercises that followed, students were instructed to write several drafts of their written work, revising, and editing each draft to create the final product. Students will be able to improve their drafts with the help of discussion and input from teachers or other students. Since students receive helpful feedback from others while working through many processes, the process approach is known as a learner-centered approach. (Russinovich ,2015).

Previous studies have shown that the process approach to writing, particularly in a collaborative setting, can have a positive impact on students' writing skills. One study involving first-year preschool instructors found that following Bayat's writing process led to an improvement in participants' writing abilities (Bayat, 2014). Another study found that providing scaffolding during the writing process led to a significant improvement in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' writing skills and increased their confidence in expressing ideas through writing (Faraj, 2015). These findings are supported by additional studies that have demonstrated the benefits of the process approach to writing. Overall, the process approach to writing is considered a learner-centered approach as it focuses on the student's development as a writer and emphasizes the importance of constructive feedback in the improvement of written work. This

approach has been widely adopted in writing instruction and continues to be an effective method for helping students develop their writing skills.

Importance of Padlet

Padlet is an effective teaching tool, especially due to its accessibility as students do not have to create accounts. It functions as an online canvas where students can write and share anything they want with anyone they choose, from any device with internet access. This promotes creativity and enhances student performance (Ojha & Acharya, 2021). Padlet serves as a virtual journal for collecting and nurturing ideas, sharing images and videos, and freely modifying and sharing them on the platform (Sangeetha, 2016). Furthermore, it provides students with an opportunity to participate and learn from others in a less formal setting.

Additionally, Padlet can be utilized as a tool for promoting collaborative learning among students. Its user-friendly design and easy accessibility make it enjoyable and effortless to follow conversations and interact with others (Ali, 2021). Students can actively participate and ask questions anonymously, fostering active critical engagement (Deni & Zainal, 2018). Padlet can also be employed as an assessment tool, evaluating students' writing skills (Jong & Tan, 2021) and enabling peer assessment through students' responses to each other's posts (Adachi et al., 2018). In conclusion, it is worth mentioning that Padlet promotes both independent and collaborative learning and fosters direct connections among students.

Multiple studies have shown that incorporating Padlet in language classrooms can improve student performance, increase student participation, boost teaching and learning efficiency, and make the learning experience more engaging (Fadhilawati et al., 2020; Haris et al., 2017; Taufikurohman, 2018). A study by Beitz (2019) found that Padlet creates a supportive and flexible learning environment where students can access it from anywhere and at any time, especially if they have their own devices. Furthermore, Mahmud (2019) discovered that Padlet enables students to collaborate with their peers while developing their writing abilities. Etfita and Wahyuni (2021) confirmed that Padlet is effective for facilitating collaborative activities outside of the classroom and for enhancing the learning process.

Teng et al. (2020) found that Padlet can aid students in enhancing self-regulation in online reading and writing activities. Additionally, Ali et al. (2018) discovered that Padlet can significantly enhance students' writing skills and expand their knowledge through new terminology. Moreover, Padlet fosters a student-centered learning atmosphere as

it allows students to actively engage by posting, sharing information, commenting on their peers' work, and exchanging knowledge.

Padlet in EFL Classroom

Padlet has been shown to significantly enhance students' writing abilities through various factors. It provides students with opportunities to practice writing skills, express themselves freely without fear of judgment, receive feedback from teachers and peers, and participate in class activities. As a result, Padlet can be a valuable tool in helping to develop students' writing skills.

According to England (2017), Padlet is a website solution that mimics a virtual platform for sharing ideas, videos, web documents, and more. It can also serve as a unique and modern evaluation tool for teachers instead of traditional written tests, as suggested by Alabbad and Huwamel (2015). Additionally, Padlet can be used for classroom activities such as brainstorming, discussions, and team projects, and is accessible to students through any internet-connected device, including computers, tablets, and smartphones. Students can share their writing through various methods, such as social media accounts, email, or embedding URLs, and it does not require any special software to download. Haris and Putri (2020) point out that Padlet has many benefits, such as promoting writing, providing a new media platform for learning writing, and creating a comfortable and conducive environment for introverted students to participate in class discussions.

Numerous studies have shown that Padlet is an effective teaching tool. It was found to improve students' writing abilities, including the capacity to write procedural texts (Fadhilawati et al., 2020), grammar skills (Haris et al., 2017), and the ability to articulate their views (Awaludin et al., 2017). In Saudi Arabia, the use of Padlet led to an improvement in writing skills among students (Haris et al., 2017).

According to Awaludin et al. (2017), the use of Padlet in education improved students' writing abilities and helped them express their views more effectively. Lestari (2018) found that the students in the English Department at Universitas Islam Kadiri were able to write more descriptive texts due to using Padlet as a teaching tool. At Universitas Islam Negeri Malik Ibrahim Malang, students showed improvement in their procedural writing as a result of using Padlet during the first semester (Fadhilawati & Sari, 2018). Furthermore, the 28 students at Universitas Islam Sultan Agung Semarang had positive feedback for Padlet as a tool for teaching functional linguistics (Anwar et al., 2019). Wulandari (2018) also noted that Padlet offered numerous benefits, including fostering collaboration, providing the instructor with the

ability to give feedback, helping students reflect on their knowledge, and increasing their motivation and vocabulary.

2. Methods & Study Population

2.1. Design

This study used a quasi-experimental research design and included two groups of participants: a control group (N=30) and an experimental group (N=30). The experiment took place over three months during the second term of the 2021-2022 academic year. The experimental group received instruction using the process writing approach method that incorporated the Padlet Application (PA), while the control group received instruction using the traditional method.

2.2. Participants

In the current study, 60 EFL major students from the College of Science and Arts at Qassim University participated during the second semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. The students were divided into two groups: an experimental group (consisting of 30 students) and a control group (also consisting of 30 students). All participants had been studying English as a Foreign Language for at least 10 years.

2.3. Instrument

In the current study, 60 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) major students from the College of Science and Arts at Qassim University participated. The participants were divided into two groups: the experimental group (30 students) and the control group (30 students). Both groups of students had been studying EFL for at least 10 years. The study was conducted over three months during the second term of the 2021-2022 academic year.

The students were evaluated through an argumentative essay pre-posttest to assess their writing development. The essay required students to write an argumentative piece on a given topic that covered Orientation, Event, and Reorientation. The writing was evaluated on several factors including content, vocabulary, grammar, spelling, capitalization and more.

Two research instruments were used to collect the data for this study. The first tool was a writing test which was used as a pre-test before the treatment and post-test after the treatment to assess the impact of Padlet on students' writing abilities. The second tool was a rating matrix for writing abilities. In the data gathering process, the students were initially given an essay assignment as a pre-test to evaluate their writing abilities. During the treatment sessions, two different teaching and learning techniques were used, with Padlet

being used in the experimental group to aid in the teaching and learning processes.

Figure (1) The Main Screen of The Application
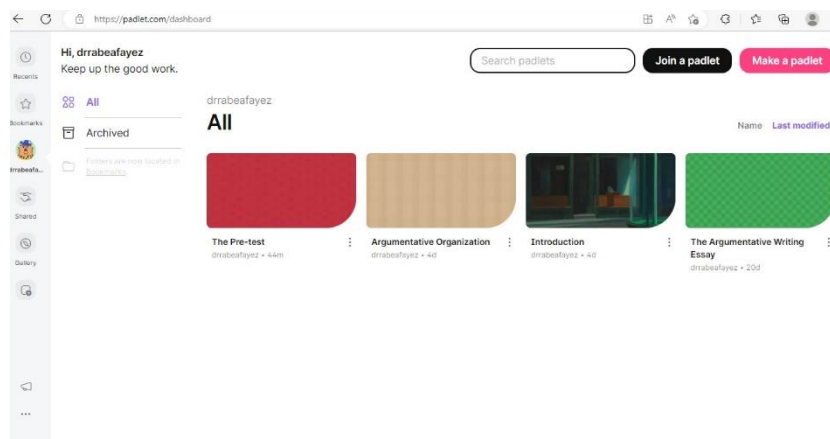
Experimental Manipulation

Three phases of the experiment were separated:

A. Pre-testing

The participants in both the control and experimental groups underwent a pretest using the argumentative essay test created by the researchers before receiving the process writing approach method that involved the use of the Padlet Application. For this test, they were asked to write an argumentative essay of at least 300 words on a designated topic.

B. Intervention

The study divided the 60 EFL major students from the College of Science and Arts at Qassim University into two groups: the control group (30 students) and the experimental group (30 students). The students' writing abilities were pretested using an argumentative essay test, and there was no noticeable difference between the two groups' scores. The control group received the traditional teaching method while the experimental group received the process writing approach method based on the Padlet Application (PA).

The researchers first observed the students for a month and administered a placement test to determine their English proficiency levels. The experimental group received 16 sessions of training lasting 50 minutes each over a period of two and a half months. The first session was an introduction to the program and a pretest, and the last session was a posttest. During the sessions, the students were introduced to the process-based writing approach using the Padlet

application. The results of the post-test were compared to the results of the pre-test to determine the effectiveness of the process writing approach based on the Padlet application.

Procedures for each Session

The steps followed during each session of the experimental group's process writing approach method based on Padlet Application (PA) were as follows:

1. The main skill of the lesson was introduced.

2. Sub-skills and micro-skills were introduced.

3. The objectives of the session were presented.

4. Warm-up exercises were conducted.

5. Ideas were generated for the skill and what students would write about.

6. Individual and collaborative activities were carried out using the Padlet application.

7. Evaluation was performed.

8. Preparation was made for the next session.

Evaluation and Assessment

In addition to individual evaluations, students were also involved in peer and group assessments where they were encouraged to provide constructive criticism and feedback on each other's work, helping them to further evaluate their own progress.

Implementing the experiment

Pre-application, application, and post-application were the three stages of the program. The stages of the argumentative essay writing process were conducted using the Padlet application. Participants had downloaded the app prior to beginning the experiment. The focus of the writing process was to improve argumentative writing skills, such as counterargument, concession, refutation, unity, coherence, and organization. The Padlet application covered the following stages of the writing process.

1- Pre-writing: This stage includes brainstorming and idea generation for the argumentative essay topic.

2- Planning: This stage includes organizing ideas and creating an outline for the essay.

3- Drafting: This stage includes writing a rough draft of the essay.

4- Revising: This stage includes making changes and improvements to the draft based on feedback and self-assessment.

5- Editing: This stage includes correcting grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.

6- Finalizing: This stage includes creating a final copy of the essay and submitting it for evaluation.

The argumentative essay writing process involves several stages, which are carried out using the Padlet app. In the pre-writing stage, students are asked to log into their accounts on Padlet and brainstorm ideas and plan their writing. This stage includes techniques like brainstorming, making lists, mind maps, and charts to help choose ideas to include in the text. Writing can be done individually or collaboratively, based on the student's preference. The writing stage involves writing the first draft of the text, without worrying about accuracy. The revising stage involves going back over the text to reorganize ideas, make changes, and adjust word choice to ensure clear conveyance of ideas. Feedback is crucial in this stage and can be provided by the teacher or peers. After several drafts, the editing stage involves proofreading and checking grammar, spelling, punctuation, and various other elements of writing. Peer assistance and reading each other's work can also be beneficial in this stage.

Figure (2) Samples of Students' essays (Pre-test)
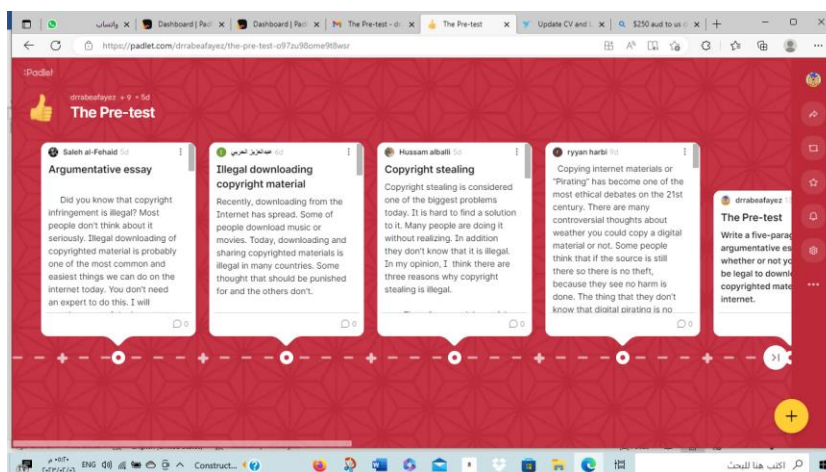
C. Post-testing

All participants received an argumentative essay posttest following the completion of all instructional sessions.

3. Statistical Analysis

The first hypothesis of the study, which states that there will be a significant difference in the mean scores between the control group and experimental group in the post-test of argumentative essay writing performance, was tested using independent samples t-test. SPSS software was used to organize and analyze the data from the pre-test and post-test. This information was then used to answer the research questions and confirm the expected results. The study also evaluated the limitations of the process-based writing approach.
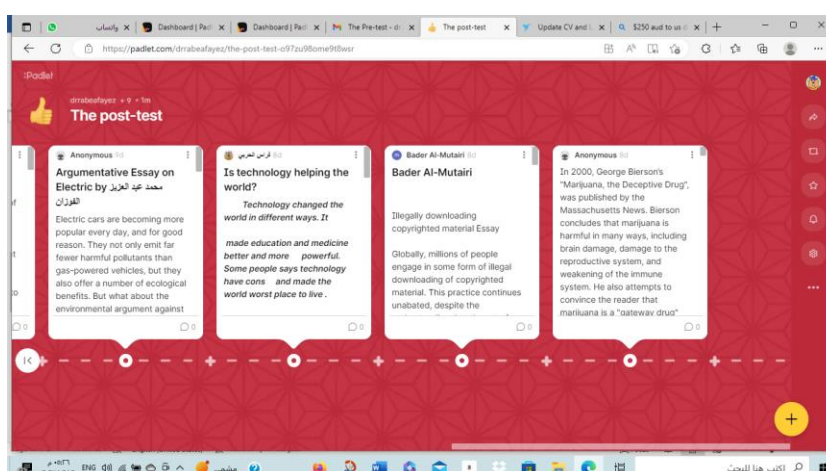
Figure (3) Samples of Students' essays (The Post-test)

Table 1. Independent Samples t-test of the difference between the mean scores of the control and experimental group on the post test of argumentative writing essay

Skills	Groups	N	Mean	St. Deviation	DF	T. Value
counterargument	Experimental	30	4.76	0.25	58	9.40
	Control	30	2.25	0.66		
Concession	Experimental	30	4.60	0.74	58	12.39
	Control	30	2.33	0.50		
Refutation	Experimental	30	4.38	0.62	58	9.50
	Control	30	2.90	0.68		
Unity	Experimental	30	4.19	0.30	58	12.50
	Control	30	2.95	0.75		
Coherence	Experimental	30	4.59	0.61	58	9.60
	Control	30	2.49	0.64		
Organization	Experimental	30	4.50	0.58	58	12.59
	Control	30	2.96	0.51		

**Significant at 0.01 level

According to Table 1, the results showed that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean argumentative essay writing performance scores of the control group and the experimental group on the post-test, with the experimental group performing better. This indicates that the process writing approach using the Padlet Application (PA) was effective in improving the argumentative essay writing performance of the experimental group. Therefore, the first hypothesis was accepted based on this statistical finding.

Additionally, the study found that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean argumentative essay writing performance scores of the experimental group in the pre-test and post-test, with the post-test scores being higher. This finding supports the effectiveness of the process writing approach in improving argumentative essay writing performance.

Table 2. Dependent Samples t-test for the difference in the mean scores of the experimental group between the pre and posttest of the argumentative writing essay.

Skills	Groups	N	Mean	St. Deviation	DF	T. Value
counterargument	Pre	30	2.49	0.24	29	13.90
	Post	30	4.76	0.25		
Concession	Pre	30	2.13	0.69	29	10.39
	Post	30	4.60	0.74		
Refutation	Pre	30	1.99	0.68	29	13.50
	Post	30	4.38	0.62		
Unity	Pre	30	2.33	0.32	29	12.50
	Post	30	4.19	0.30		
Coherence	Pre	30	2.9	0.63	29	11.27
	Post	30	4.59	0.61		
Organization	Pre	30	2.30	0.5	29	10.23
	Post	30	4.50	0.58		

The results of the paired samples t-test showed that there was a statistically significant improvement in the mean argumentative essay writing performance scores between the pre- and post-tests, with higher scores on the post-test. The effect size of the explicit process writing approach through the Padlet application training was calculated using Eita Square, revealing a significant and substantial impact. This indicated that the members of the experimental group significantly improved their argumentative writing skills during the study. Hence, it was concluded that the Padlet application was effective in enhancing the argumentative writing abilities of Freshman

English majors. Consequently, the second hypothesis was accepted based on these findings.

4. Discussion

The results of the study showed that the Padlet application was effective in enhancing the argumentative essay writing skills of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) university students. This is supported by previous research from (Pirantina & Erwin, 2016), (Fadhilawati et al. 2020), (Istianah, 2019), and (Anwar et al. 2019), which showed that Padlet helps with improving writing organization. Teachers should highlight the importance of using the Padlet-based process writing strategies. Participants in the study greatly improved their counterargument, concession, and refutation skills in writing argumentative essays. Researchers such as (Kaya, 2015), (Deni and Zainal, 2015), and (Jabar and Ali, 2016) also emphasized the use of Padlet as a tool to improve students' argumentative writing abilities and enhance the classroom environment. The findings also support the research of (Haris, Yunus, and Badusah, 2017) and (Alabbad and Huwamel, 2020), who showed that Padlet is useful for teaching grammar and vocabulary skills. (Wiangsima, 2013) (Awaludin et al. 2017), (Lestari and and Makrypodi, 2018) found that Padlet facilitates the writing process.

5. Conclusion

The results of the study showed a noticeable improvement in the argumentative writing performance of the experimental group. This finding was in line with previous research by (Fuchs, 2014), (Pirantina & Erwin, 2016), (Istianah, 2019), and (Algraini, 2014), who found that using the Padlet application was effective in enhancing EFL writing skills. Moreover, the results of other studies by researchers such as (Kaya, 2015), (Deni and Zainal, 2015), and (Jabar and Ali, 2016), highlighted the use of Padlet as a technology tool to enhance the classroom environment and boost students' collaborative and creative work. The study supports the notion that using Padlet to teach EFL skills, particularly writing, is advantageous. First-year university students who used Padlet showed improvement in their EFL writing abilities. The results also indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group in both writing tests and attitude scales, signifying a significant improvement in their writing skills and mindset.

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Consent statement: Written informed consent from the [patients/ participants or patients/participants legal guardian/next of kin] was not required to participate in this study in accordance with the national legislation and the institutional requirements.

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