

The Effect of Digital Literacy and Word Choice Mastery on Students' Writing Skills

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ARTICLE INFORMATION	ABSTRACT
<p>Article History:</p> <p>Received: 26-12-2022 Accepted: 15-05-2023</p> <hr/> <p>Keywords:</p> <p><i>digital literacy;</i> <i>word choice mastery;</i> <i>writing skills</i></p> <hr/> <p>Authors Correspondence:</p> <p>Aveny Septi Astriani Indonesian Language Education Universitas Siliwangi Siliwangi St, Number 24, Tasikmalaya, West Java, Indonesia E-mail: aveny.septi@unsil.ac.id</p>	<p>This study aims to investigate the effect of digital literacy skills and word choice mastery on students' writing skills. This descriptive qualitative research used survey in the form of questionnaires, multiple choice items, and writing practice as the data collection techniques. The obtained data were analysed by calculating the scores of digital literacy skills, word choice mastery, and writing skills practice, and then calculating the effect of those variables using multiple linear regression tests. The data were then processed through the steps of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The sample of this study were 55 college students who signed a writing contract at Siliwangi University. As a result, word choice mastery had an effect of 1.2%, digital literacy skills had an effect writing skill of 9%, while literacy skills and word choice mastery influenced writing skills of 11.6%.</p>

One of the language skills that students must master is writing skill. Writing is important because this skill is widely used in all courses especially in college. Most courses rely on writing skills to express students' thoughts such as papers, scientific articles, proposals, research reports, theses, dissertations, and others. It can be said that writing is part of a student's daily life (Klimova, 2014). Producing good writing is a challenge for students because writing requires memory, language, and thinking skills (Kellogg & Raulerson, 2007). Memory skills are needed because writing requires cognitive experience to be conveyed in written form. Meanwhile, language skills are also important in writing because language symbols are used to represent the results of thoughts. In addition, thinking skills are needed because the writing process requires reasoning ability to express thoughts. This opinion is reinforced by (Tangpermpoon, 2008; Fauziya, 2016; Hartley, 2002; Astriani et al., 2022) who say that writing skills are the most difficult skills compared to listening, speaking, and reading skills. This is because writers are required to have a lot of lexical knowledge, syntax, and organizational principles in language to produce a good writing. As a result, it takes various efforts made by the teacher so that students can write well.

However, composing a good writing is not easy for students. The writing tradition among Indonesian students is still relatively low. This is reflected in the low number of scientific papers published by Indonesian students. Based on the list of scientific paper publications issued by the Asia Pacific Nature Publishing Index (Asia Pacific All-Asia Pacific Journal Publishers Agency) in the period of April 14, 2014 to April 13, 2015, Indonesia ranks 12th out of 20 countries in Asia Pacific (Persadha, 2016). In this case, various ways are carried out by the students to get good writing. Some of them are by relying on digital literacy skills and word choice mastery. However, a study should be conducted to determine whether or not these two factors influence and improve students' writing skills. Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence between digital literacy skills and word choice mastery on students' writing skills.

Literacy is traditionally defined as the ability to read and write. However, the notion of literacy is growing along with the development of technology and information. Literacy develops into an individual's ability to process information and knowledge. Processing information means being able to identify, examine, and analyze all information and knowledge that is well received. In this case, literacy is not only about reading and writing literacy, but manifests itself into digital literacy, cultural literacy, scientific literacy, numerical literacy, financial literacy, and other kinds of literacy. Nonetheless, the focus of this study is only on digital literacy.

Digital literacy is very closely related to rapid development of social and technology. The term "digital literacy" was coined by Gilster and Wattson (1997) to refer to the ability to understand and utilize information gathered from various digital sources. The United States Department of Education (1996) defines digital literacy as an ability to use computers and other forms of technology to enhance learning, productivity, and performance. In addition, Dudeney, Hockly, and Pegrum (2014) define digital literacy as the ability to take advantage of available technology and understand social practices around the use of

new media. Meanwhile, Barrette (2013) and Corbel (2004) stated that digital literacy consists of two important components: a) the ability to perform basic computer operations and b) the application of computer knowledge for problem solving and critical thinking. Gilster (1997) also argues that digital literacy is more than just the capacity to operate digital devices; instead, he highlights the importance of critical thinking in the processing of information obtained digitally. In this regard, this research refers to the effect of digital literacy on students' writing abilities which involve critical thinking.

In the context of language learning, students are required to develop digital literacy. Therefore, digital literacy can be defined as “survival skills for the digital age” (Eshet-Alkalai, 2004). To guarantee that students are digitally literate, skills such as information, media, and technology skills; learning and innovation skills; and life and work skills are needed (Warschauer & Matuchniak, 2010). In this regard, Hafner (2014) believes that digital literacy can be incorporated into the existing language curriculum by using digital technology in learning activities. In addition, Dudeney and Hockly (2016) believe that students can acquire digital literacy through activities and assignments that are integrated with technology as part of language teaching.

Dudeney (2014) divides the digital literacy taxonomy into four basic categories, namely language, information, connection, and (re) design as follows, a) language: printed literacy, *SMS* literacy, *hypertext* literacy, visual and multimedia media literacy, game, mobile literacy, code and technology literacy, b) information: search literacy, information literacy, tagging literacy, c) connection: personal literacy, network literacy, participatory literacy, cultural and intercultural literacy, d) (re)design: mixed literacy.

Apart from digital literacy, mastery of word choice is also considered as one of the factors that influence students' writing skills. The more students master word choice, the more they are considered to be able to write. The definition of word choice is much broader than what is reflected by the relationship between the words. This term is not only used to state which words are used to express an idea, but also includes phraseology, style of language, and expressions (Keraf, 2008).

Research relevant to this study has been written by Chadis (2014), Fahrurroz (2017), Yahya (2018), and Indriani et.al.(2020) . Chadis (2014) writes *The Effect of Vocabulary Mastery and Sentence Comprehension on Narrative Writing Skills*. In his research, Chadis said that there is an influence between sentence comprehension variables and narrative writing skill variables. Even though the research is about writing skills, there are differences in the independent variables with this present study. There are two independent variables for this study, namely digital literacy skills and word choice mastery. Additionally, Yahya (2018) writes *The Relationship between Vocabulary Mastery and Diction Errors in Indonesian Sentences for BIPA Academic Level Students*. The findings showed that, the more vocabulary mastered by the learners, the better their ability to choose appropriate words to be written into sentences. In this case, the research conducted by Yahya has some differences from this present study in terms of the variables used.

Furthermore, Indriani (2020) writes *Reading Habits, Mastery of Diction, and Ability to Write Expository Texts*. The results of that study are (a) there is a positive correlation between reading habits and the ability to write exposition texts of the tenth-grade students of SMA Negeri 11 Palembang, (b) there is a positive and significant correlation between word choice mastery and the ability to write exposition texts of the tenth-grade students of SMA Negeri 11 Palembang, (c) there is a positive and significant correlation between students' reading habits and word choice mastery with the ability to write exposition texts of the tenth-grade students of SMA Negeri 11 Palembang. There is a difference between Indriani's research and this present study, especially in the independent variables and the subjects studied. Although one of Indriani's independent variables is word choice mastery, the respondents were the tenth-grade students, while the research subjects are college students. In terms of language psychology, there are differences in language development between senior high school students and college students, therefore Indriani's research results cannot be generalized to university students.

METHODS

This research is a descriptive qualitative study with a sample of 50 college students who took writing courses as respondents. There were several stages in conducting this research. The first stage was data collection, the authors distributed digital literacy ability instruments, word choice mastery instruments, and blank paper to assess respondents' writing skills. The digital literacy ability instrument contains a list of confirmed statements in the form of a 1-4 Likert scale. Scale 1 means strongly disagree (SD), scale 2 means disagree (D), scale 3 means agree (A), and scale 4 means strongly agree (SA). The number of statements contained in the digital literacy ability instrument is sixteen statements adapted from *A Global Framework of Reference on Digital Literacy Skills* by Law (2018) and Bawden (2008).

The second instrument that was distributed to respondents was the word choice mastery instrument. The instrument contains forty lists of objective or multiple-choice questions. The aspect that is assessed from the word choice mastery is the definition of diction; denotative and connotative mastery; changes in meaning, synonyms, and antonyms; homonym, homophone, homograph; special words, common words, standard words; as well as polysemy. Meanwhile, the respondent's writing ability was obtained from writing practice. Assessment of respondents' writing skills was measured through four indicators of writing skills assessment, namely: a) content of writing, b) organization of writing, c) vocabulary and terms, d) use of language, and e) application of spelling and writing techniques which were assessed based on scores and weights.

The next stage is data analysis. Data from the three variables that have been collected are inputted into the SPSS application and analyzed using linear regression analysis and multiple linear regression to determine the relationship between digital literacy skills, word choice mastery, and students' writing skills. After the data is analyzed, the data is presented in the form of tables and sentence descriptions, which describe the results of the tables as well as discussions between the variables of digital literacy ability, word choice mastery, and students' writing skills.

RESULTS

This sub-chapter explains the scores of students' writing skills, digital literacy skills, word choice mastery, as well as the influence between digital literacy skills and writing skills, the effect of word choice mastery on writing skills, and the influence of digital literacy skills and word choice mastery on students' writing skills.

Students' Writing Skills

Writing skills are one of the graduation indicators for students who take writing courses. The data taken by the researchers is data at the meeting of the two writing courses, so that students' knowledge of writing skills is not maximized. The following is descriptive statistical data regarding the skills of students who contract writing courses.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Student Writing Skills

Statistics	Statistic Score
Sample	55
Lowest Score	58
Highest Score	94
Average Score (<i>mean</i>)	73
Standard deviation	6,45

Based on Table 1, it is can be seen that the sample involved as respondents was 55 college students. The students' lowest score of writing skills was 58, while the highest score was 94, and the average student score was 73 with a standard deviation of 6.45. Based on these data the researchers can formulate a categorization of students' writing skills as follows.

Table 2. Categorization of Student Writing Skills

Limit Category	Interval	f_1	Category	Percentage
$x < (\mu - 1,0 \sigma)$	$x < 66$	9	Low	16%
$(\mu - 1,0 \sigma) \leq x < (\mu + 1,0 \sigma)$	$66 \leq x < 80$	33	Medium	60%
$x \geq (\mu + 1,0 \sigma)$	$x \geq 80$	13	High	24%
SUM		55		100%

Table 2 is a categorization of writing skills for students who took writing courses at Siliwangi University. Based on the category limit, the data obtained from students who got the low category with a percentage of 16% and scores less than 66 were 9 students. In the medium category, there were 33 students with a percentage of 60% who got a score greater than or equal to 66 and less than 80. In the high category, there were 13 students with a percentage of 24% who got a score greater than or equal to 80. To sum up, students' writing skills tend to be moderate.

Students' Digital Literacy Skills

Digital literacy skills is considered as one of the factors that influence students' writing skills. This is because it is related to the ability to read, know, understand, and use ICT hardware and software system in everyday life, especially through gadgets such as mobile phones, tablets, computers, laptops, etc. Most students access the internet to do their assignments, but this does not guarantee that students have good digital literacy skills. This study investigates the digital literacy skills, especially of students who took writing courses at Siliwangi University. The following is descriptive statistical data on students' digital literacy skills.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Digital Literacy Skills

Statistics	Statistic Score
Sampel	55
Lowest Score	61
Highest Score	98
Average Score (<i>mean</i>)	79
Standard deviation	8,10

Based on Table 3, it can be seen that the number of samples who became respondents was 55 students. The lowest score is 61, the highest score is 98 with an average (mean) of 79, and a standard deviation of 8.10. Based on these data, the students' digital literacy skills can be categorized as follows.

Table 4. Categorization of Students' Digital Literacy Skills

Limit Category	Interval	f_1	Category	Percentage
$x < (\mu - 1,0 (\sigma))$	$x < 71$	8	Low	15%
$(\mu - 1,0\sigma) \leq x < (\mu + 1,0 \sigma)$	$71 \leq x < 87$	34	Medium	62%
$x \geq (\mu + 1,0 \sigma)$	$x \geq 87$	13	High	24%
Sum		55		100%

Table 4 is a categorization of students' digital literacy skills, namely low, medium and high categories. In the low category, there were 8 students who scored below 71 with a percentage of 15%. In the medium category, there were 34 students who scored between more than or equal to 71 and less than 87 with a percentage of 62%. In the high category, there were 13 students who scored more than or equal to 87. This means that the digital literacy skills of students who contract writing courses are classified as moderate.

The Effect of Digital Literacy on Students' Writing Skills

The analysis results of digital literacy skills on students' writing skills are presented in the following table.

Table 5. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.300 ^a	.090	.073	7.00978

a. Predictors: (Constant), LITERASI

The Model Summary table indicates that the R Square value is 0.090. It means, the effect of digital literacy skills on writing skills is 9%, while the remaining 81% is influenced by other factors.

Table 6. ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	257.119	1	257.119	5.233	.026 ^b
	Residual	2604.262	53	49.137		
	Total	2861.382	54			

a. Dependent Variable: WRITING

b. Predictors: (Constant), LITERACY

In the ANOVA table, F count = 5.233 with a significance/probability level of 0.026 < 0.05, so the regression model can be used to predict writing skill variables. This means that there is an influence between the variables of digital literacy skills and the writing skills.

Students' Word Choice Mastery

Word choice mastery is also considered as one of the factors that influence students' writing skills. Many people think that the more they master word choice, the better their individual writing skills will be. This is seen because writing a sentence, paragraph, or discourse requires words in a unit of meaning to complete it. Word choice is also placed as a support for the harmony of meaning in a sentence. The following is descriptive statistical data regarding the word choice mastery of students who took writing courses at Siliwangi University.

Tabel 7. Descriptive Statistics of Student Diction Mastery

Statistic	Statistik Score
Sampel	55
Lowest Score	35
Highest Score	75
Average Score (<i>mean</i>)	57
Standard deviation	9,54

Based on table 7, it is known that the sample who became respondents was 55 students. The lowest student score regarding word choice mastery was 35. The highest score was 75, the average was 57, and the standard deviation was 9.54. Based on these data, the writer can categorize student word choice mastery as follows.

Table 8. Categorization of Students' Word choice Mastery

Limit Category	Interval	f_1	Category	Percentage
$x < (\mu - 1,0 (\sigma))$	$x < 47$	8	Low	15%
$(\mu - 1,0\sigma) \leq x < (\mu + 1,0 \sigma)$	$47 \leq x < 67$	38	Medium	69%
$x \geq (\mu + 1,0 \sigma)$	$x \geq 67$	9	High	16%
Jumlah		55		100%

Table 8 is a categorization for students' word choice mastery who took writing courses at Siliwangi University. Based on the category limit, the data obtained from students who got the low category with a percentage of 15% and scores less than 47 were 8 students. In the medium category, there were 38 students with a percentage of 69% who got a score greater than or equal to 47 and less than 67. In the high category, there were 9 students with a percentage of 16% who got a score greater than or equal to 67. In conclusion, students' word choice mastery tends to be moderate.

The Effect of Word choice Mastery on Students' Writing Skills

Data from the analysis results regarding the effect of word choice mastery on writing skills is presented in the following table.

Table 9. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.111 ^a	.012	-.006	7.30226

a. Predictors: (Constant), DIKSI

It can be seen from the table 9 Model Summary that the R Square value is 0.012. It means, the effect of word choice mastery on writing skills is 1.2%, while the remaining 98.8% is influenced by other factors.

Table 10. ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	35.261	1	35.261	.661	.420 ^b
Residual	2826.121	53	53.323		
Total	2861.382	54			

a. Dependent Variable: WRITING

b. Predictors: (Constant), WORD CHOICE

In the ANOVA table, F count = 0.661 with a significance/probability level of 0.420 > 0.05, so the regression model cannot be used to predict writing skill variables. To conclude, there is no significant influence between word choice mastery and writing skill variables.

The Effect of Digital Literacy Ability and Word choice Mastery on Students' Writing Skills

The results of multiple linear regression analysis regarding the effect of digital literacy skills and word choice mastery on students' writing skills are described in the following table.

Table 11. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.340 ^a	.116	.082	6.97533

a. Predictors: (Constant), Word choice X2, Literacy X1

Table 9 Model Summary indicates that the value of R Square is 0.116, which means the effect of digital literacy skills and word choice mastery on writing skills is 11.6%, while the remaining 88.4% is influenced by other factors.

Table 12. ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	331.309	2	165.654	3.405	.041 ^b
	Residual	2530.073	52	48.655		
	Total	2861.382	54			

a. Dependent Variable: Writing Y

b. Predictors: (Constant), Word choice X2, Literacy X1

In the Anova table, F count = 3.405 with a significance/probability level of 0.041 < 0.05, so the regression model can be used to predict the variable of writing skills.

DISCUSSION

Student writing skills are influenced by various internal and external factors. One must have the will to be able to write well. Kellogg (2008) stated that there were at least three stages carried out by the writer, namely the beginner stage, the transitional stage, and the final stage. The beginner stage uses writing to tell what someone knows. Furthermore, the transitional stage is transforming what is known for the benefit of the writer, and the final stage is compiling what is known for the benefit of the reader. Based on the description of the results of this study, the writing skills of students who took writing courses resulted in 9 students (16%) who scored less than 66 (low), a total of 13 students (24%) who scored more than 80 (high), and a total of 33 students (60%) who scored between 66-80 (moderate). It means, the ability of students in writing is still in the moderate category. In addition, the data proves that not all students can write well.

In this regard, developing good writing requires planning, texting, and reviewing. This is because the writer tries to solve the problem of what content should be conveyed and the rhetorical problem of how to say it (Bereiter, C., & Scardamalia, 1987). Cognitively, an individual's writing ability is influenced by three things: a) a measure of working memory capacity in the brain, b) mechanical skills of handwriting and spelling, and c) progress in using writing as a tool for thinking, and language production that appears only after a decade or so (Kellogg & Raulerson, 2007). Therefore, one way that can be done to train students' writing skills is to practice continuously.

The challenge for teaching writing courses is to make the students graduate by mastering writing skills well (November & Day, 2012). Teachers must be more creative so that students can produce a good writing. November and Day further revealed this must start from the way students think about the writing process that cannot be carried out without the reading process (literacy).

To streamline digital literacy skills, November and Day (2012) conducted writing exercises for students online with the assumption that a) students are considered digital-minded, meaning students use mobile phones, surf the internet, and use social media in everyday life, b) teachers in universities assume that digital literacy is useful for building student knowledge. In their research, November and Day use textual intervention techniques and productive language games. After working on assignments, students upload their assignments to Aropý, an application that allocates and facilitates peer review of student writing. Colleagues are also required to review the submissions that have been submitted. As a result, the peer review process succeeded in improving students' writing and making them reflect on writing as an extensive process.

Learning to write digitally is also carried out by Al-Qallaf and Al-Mutairi (2016). In their writings, Al-Qallaf and Al-Mutairi argue that several elements of digital literacy such as critical thinking skills, creativity, constructing and evaluating information, and using digital media effectively can be developed into students' digital writing. In other words, integrating technology into the classroom. In their research, students were asked to write on a blog every day. As a result, there is a positive effect on students' writing.

Both of these studies can be used to improve digital literacy skills as well as students' writing skills. As in the results of this study, the digital literacy level of students who contract writing courses tends to be classified as moderate, with 34 students (62%) in medium category, 8 students (15%) in the low category, and 13 students (24%) in the high category. Continuous training is also needed to train students' digital literacy skills. According to the results of this study, there is an influence between digital literacy skills and students' writing skills of 9%. It means, 81% is influenced by other factors. This proves that writing skills are not only influenced by students' digital literacy skills, but it also takes effort from other factors to make students skilled at writing.

In word choice mastery, the results of this study are divided into three categories, namely low, medium, and high. The low category was obtained by 8 students (15%), the medium category was obtained by 38 students (69%), and the high category was obtained by 9 students (16%). The importance of word choice or word choice in the development of grammar is also conveyed by Wyse (2006). Wyse conducted research on student word choice and language teaching. In his writing, Wyse argues that learning contextual grammar is important. This is considered to affect students' performance towards writing. This study also discussed the influence of word choice mastery on writing skills. As a result, the word choice mastery variable

influences the writing skill variable. The effect is 1.2%. If you look at the results of the F test table, it is obtained F count = 0.661 with a significance/probability level of $0.420 > 0.05$, then the regression model cannot be used to predict writing skill variables. In other words, even though it has a very small effect, word choice mastery cannot be used as a reference in improving students' writing skills. However, if the two variables, namely digital literacy skills and word choice mastery, are associated with writing skills, there is an influence of around 11.6%. According to Keraf (2007), the term word choice or word choice does not only refer to words used to express ideas, but also includes issues of phraseology, style of language, and expressions. Word choice is considered important in writing skills. Selection of the right word choice will represent individual ideas appropriately too. For example, in the sentence *Seekor manusia ditemukan tergeletak di pinggir sungai* (A human was found lying on the bank of a river). Structurally, the sentence is correct, namely there is a subject, predicate, complement, and adverb of place. However, it is different from the point of view of word choice or word choice. The word 'seekor' should not be juxtaposed with humans. Said 'seekor' would be better when juxtaposed with animals. The sentence should be changed to "Seorang manusia ditemukan tergeletak di pinggir sungai." These case examples proves that word choice mastery is also an essential aspect of writing.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, the conclusions of this study are described as follows. First, mastery of student writing skills is divided into three categories, namely low, medium, and high. In the low category, there were 9 students (16%), in the medium category there were 33 students (60%), and in the high category there were 13 students (24%). Second, students' digital literacy skills are also divided into three categories, namely low, medium, and high. There were 8 students in the low category (15%), 34 students in the medium category (62%), and 13 students in the high category (24%). Meanwhile, the influence between students' digital literacy skills and students' writing skills is 9%. Third, categories of student word choice mastery include low, medium, and high categories. There were 8 students in the low category (15%), 38 students in the medium category (69%), and 9 students in the high category (16%). Meanwhile, the influence between word choice mastery and student writing skills is 1.2%. Fourth, the effect of digital literacy skills and word choice mastery on students' writing skills is 11.6% while the other 88.4% are influenced by other factors.

This research is not a new research, but this research is a complement to the previous research. The novelty of this research lies on comparing the effect of digital literacy skills and word choice mastery and combining both variables with the students' writing skills. However, this research still has some limitations. Future reserachers are suggested to add the number of sample and methods to improve students' writing skills through mastering word choice and digital literacy skills.

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