

Quillbot Web-Application: Utilizing Online Technology on Academic Writing at an Indonesian Islamic Higher Education

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Abstract

The objectives of this research were to find out the impact and obstacles that QuillBot's utilization as an online technology faced on students' academic writing. This research used a phenomenological qualitative design. The subjects were eight students who participated in this research. This research used an interview guide to collect the data. The result showed that the impact of QuillBot as an online technology on students' academic writing has a positive and negative impact, where the positive is that QuillBot can help students save their time to write the academic writing process, increase their vocabulary, and help in the writing process with the complexity, objectivity, formality, and hedging aspects of academic writing itself. The negative impact indicates the students' dependence on QuillBot tools, where they become lazy to think and do not use their ability to write their academic writing. Finally, there were the obstacles that students encountered while using QuillBot, such as a bad network and a lack of clear instructions on how to upgrade to the premium version.

Keywords: *QuillBot, academic writing, impact, obstacle.*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is regarded as a somewhat complicated activity, making it one of the most difficult activities to do, especially for Indonesian Islamic higher education students completing their studies. EFL students must abide by several writing rules in order to write well since the sort of writing they work on is a formal style of writing that is distinct from other types of writing and is known as academic writing. The ability to think critically leads to academic writing, which is a vehicle for communicating one's ideas to those who can understand his or her intellectual process. EFL students need to improve their academic writing abilities. They must be capable of developing arguments and ideas in academic writing (Fareed et al., 2016); therefore, learning academic writing is essential for students.

Teaching and learning academic writing help students develop higher-order thinking abilities, including the ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate material and ideas, as well as the ability to offer original ideas or claims that are supported by thorough research (Coffin et al., 2003). Otto Kruse in Björk et al., (2003) outlines some typical problems that university students face. Otto Kruse in Björk et al., (2003) highlights some typical issues that university students encounter when they start working on their writing assignments without first being trained to notice the differences between writing at the high school level and writing at the university level. Academic writing will be discussed as something that should be taught at the university rather than in high school since it is closely tied to the traditions, ways of thinking, modes of communication, and research methodologies of the academic world itself (Mudawy, A. M. A. & Mousa, A. A. E., 2017)

There are eight challenges that students face when writing academically, claims Kaur Mehar Singh (2019). Lack of English language skills, difficulty expressing ideas, a disordered academic writing structure, plagiarism that is done on purpose, editing, translation, an improper academic writing culture, and academic cheating are some of these challenges. Online technology is thus one of the methods utilized in academic writing to correct a chaotic academic writing structure, intentional plagiarism, and grammatical problems.

Online technology has been a new concept and strategy of teaching learning in this digital era which brings positive response to students and lecturers (Inderawati et al., 2019). According to Li et al., (2017), the wide variety of technologies for L2 writing can be divided into three general categories, they are Web 2.0 application, automated writing evaluation systems, and the corpus-based. According to Ali (2022), to check their language in writing task, the students use Grammarly, QuillBot application, and Google translate as an online technology intensively, but according to Chui (2022), from the sentence- and paragraph-level tests on actual student writing that had been research indicate that the free QuillBot application is the best performer compared to the free versions of Grammarly and Ginger applications. QuillBot application is an online application that is used to shorten long sentences, fix grammar, and paraphrase material to minimize plagiarism and make it sound professional (Williams & Davis, 2017). Therefore, this study investigated the impact and the obstacle that faced by the students of QuillBot utilization as one of the online technologies which the piece of automated writing evaluation of students' academic writing.

METHOD

Research Design

To analyze the research, this study employed a qualitative methodology. According to Miles et al. (2018), the primary goal of qualitative research is to explain social context or activity from the viewpoint of the research subjects. A phenomenological qualitative design was used in this study. By proving the significance of the experiences as felt by the participants and the experience of an activity or concept as seen through the eyes of particular participants, a phenomenological case study can explain and analyze the experiences of students (Ary et al., 2010). The purpose of this phenomenological study was to analyze students' experiences about the impact and the obstacle that faced by the students of QuillBot utilization on their academic writing.

Research Subject

This study used a purposive sampling technique to choose them as participants in this research. The deliberate selection of an informant based on a trait they possess is known as purposeful sampling, often referred to as judgment sampling (Tongco, 2007). This research has been conducted at the Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN Bone). As the main focus of this research, the subjects in this study were students from the English language department, specifically students in their eighth semester who use the QuillBot application.

Research Instrument

In order to gain more information related to the utilization of online technology in students' academic writing. The researchers conducted a semi-structured interview with the students who were being observed as participants. The most common type of interview used in qualitative research is the semi-structured interview. Thus, the interview guide would probably include a number of the researcher's intended targeted questions as well as additional open-ended inquiries that allow for further exploration through prompts. In an interview, the researcher, who serves as the interviewer, and the sample participants have a direct exchange of information. Each respondent is asked a series of questions, and the interviewer records their responses (Ary et al., 2010).

This study used the interview as a tool for data collection. The interview questions for the students consist of several main questions, and the researcher records the conversation using a voice recorder to prevent missing information during the interview.

Technique of Data Analysis

This research used Synchronous qualitative data analysis (Miles et al., 2018). The term for this kind of analysis was "transcendental realism," and the main components were data collection, data condensation, data display, drawing conclusion, and verification of the key points made in each analysis.

FINDINGS

In the interview section, the students shared their experience of the impact of QuillBot and the obstacles that they faced when using QuillBot for academic writing.

The impact of QuillBot as an online technology on students' academic writing

Based on Darshman's (2020) theory, there are two kinds of impact of online technology on writing, namely positive impact and negative impact, which are described below:

a. Positive impact of utilizing QuillBot on students' academic writing

Extract 1:

"Iye kak berdampak sekali, karena tanpa adanya QuillBot, mungkin saya harus berpikir sendiri bagaimana memparaprase satu skripsi dan itu pasti memerlukan waktu yang cukup lama."

"Yes sis, it's very impactful, because without QuillBot, maybe I have to think for myself how to paraphrase a thesis and it definitely takes quite a long time."

(Interview with S1)

In this extract, S1 felt the positive impact of QuillBot. Paraphrasing was one of the impacts that she got from that. If she used her own thoughts, maybe her academic writing would take quite a while to do.

Extract 2:

"Iya karena kalau mauki paraphrase sendiri mungkin saya kerja skripsiku lama sekali karena kadang saya malas berpikir jadi cara cepatnya pakai quillbot saja"

"Yeah, because if I want to paraphrase myself, I might work on my thesis for a long time because sometimes I'm lazy to think, so the quick way is to just use QuillBot"

(Interview with S2)

Based on the extract above, S2's statement is similar to S1's statement. S2 also thought that if she used her mind to paraphrase her sentence by herself, it would take a long time. In addition, she added that the reason she used the paraphrase tool intensively was because she was too lazy to think, so she got a positive impact on her academic writing by using the paraphrase tool of QuillBot.

Extract 3:

"Iye kak, berdampak daripada tidak pakai karena selain mengefesienkan waktu kerja skripsi, juga kosa kata yang ada di skripsi itu lebih bervariasi sehingga ketika di baca, ada sedikit kosakata baru yang masuk"

"Yes sis, it has an impact rather than not using it because apart from making the thesis work efficient, the vocabulary in the thesis is more varied so when it is read, a little new vocabulary is added"

(Interview with S3)

Based on the extract above, S3 felt the positive impact of QuillBot utilization. The impact is in the form of time. She stated that if she used her time more efficiently for academic writing, she would have a more diverse vocabulary.

Extract 4:

"Lumayan berguna untuk membantu saya jika saya sudah merasa kesulitan dan tidak percaya lagi sama paraphrase saya sendiri"

"It is pretty useful to help me when I am having trouble and do not trust my own paraphrases anymore"

(Interview with S6)

In this extract, S6 got a positive impact from her experience. Although she used her own paraphrase in her academic writing, not all of her paraphrasing results used her own language; sometimes she used QuillBot if she was not confident in her ability to paraphrase by herself, so she got the impact of this technology.

According to the students' experience with innovation and technology, QuillBot's influence was also discovered in this study to be consistent with a number of elements that are thought to be traits of academic writing. These traits set academic writing apart from non-academic writing. The purpose of academic writing, according to Šimanskien (2005), is to inform the reader. rather than to convince or amuse. Based on the interview, students discussed how four factors—complexity, objectivity, formality, and hedging—that the software corrected affected them.

According to the result of interview, the researcher found that most of participants get positive impact of QuillBot in complexity on academic writing. Students mentioned that:

Extract:

“Jujur sangat membantu. Karena saya sering menggunakannya. Terkadang, itu membuat saya terbiasa dengan grammar. Tapi, QuillBot memberikan saya beberapa koreksi atau saran dalam hal structure dan itu membantu saya untuk menjaga kompleksitas tulisan saya ...”

“Being truthful is really beneficial, as I frequently do. It occasionally helps me become acclimated to grammar. But QuillBot provided me with some structure-related corrections or advice, which enabled me to keep my work complicated. ...”

(Interview with S3)

Based on the statement above, QuillBot can help with the complexity of students' academic writing, as proved by S3's statement from her experience. QuillBot give suggestion or correction in her grammatical error or her structure on her academic writing.

Academic writing's objectivity revealed a paragraph or text's perspective. Some of the students are assisted after using QuillBot. Based on the interview, the student mentioned that:

Extract:

“... kalau objektivitasnya itu bisa membantu kalau misalnya ada kalimat yang ingin di cek atau di paraphrase, quillbot akan memperbaiki jika terjadi kesalahan menurut stucturenya”

“... in terms of objectivity, it can help if for example there is a sentence that we want to check or paraphrase, QuillBot will correct if an error occurs according to the structure”

(Interview with S7)

Based on S7's statement above, QuillBot can help with the objectivity in the sentence. Based on S7's experience, she ever used the wrong object in her sentence, and after using QuillBot, QuillBot fixed her sentence.

However, some of the participants concurred that QuillBot improved the formality of their writing. During the interview, the student discussed her experience using QuillBot for revising her assignment, which they claimed:

Extract:

“Iye kak karena saya baca hasil paraphrasenya itu kata yang formal ji na kasikanki, kalimat yang dihasilkan juga complex, jadi saya pikir membantu.”

"Yes sis, because I read the results of the paraphrase, the formal words it gave, the resulting sentences were also complex, so I think that helps."

(Interview with S1)

Based on S1's thought, the sentence that QuillBot produced was formal because she said that she read the result of that being paraphrased and it was formal sentence; therefore, it means that QuillBot can help with the formality.

Some students have helped them with their sentence correction, particularly with the hedging. Hedging, according to Birhan (2017), is used to gauge how accurate a fact or piece of information is. During the interview, the student also discussed her experiences with hedging, saying:

Extract:

“Iye juga kak, saya pikir yang paling membantu itu hedging diantara yang lain kak karena dengan menggunakan saran yang diberikan dari QuillBot, bisaki menyesuaikan saran tersebut dengan konten tulisanta. Tapi harus memastikan apakah kita perlu menggunakan sarannya atau tidak, tergantung dari kita.”

“Yes sis, I think the one that helps the most is hedging among the others because by using the suggestions provided from QuillBot, I can adapt these suggestions to your written content. But we have to make sure whether we need to use his advice or not, it's up to us”

(Interview with S8)

From this extract, one of the impacts of QuillBot is about hedging. She thought that the most helpful for her academic writing was hedging on QuillBot because it could give her suggestion with her writing content.

Based on the result above, there are many positive impacts for students who utilize this QuillBot in their academic writing. The positive impact is the ease with which students can paraphrase their academic writing, streamline their working time, increase the existing vocabulary in their writing, help students if they find it difficult to paraphrase their own writing and the findings indicated that using QuillBot could help students on their academic writing in four aspects. The aspects that can be corrected by the software are complexity, objectivity, formality, and hedging. In addition, QuillBot can give suggestions to the students about the complexity or hedging of academic writing, while for formality and objectivity in academic writing, QuillBot can help both.

b. Negative impact of utilizing QuillBot on students' academic writing

Extract:

“Dia berdampak tapi tidak yang memberikan dampak besar bagi saya pribadi atau skripsi saya kak karena seperti yang saya bilang kak, saya gunakan sendiri kata-kataku untuk mamparfrase karena kalau digunakan terus menerus QuillBot, skill menulista itu nantinya tidak terasah, kita hanya mengandalkan teknologi yang membuat kita itu malas belajar atau malas berpikir, yang mungkin kita itu awalnya sudah malas, tambah malas lagi kak karena bergantung terus sama teknologi yang ada.”

"It had an impact but did not have a big impact on me personally or my thesis sis because as I said sis, I use my own words to paraphrase because if QuillBot is used continuously, my writing skills will not be honed, we only rely on technology that makes us lazy to learn or lazy to think, maybe we were already lazy at first, and the feeling of laziness increases again because we depend on the existing technology.”

(Interview with S7)

From the extract above, S7 felt that using QuillBot continuously will affect her level of learning and her level of laziness; therefore, it will have a bad impact on her; furthermore, she feels that using her own language to memorize will be better for improving her ability to write.

Based on the result of negative impact above, only one student had a negative impact on her personally or on her academic writing. The negative impacts are making the students not use their brains for thinking, making them addicted to always using QuillBot or dependent on technology; therefore, the skill of writing does not increase.

Based on the data above, the research on the third research question focused on the impact of utilizing QuillBot on students' academic writing, as seen by the various students' feedback. Some of them have a positive impact, while others have a negative impact. The positive outcomes of QuillBot use include making it simple for students to paraphrase their academic writing, streamlining their workload, expanding their writers' vocabulary, and helping students who find it difficult to do that. The negatives include preventing students from using their brains to think, creating technology dependence, or making them addicted to QuillBot.

The obstacle that faced by students in QuillBot as an online technology on students' academic writing

An analysis of the data gathered through the interview section revealed the obstacles that faced by students based on their experience of QuillBot utilization, which are presented below:

a. Internal obstacle

Extract 1:

"Iya kak, kalau alat paraprasanya itu sekarang 125 kata ji bisa diparaprased, kalau dulu 400 kata jadi dulu itu bisa di paraphrase langsung banyak jadi kalimatnya itu nyambung tapi sekarang karna sedikit mi jadi pintar-pintarki lagi kasi nyambung itu kalimat."

"Yes sis, with the paraphrasing tool, now 125 words can be paraphrased, before it was 400 words then it could be paraphrased immediately a lot of it so the sentences are connected but now because there are not many, so we have to be smart again to connect sentences."

(Interview with S1)

From the extract above, S1 experienced an obstacle while using QuillBot. The obstacle arose as a result of changes made to QuillBot's paraphrase tool system. Previously, the tool could paraphrase 400 words at a time, but now it can only paraphrase 150 words, making it difficult for S1 to connect her sentences.

Extract 2:

"Iye karena sedikit gaptekka, pernah saya mau upgrade jadi premium tapi tidak saya tahu kak karena tidak ada intrsuksinya yang lebih jelas menurutku untuk upgrade."

"Yes, because I'm a little clueless, I once wanted to upgrade to premium, but I don't know, sis, because I don't think there are clearer instructions for upgrading."

(Interview with S4)

Based on the extract above, one of the difficulties S4 felt was when she wanted to upgrade her account but did not know how to do it. From her experience, there was no clear instruction on how to upgrade a QuillBot account to a premium account, so it became an obstacle in her opinion.

b. External obstacle

Extract:

"Menurut saya mungkin pada saat digunakan lalu jaringan kurang bagus, itu juga memberikan kesulitan dalam mengoperasikan"

"In my opinion maybe when used then the network is not good, it also makes it difficult to operate"

(Interview with S8)

Based on the extract above, S8 has an obstacle when using QuillBot because of the network. She explained that if the network is bad, operating QuillBot would be difficult.

Based on the extract and data from the students' interview, the researcher can conclude that the obstacle includes the difficulties experienced by students when using this QuillBot application when their network is not good and they want to paraphrase or check anything in their academic writing using the QuillBot application.

DISCUSSIONS

The results of the interviews showed that the participants had two opinions, as stated by Darshmam's (2020) theory regarding how technology has impacted students' academic writing skills both positively and negatively. The first opinion is that QuillBot has a positive impact on students' academic writing. While using QuillBot tools, students can learn about new word sets that they might not have known before, they can use more academic words to improve their essays, and if they are pressed for time, paraphrasing tools can help them, in addition, the students can more studious to write their academic writing. Meanwhile, students also get positive impact of QuillBot in some aspect of academic writing such as QuillBot can help in complexity, objectivity, formality and hedging on students' academic writing. In other case, QuillBot has a negative impact. The use of QuillBot intensively has a sense of laziness in developing their personal skills, and it will make them addicted to QuillBot, dependent on technology, its term of psychological negative impact of students.

Additionally, some of the students have difficulties using QuillBot both in terms of the obstacles within the students themselves and the obstacles from outside or around them, namely internal obstacle, and external obstacle. The obstacles include a bad network, unclear instructions for purchasing the premium version, and a change in the system used to run QuillBot.

CONCLUSION

Although using QuillBot has obstacle and negative impacts on students, such as making them lazy to paraphrase manuals or use their brains, it also has positive impacts, such as reducing plagiarism and helping students achieve higher levels of vocabulary. QuillBot usage also helps students improve their academic writing in terms of objectivity, formality of sentences in writing, and complexity in grammar. In write the academic writing process, QuillBot has limitation. In writing process, QuillBot cannot help students in content and organization aspect on writing. Aspect of writing about content and organization should come from the ideas and abilities of the students themselves in write their academic writing, and with this QuillBot, it is hoped that the future research can find other impact of other tools of QuillBot and the good solution of obstacle that students faced in use QuillBot.

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