

## ACADEMIC WRITING EMPOWERMENT: INTEGRATING DIGITAL LITERACY INTO TEACHING AND LEARNING

*Defi Nor Izati, Nani Hizriani*  
*Antasari State Islamic University*  
*definorizati1@gmail.com, nanihizriani@uin-antasari.com*

Submitted: 2024-8-14

Accepted: 2024-8-14

---

**Abstract:** In an age marked by the pervasive presence of digital technologies, incorporating digital literacy into education has become essential. This study aims to explore the types of digital media utilized by lecturers in teaching and learning Academic Writing, as well as the challenges they encounter. Conducted at Antasari State Islamic University Banjarmasin, the research employs narrative inquiry with interview guidelines. Data gathered from writing instructors, are analysed through narrative analysis. The findings indicate that lecturers utilize diverse digital resources and platforms, such as WhatsApp, Google Site, Microsoft Office, and ChatGPT. However, despite this integration, lecturers encounter challenges in teaching Academic Writing. These challenges encompass students' struggles with standard and scientific English in sources, difficulty in reading and writing English, overreliance on chatbots affecting original writing, student procrastination despite media variety and deadlines, unstable network usage in some areas, and students' reluctance to share thoughts due to fear of making mistakes.

**Keywords:** Digital Literacy; Teaching and Learning; Academic Writing

---

### INTRODUCTION

In today's highly technologized society, it is undeniable that technology plays a crucial role in education. Digital platforms serve not only as sources of knowledge but also as tools for managing and generating information, a concept known as digital literacy. Despite this, a considerable portion of students still lack proficiency in literacy skills, as evidenced by their limited engagement in reading and writing activities (Nuroh & Liansari in Purmayanti, 2022). When it comes to writing, students often encounter challenges in expressing their ideas, primarily due to the inadequate development of writing culture. These difficulties become more pronounced when students are required to write in English, a language they infrequently use for written communication (Cahyani in Apriyanti & Rahman, 2020). Educators play a crucial role in supporting students' learning with digital tools by providing appropriate educational resources, conducting online learning activities, creating engaging assignments, administering assessments, communicating grades and announcements to students and parents, among other responsibilities.

Several researchers have previously conducted studies on the implementation of digital literacy in teaching and learning English writing. Apriyanti & Rahman (2020) explored "Gadget-Based Digital Literacy in Learning Writing Skills for Elementary School Students," emphasizing the importance of preparing the next generation to use technology creatively and responsibly. Sholikhah & Anggraeni (2022) conducted a study titled "Empowering Digital Language Literacy in Writing Instructions: Lecturers' and Students' Voices," which highlighted the experiences of

students and instructors in utilizing digital tools within the classroom, addressing both challenges and benefits. Benyta & Ningsih (2023) investigated "Exploring the Teacher's Experiences of Using Digital Technology in Teaching Writing Skills," where teachers emphasized the diverse and engaging nature of learning facilitated by digital technology, despite some challenges in its implementation. While these studies collectively focus on digital literacy in teaching writing, this current research specifically delves into Academic Writing, addressing the challenges associated with digital literacy implementation. Unlike previous studies, which primarily focused on the positive impacts of digital literacy, this research aims to highlight the challenges encountered in integrating digital literacy into Academic Writing instruction. In addition, this study holds significance due to exploration of the utilization of diverse digital media, offering valuable insights for the integration of digital literacy into writing instruction.

## **METHOD**

Researchers employ narrative inquiry as the research approach to embrace a specific interpretation of experiences as the phenomena under investigation. Riessman (1993) stated, narrative analysis, a qualitative approach focusing on understanding people's experiences and motives through careful examination of the narratives they provide was employed for data analysis. The narrative inquiry approach in this research allowed an in-depth look at the experiences of two English lecturers from UIN Antasari Banjarmasin using digital literacy in Academic Writing classes. The lecturers noticed significant improvements in student engagement and performance, they adjusted their teaching methods to better integrate these tools, redesigning lesson plans and creating more opportunities for practical application of digital literacy skills. However, they faced challenges such as technical issues and students' unfamiliarity with digital tools, highlighting the need for ongoing professional development. Both lecturers expressed positive views on the role of digital literacy in academic writing, seeing it as essential for preparing students for future academic and professional success.

This research was carried out from January 11<sup>th</sup> to March 15<sup>th</sup> 2024. Researchers in clearly chose conducted in-depth interviews and recorded them via WhatsApp voice notes. There were seven questions asked in order to collect suitable research data to identify kinds of media used and to explore the challenges faced by the lecturer in implementing digital literacy for teaching and learning Academic Writing. As stated by (Riessman, 1993), researcher must go through the following stages such as telling, transcribing, and analyzing.

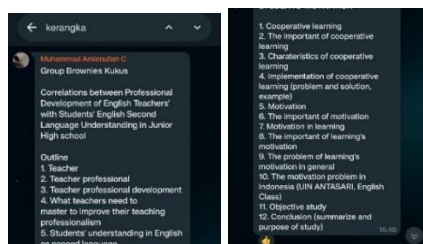
## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

### **a. Finding**

1. The types of media utilized by the lecturers to incorporate digital literacy into teaching and learning Academic Writing.

a. WhatsApp

The lecturers opened a group chat as a forum for students to discuss and consult. Lecturers prepare reading materials or other media for students to access anytime. In the WhatsApp group, students are asked to think about the idea, topic or theme that they want to make into a piece of writing which will later help them determine the title. The lecturers also asked students to send their frameworks to the group regarding problematic issues they wanted to address in their academic writing.

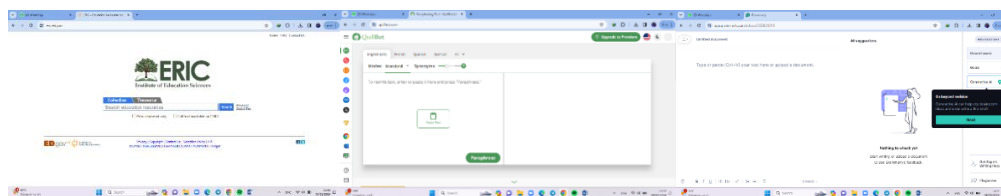


b. Google Sites

There are several Google Sites that lecturers introduce to students to help them in writing. The first is a collection of journals which have previously been provided with explanations and descriptions through class meetings. Students could carry out digital literacy through the Google Scholar site, ERIC journal, and SINTA. Same as the lecturer statement below:

*"I also think that a journal website that is easy for students to access, especially for those who are beginners and just reading journals, is the ERIC journal, because the level and language can also be adjusted."*

Lecturers also provided education to avoid plagiarism, students certainly need to paraphrase every other person's writing that they want to take. One of the website that students could access, namely QuillBot. Checking how the language is arranged is also necessary, so lecturers advised students to check their grammar on the Grammarly site.



c. Microsoft Office

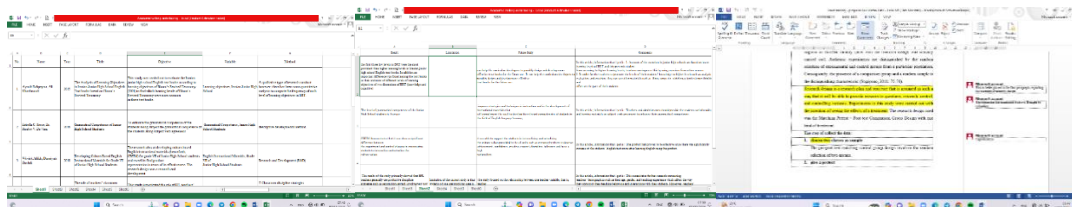
The lecturer assigned them to do note-taking. Students are asked to collect the information obtained from the sources and type it into Microsoft Excel. Students create a note-taking table where each column contains the author's name, the year the journals were published,

title, research objectives, variables, methods, results, limitations, future study, comments. As stated by the lecturer:

*"Note-taking is very necessary to make it easier, so what we need is Excel. Students make a table, then fill in each column, at the top, fill in the author's name, year of publication, title, then there is the research objective, variables or core, results, limitations of the research, future study, and last comments from the students."*

The next stage is proof-reading. Lecturers randomly divide who does whose proof-reading. Students have to re-read carefully, not just checking fellow students for mistakes, but still have to pay attention to conclusions. This process can be easier by utilizing Microsoft Word, where on the tab 'review', students can add comments to individual paragraphs or sentences that may contain errors. As the lecturer statement below:

*"To simplify, I recommend they use Microsoft Word. In the 'review' tab, we can click 'new comment' and then students can write their comments on sentences or paragraphs that they consider inappropriate, like that."*



#### d. ChatGPT

Through this chat bot, students can look for new inspiration or when they experience writers block due to the lack of English vocabulary. However, lecturers gave this option to students with the intention of serving as a reference. Even if students want to copy the content, they still need to paraphrase to avoid possible plagiarism. In accordance with the lecturers explanation below:

*"I just give students another option if they need help when they get stuck on ideas, so they can use chatGPT as a reference. But, I really don't recommend that students take what the chatbot says at face value, even if they want to copy, they have to paraphrase again, because we don't know whether this is plagiarism or not."*



## 2. Challenges Faced by Lecturer in Implementing Digital Literacy for Teaching and Learning Academic Writing.

- a. Students' struggles with standard and scientific English in sources.

This was felt by lecturers when making note-taking and paraphrasing. Some students complained that they did not understand what was discussed from the sources they got. As the experience described by lecturers:

*"There are some students who often come to me in front of the class because they are confused about finding keywords for every source they find. I suggested using the translate feature, but they argued that they didn't understand what was translated, even though they hadn't tried."*

b. Difficulty in reading and writing English.

Students have thought and assumed that writing in English is difficult, especially academic writing, so they look for an instant way. Students are still stuck on English reading with fiction themes, in contrast to scientific reading such as journals. According to the lecturers said:

*"It is very unfortunate that there are still students who have complained that academic writing is difficult, the sources they read, whether in journals or on internet sites, contain a lot of scientific language that they do not understand. So, every writing progress that I pay attention to, they write just as they are, with rudimentary grammar. Not all, but there are still students like this."*

c. Overreliance on chatbots affecting original writing.

The lecturers think that students use this chatbot to spark their thinking, increase their insight and vocabulary, look for new ideas if they feel stuck. But unfortunately, some students do not really improve the quality of their literacy. There are still students who only rely on chatbots without want to think about whether what is conveyed is valid or where the source comes from. According to the experiences mentioned by lecturer:

*"Actually, using GPT chat is normal, because when we ask students to write online, outside of class, we can't monitor them what they use. Sometimes students use chatGPT directly, so the results of their writing seem very good. Well, most of the students don't want to process or evaluate the results from chatGPT."*

d. Students procrastination despite media variety and deadlines.

Students may feel that because the information from the sources they want to search is very easy to find, with the many digital journal sites, they often procrastinate even though they have been given a deadline. Even in class, the lecturer noticed that there were still people who misused the digital platforms they were running. According to the stories of the lecturers:

*"Students easily get bored if they learn just one media. On the other hand, even though we provide a variety of learning media, students end up delaying work. Because of how easy it is to access these digital sources, students tend to procrastinate, especially if they are not given a deadline. Sometimes during class, I find students opening applications, social media, or even games that have nothing to do with Academic Writing."*

e. Unstable network usage in some areas.

Students are usually asked to continue their writing project and paraphrase for which students need a network to open the QuillBot. Some classes or in certain situations, cellular networks are unstable, making it difficult for students to access digital resources. This is in accordance with the lecturers said:

*"At certain times, some networks do not support learning. It's like slow internet, which makes students' progress become stuck, they are hampered by searching for new sources, or paraphrasing, checking grammar, all of these processes require the internet."*

- f. Students' reluctance to share thoughts due to fear of making mistakes.

Lecturers try to encourage all students to participate in providing constructive criticism and suggestions on each of their writing progress. There are still those who only appear occasionally, or are often not seen providing comments as if they are embarrassed to express their opinion. In accordance with the participant experiences:

*"Until now there are still students who choose to be passive, although I emphasize that everyone should contribute. Unfortunately, I just memorize the names of active students because they are definitely the ones who are active at every meeting."*

#### b. Discussion

1. The types of media utilized by the lecturers to incorporate digital literacy into teaching and learning Academic Writing.

In WhatsApp group, the lecturers provide feedback in the form of criticism and suggestions for students to redevelop their initial writing material. This is in line with research from Based on Rosenberg and Asterhan (2018), teachers have accessibility after school, are able to be employed as a channel for either private or public contact, may utilize various forms of textual communication, and have less privacy concerns when using WhatsApp group conversations in the learning process. At this stage the lecturers encourage students to prepare outlines for their academic writing. This is in accordance with the Academic Writing process based on Bailey (2011) Background to writing, the first step is to determine what academic writing is actually written for, what phenomenon or event is the basis for it and what method the writer want to use and determine the target audience.

All sources obtained from the internet are collected first and then selected. There will be greater amounts of internet-based materials used to study the topics because models are designed with students development and technology in mind (Peprizal & Syah in Jusriati et al., 2021). With literacy skills, students must be able to filter which information is valid. This is in line with the statement of Gilster (1997) that it is a skill or ability to brainpower and use information in profuse formats from various sources through computers and comparable technologies. This is in line with the Academic Writing process by Bailey (2011) Reading: finding suitable sources, also said Reading: developing critical approaches, is a step that can be called applying critical thinking. Analyze the reading sources found and ensure that there are grand theories from previous researchers.

In developing student literacy to study digital sources, this is in line with Hobbs in Li et al., (2020) stated that including digital and media literacy into classroom instruction not only binds technological devices and cultural enclaves together but is also a means to encourage students to generalize information gained from numerous courses. Avoiding the issue of plagiarism to create Academic Writing by paraphrasing what the lecturer taught is in line with



what Bailey (2011) stated regarding avoiding plagiarism, this step can be said to be an action to avoid copyright on content or sentences taken from sources obtained. In addition, Bailey (2011) Paraphrasing, changing the wording of a text so that it is significantly different from the original source, without changing the meaning.

The next stage is the lecturers teach students to take notes. Note-taking is made easier with Microsoft Excel. This is part of a new discovery by researchers, indicating that Microsoft Excel can be leveraged in Academic Writing lessons. It also helps students prepare their research papers, assignments, and individual or group presentations; hence, using the entire Microsoft Office suite in teaching and learning is critical (Bawa et al., 2021). This process is in line with Bailey (2011), who states that proof-reading means checking the final work for small errors that may make it more difficult for the reader to understand exactly what the writer want to say.

Through chatGPT, students can look for new inspiration or when they experience writers block due to lack of English vocabulary they master. Johnson (2023) contends that if created information is critically assessed, rephrased, and properly cited, its usage in academic writing is appropriate and does not qualify as plagiarism. In addition, if created information is critically assessed, rephrased, and correctly attributed, it may be used in academic work without being considered plagiarism (Perkins, 2023).

## *2. Challenges Faced by Lecturers in Implementing Digital Literacy for Teaching and Learning Academic Writing.*

Unfortunately, there are still students who have difficulty understanding parts of language that they consider scientific language and seem unfamiliar. a number of pupils found it extremely challenging to grasp the importance and meaning of the information and contents they observed from websites (Mudra in Purmayanti, 2022). Furthermore, students remark that some information they obtained on internet sites is often difficult to read and understand (Burnett, 2011). From the start, students already distracted and have thoughts or think that reading and writing in English is difficult. This leads them to suggest that Academic Writing will also be difficult. Due to the difficulty of their resources, students' inability to make independent decisions, and a lack of encounters, lecturers must teach them how to explore and choose information logically, as well as being indicative of the performing rituals of digital activities (Bhatt & MacKenzie , 2019).

Today's students prefer taking the fast route without increasing their literacy knowledge, there are still students who only rely on chatbots without thinking whether what is being conveyed is valid or the source is not clear. This constitutes a new finding by the researchers, wherein there is no theoretical mention in the preceding chapter regarding these challenge.

The lecturers also noticed that there were still people who misused the digital platform being used. For example, when students read literacy sources that they find in various media, suddenly

in the middle of the time they still have time to open games or other social media that are not related to Academic Writing and they do this even though there is a lecturer in the class. During distance learning, teachers used a variety of digital tools to help students learn and perform on assessments; However, certain pupils were not involved in the virtual activities and failed to complete the assigned duties Priyantini & Herawati (2023). In addition, teachers have the capacity to use numerous technology tools and incorporate them into their instructional methods, but they still have challenges when choosing appropriate technologies for facilitating customized learning and performing assessments for pupils Priyantini & Herawati (2023).

Even being in a sophisticated technology era, does not rule out situations where the network is still unstable. This is in line with Kimble-Hill et al. (2020) stated that students typically struggle to access and comprehend classes due to inadequate internet connection. Furthermore, numerous students are frustrated and upset at school since they are unable to acquire an adequate internet connection to reach every single site (Argawati & Suryani, 2020).

Lastly, there are still passive students, they were embarrassed to express their opinions. If lecturers dictate students' access to academic material and knowledge via the Internet due to the difficulty of their resources, students' inability to make independent decisions, and a lack of encounters, lecturers must teach them how to explore and choose information logically, as well as be indicative on the performing rituals of digital activities (Bhatt & MacKenzie, 2019).

In short, integrating several various media digital literacy in teaching and learning Academic Writing represents a critical advancement in educational practices. Despite its potential benefits, including enhanced engagement and accessibility, there still lack or challenges faced by the lecturers. This research allowed an in-depth look at the experiences of two English lecturers from UIN Antasari Banjarmasin using digital literacy in Academic Writing classes. However, they faced challenges such as technical issues and students' unfamiliarity with digital tools, highlighting the need for ongoing professional development.

The lecturers noticed significant improvements in student engagement and performance of digital tools. They adjusted their teaching methods to better integrate these tools, redesigning lesson plans and creating more opportunities for practical application of digital literacy skills. Both lecturers expressed positive views on the role of digital literacy in academic writing, seeing it as essential for preparing students for future academic and professional success. These insights highlight the importance of digital literacy in education and its impact on enhancing academic writing skills.

This research contributes to advancing the understanding implementation of digital literacy in the realm pf teaching and learning Academic Writing. By exploring various media digital for literacy and challenges associated with integrating digital tools into academic writing course, this



study aims to provide valuable insights for educators and students who wants to write academically. Ultimately, this study seeks to catalyze efforts towards optimizing educational outcomes through thoughtful integration of digital literacy in Academic Writing instruction.

## CONCLUSION

The lecturers used various media platforms for digital literacy in Academic Writing course, namely, WhatsApp for initial material dissemination and facilitating discussion with consultation forums. Google Sites for accessing reading materials and references, paraphrasing, also checking grammar. Microsoft Office for note-taking and document creation has streamlined the academic writing process and peer proof-reading. ChatGPT serves as a valuable resource for students seeking inspiration and assistance with academic writing.

Despite the integration of various digital media, the lecturers encountered challenges when teaching Academic Writing. These challenges encompass students' struggles with standard and scientific English in sources, difficulty in reading and writing English, overreliance on chatbots affecting original writing, student procrastination despite media variety and deadlines, unstable network usage in some areas, and students' reluctance to share thoughts due to fear of making mistakes.

## REFERENCES

- Apriyanti, S. N., & Rahman. (2020). Gadget-Based Digital Literacy in Learning Writing Skills for Elementary School Students. *The 3rd International Conference on Elementary Education*, 186-193.
- Argawati, N. O., & Suryani, L. (2020). Digital-Based Instruction: Chances and Challenges in English Language Teaching Context. *Int J Eval & Res Educ.*, 1139.
- Bailey, S. (2011). *Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students (Third Edition)*. Routledge.
- Bawa, K., et al. (2021). Application of Microsoft Office Suite in Teaching and Learning. *ResearchGate*, 62-73.
- Benyta, B. E., & Sri, K. N. (2023). Exploring the Teacher's Experiences of Using Digital Technology in Teaching Writing Skills. *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan*, 1460-1465.
- Bhatt, I., & MacKenzie, A. (2019). Just Google It! Digital literacy and The Epistemology of Ignorance. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 302-317.
- Burnett, C. (2011). Pre-Service Teachers' Digital Literacy Practices: Exploring Contingency in Identity and Digital Literacy in and out of Educational Contexts. *Language and Education*, 433-449.
- Glistner, P (1997) Digital literacy. New York: Wiley.

- Johnson, A. (2023). ChatGPT in Schools: Here's Where it's Banned—And How it could Potentially Help Students. *Forbes*.
- Jusriati, e. a. (2021). The Implementation of Google Site as E-Learning Platform for Teaching EFL During COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of English Education*, 129-138.
- Kimble-Hill, et al., (2020). Insights Gained into Marginalized Students Access Challenges during The COVID-19 Academic Response. *Journal of Chemical Education*, 3391-3395.
- Li, K. Y., Megat, A. Z., & Nurul, F. J. (2020). Understanding Digital Media Literacy in a Digital Age: A Riview of Current Frameworks. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, 1010-1015.
- Perkins, M. (2023). Academic Integrity Considerations of AI Large Language Models in the Post-pandemic Era: ChatGPT and Beyond. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*.
- Priyantini, T., & Herawati, H., (2023). EFL Teachers' Strategies and Challenges in Developing Digital Competency: A Narrative Inquiry. *Pedagogy: Journal of English Language Teaching*, 11(1).1-14.
- Purmayanti, D. (2022). The Challenges of Implementing Digital Literacy in Teaching and Learning Activities for EFL Learners in Indonesia. *BATARA DIDI: English Language Journal*, 101-110.
- Riessman, C. K. (1993). *Narrative Analysis*. Sage Publication. Inc.
- Rosenberg, H., & Asterhan, C. S. . (2018). Students' Perspective on Teacher Students Whatsapp Interaction in Secondary School. *Journal of Information Technology Education Research*. 17.
- Sholikhah, M., & Candradewi, W. A. (2022). Empowering Digital Language Literacy in Writing Instructions: Lecturers' and Students' Voices. *Lensa: Kajian Kebahasaan, Kesusastraan, dan Budaya*, 263-281.

**Disclaimer:** The article has been reviewed by a team from the Indonesian English Lecturers Association at the 2nd Hybrid International Conference on Global Trends in English Language Pedagogy: Navigating New Horizons.

**Copyright** © 2024 Defi Nor Izati, Nani Hizriani. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY-SA). The use, distribution, or reproduction in other forums is permitted, provided the original author(s) and copyright owner(s) are credited and that the original publication in this journal is cited in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution, or reproduction is permitted that does not comply with these terms.