The Importance of Digital Literacy to Enhance Student's Ability in English Language

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ABSTRACT

The pandemic in Indonesia views that Indonesian people are still experiencing "technology stuttering", especially in the education field, where technology is scarce due to the availability of technology devices. The phenomenon of pandemic situations makes it hard for teachers and students to carry out online learning because they do not have adequate skills to implement online learning. It affects the quality teaching process and students outcomes in school, especially in English Language subjects. This research aims to observe the ability of senior high school student's digital literacy skills in Singaraja, Bali. This research informed by descriptive qualitative employed semi-structured interviews to investigate 21 students. These interviews included the use of digital literacy skills in English Language Learning and the results of the interviews will be discussed in the paper. Digital literacy skills are the student's ability to search for information on the Internet. Moreover, with digital literacy skills, students can select the information carefully. This research shows the student's ability in find appropriate information related to their English material. Also, this research explains the importance of digital literacy skills, especially for ESL students, and how to utilize digital literacy for the English language in the post-pandemic situation in Indonesia

Keywords: digital literacy, English language learning

INTRODUCTION

The pandemic situation in Indonesia forced education institutions to conduct online learning. Online learning is a massive shift in our education system. The implementation of online learning is still rare and poor in Indonesia because of the shortage of devices and infrastructure. With pandemics, teachers, students, and parents do not have adequate preparation to carry out online learning in their homes. Moreover, between teachers, students, and parents should implement distance or online learning because of the government regulations to prevent the spread of the COVID 19 virus in Indonesia. Therefore, they must obey the rules that the government has issued. The sudden implementation of online learning experienced by teachers and students is not going well and faces many challenges such as download problems, connection, and difficulty accessing the online learning platform. It happens because they do not have the knowledge and skill of online learning.

Thus far, the university that has successfully implemented online is Universitas Terbuka. The university is fully organized online learning through e-learning sites. Meanwhile, the other institutions and schools (national or international) have never fully implemented online learning but only provided e-learning and websites as a place for assignments and information providers for their schools and institution (Hariati, 2021). Therefore, the situation of pandemics

brings significant changes in our education in Indonesia. Also, this has a positive influence to all people. For example,Indonesian people have started to involve technology devices and integrate with the learning activities. Based on data, almost all Indonesian people are digital natives and tech-savvy in using technology. However, they cannot use technology appropriately. Indonesian people, especially students, have preferences to use technology for entertainment and negative things (Harmoko, 2021). The application Internet positive can see as a barrier for Indonesian people to minimize access to negative on the Internet (Eryansyah, et al., 2019). The advances of technology and the Internet make students have difficulties focusing on studying and procrastinate in doing assignments. Students get distracted, which makes them not focus while studying. It gives affects their learning outcomes and achievement.

According to Shopova (2014) digital literacy is a skill and knowledge about the use of technology to construct long-term activities and support society in the pandemic COVID 19 situation. It is an important skill today, and digital literacy includes various types of literacy such as information literacy, computer literacy, media literacy, communication literacy, visual literacy, and technological literacy. These skills can help young people get information sources related to digital technology and help students face the challenges of massive technological development. Previous studies explains the development of digital literacy and the factor that determine the level of students' digital literacy skills. In this study, the researcher addresses the implementation of digital literacy skills of teachers and students in senior high school

LITERATURE REVIEW

DIGITAL LITERACY

Digital literacy is someone's ability to use Internet technology for communication tools and as sources to find important information. According to UNICEF (Nascimbeni & Vosloo, 2019), digital literacy means someone who has opportunities, abilities, and rights to use or not use that allows individuals to benefit and avoid negative things of digital content across all domains on the Internet. When someone understands how to use the Internet properly, also understands each platform's positive and negative impacts, and knows what devices and skills are used on each platform. According to Bawden (as cited in Hariati, 2021), there are four levels of digital literacy: basic literacy skills (reading and writing), background information knowledge, mastering ICT skills, and the attitudes and perspectives. Those factors have an important part in supporting the online learning process, but mastering digital literacy skills cannot be done instantly. But it requires time and is guided. Moreover, there is four-level of digital literacy as follows:

a) Basic Literacy Skills

Basic literacy skills are reading, writing, understanding signs, and calculating numbers. However, in the context of online learning, this ability includes understanding the content on the Internet, reading and interpreting information, making the text as a contributor to Internet society, and sharing information through digital (online platforms) such as Facebook, blog and Twitter.

b) Background Information Knowledge

Background information knowledge is basic information that exists as support to gain new information and to have a depth understanding of the knowledge that already

exists. In online learning, background knowledge explains the ability to search for online information through online platforms such as Google, Wikipedia, and other search engines. Then, the user can select information related to online learning materials needs.

c) ICT skills

ICT skills are the ability to make and gather digital content through technology tools. It is an essential skill in the digital literacy area and includes gathering information or knowledge. In online learning, this ability is how to combine documents or scientific articles as learning output to support online learning.

d) Attitudes and Perspectives of Users

The attitudes and perspectives of users are about the behavior, how to use digital technology and how to communicate information from other resources. In the context of online learning, this ability to quote resources from other information sources through citation rules

THE IMPORTANCE OF DIGITAL LITERACY

The development of advanced technology in the modern era makes technology become part of our lives. It can be seen in the younger generation, already familiar with the digital world. Whereas the digital world is not designed for the generation under 17 years old where there is much content on the Internet that is not suitable for children under the age of 17(Amanta, 2021)Therefore, knowledge about the digital world must be recognized at an early age and known as digital literacy skills. There are several benefits of being digital literate: students can have skills to think critically, know the credible information on the Internet, and receive and believe them. Also, teachers can use various images and sources to support online learning if students have already mastered digital literacy skills and can attract students interested in online learning (van Laar et al., 2020)

PROMOTING DIGITAL LITERACY IN INDONESIA

Indonesian society is ranked 8th in using the Internet. It can be seen from the users who come from Indonesia. According to Chips (as cited in Amanta, 2021)Internet users have increased by 22%. Meanwhile, the significant changes of the Internet users come from person lives in urban areas. However, it does not mean that people are already using the Internet correctly and adequately with the increase on the Internet used. Based on the evidence, it is important to promote digital literacy skills. Moreover, there are several ways to promote digital literacy in Indonesia, as follows(UNICEF, 2020):

a. Promoting parental awareness to digital learning

One of the steps that can be implemented is to introduce parents to the definition digital literacy and why digital literacy skills are essential in children's growth. The government or school can teach parents how to use digital literacy skills in order to help their children during online learning. The government can create a web portal about

digital skills and how they can support their children. Also, the school can make visiting lists related to children's development during online learning.

b. Reinforce school infrastructure as an investment

School is where students receive knowledge transfer through the learning process, direct observation and playing activities. Therefore, it is important for schools to have Internet access which serves to introduce the Internet, explain how to use the Internet properly and make it an opportunity that can be utilized on the Internet. Also, On the Internet, students can have different experiences in learning activities such as depth observation and cross-cultural understanding. Therefore, the availability of the Internet is an investment for schools. Not only useful for students, but teachers can access different resources for students learning.

c. Involving digital literacy skills and the demand of 21st on teacher training

Digital literacy and the demand for 21st-century skills should be introduced in teachers' training. In order to promote and develop students' digital literacy skills, the teacher should get training on how to implement digital literacy skills to students. Digital literacy skills require time to develop and maintain cause digital literacy in Indonesia is still new. Not many educators, teachers, and students realize how essential digital literacy skills are in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive data method in which the data collection process uses the semi-structured interview to describe the implementation of digital literacy as support for online learning in post-pandemic situations (Creswell, 2019). This research aims to identify the understanding and importance of digital literacy in post-pandemic situations. This research involved 21 participants who are senior high school students in Singaraja, Buleleng that use digital literacy in the online learning process. The participants were recruited from three classes randomly in SMA Negeri 4 Singaraja. This research uses a semi-structured interview method. The language used in this interview is the Indonesian language. The basis of consideration used in determining research informants is the informant who is considered the most frequent using online platforms in their studying in post-pandemic COVID 19. The data were analyzed by transcribing the recordings; key words throughout the transcripts were observed, noted, and discussed to identify subcategories within the framework of the interview question asked.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

LEVEL OF DIGITAL LITERACY

The level of digital literacy skills includes how teachers and students conduct online learning. Most students and teachers use online platforms (Google classroom, Webex, and Zoom) to conduct online learning where teachers and students implement online learning to support the learning process. This happens because of the implementation of social distancing regulations

by the government. Therefore, students and teachers have to replace offline learning with online learning. During the implementation of online learning, teachers and students face several challenges, such as difficulties accessing online learning platforms (Google classroom and zoom). Many teachers use alternative ways like social media or communication tools to keep connect with students. One of students felt how the teacher was confused when shifting offline learning to online learning   explained:

> Some teachers were confused when government decided to implement online learning to the school. Because of the sudden change, there was not enough information on how to use the application online meetings (Google Meet, Zoom). The teachers decided to use social media (Whatssap, Line and Facebook) to conduct online learning (Laila, Students, 8th January 2022).

In terms of providing learning resources to students, teachers prefer to use hard books as learning resources and as resources for assignments. After the task is done, students should send the assignment to the teachers through social media or communication that the teacher uses. Also, the teacher does not provide alternative sources such as youtube videos and recommended websites in carrying out online learning. It was supported by two participants' explanation:

> I had several difficulties when I had to search additional sources and video of English Language on the Internet for further explanation of school material." (Frans, Students, 8th January 2022).

> As a senior high school student, I did not know about websites that provide additional sources completely and got confused to follow virtual classroom. Since the teacher did not explain the material clearly." (Rama, Students, 8th January 2022).

THE IMPORTANCE OF DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS

The Importance of Digital Literacy Skills explains how digital literacy skills help students learn English online. Students get experienced how to find additional English language material during the online learning process. Many websites help the online learning process. Especially when they are asked to make English text, students will find an example of text and learn the text as reference learning. It can be seen from the result interview of three participants as follows:

> Learning English languages become fun activity because the learning process can be done through various online platforms (Google, Tiktok, and Youtube). I felt each platforms had a different kind of activity and made me more excited." (Gabriel, Students, 8th January 2022).

> In my opinion, learning activity is fun activity now, the teacher use many platforms in learning English. It makes the activity diverse and not monotonous." (Azaria , Students, 8th January 2022).

> Teacher asked students to find English material, however, sometimes I didn't know how to find appropriate English material in Google. I get confused because I did not Google regularly. I used my phone to play games with my friends." (Veronica, Students, 8th January 2022).

From the interview results, the school gives students important experience in their process of learning. The students can know the other function and can implement in real life.

Also, teachers can upgrade their skill both in teaching style and technologyAccording to UNICEF (UNICEF, 2020), schools have an important role in introducing digital literacy skills to students. Schools are not only learning communities but also a place to train soft skills to fulfil 21st-century skills.

However, the teacher cannot use and operate Internet technology appropriately. Therefore, the government must update and facilitate internet access to schools by providing adequate infrastructures such as laptops and the Internet. Also, conducting digital literacy skills training for teachers is one way to develop students' digital literacy skills

PROMOTING DIGITAL LITERACY

The government's role in promoting digital literacy should provide adequate devices to students who do not have technology devices such as mobile phones or laptops, and wifi. Based on UNICEF data (UNICEF, 2020). Many students do not take online learning because of not having adequate technology such as mobile phones, laptops, and sufficient quota data, even though the Indonesian government has provided facilities such as free quota and devices to support online learning. However, several challenges include inadequate technology and websites as a medium to support learning English online. The result of the interview can be explained:

> I hope that the government will provide the main website as a learning resource that students can access in the future. Although many websites provide English language learning materials, they do not provide them in full English and are not credible." (Mutiara, Students, 8th January 2022).

DISCUSSION

The phenomenon of Covid 19 have major impact on teachers and students. The dynamic learning process changes make teachers and students face several difficulties. Based on the findings of the study, the difficulties are about technology ability, content, main actor (teachers and students).

Regarding the technology, the findings show that both teachers and students implement digital literacy in offline or online learning. However, all students adapt to using smartphone in daily life. The main issue here, students are not directed to use the mobile phones as part of education. From data, it can be seen that Indonesia ranks 61st out 100 countries for education and preparedness in using the Internet. Also, it happens because teachers' skills in technology are still low level and affect the student's digital literacy skills. In terms of learning success, it cannot only come from the students but also from the environment, motivation, and student interaction. Kebritchi (Kebritchi et al., 2017) also supports that to increase students' achievement in online learning, the teacher should consider the relationship between cognitive complexity and intellectual stimulation, which focuses on students' environment and teacher's approaches to students.

The second difficulty is the content of English Languages on Internet, especially in Indonesia. Most students say that it is hard to find information related to the material English language on the Internet. However, it is the cause of the level of student's knowledge are not enough. It can be seen that students cannot find and select all information that exists on Internet.

The third difficulties are the main actor of the learning process: teachers and the students themselves. In implementing online learning, between the teacher and the students cannot fully implemented digital literacy and using Internet facilities appropriately.

CONCLUSION

Digital literacy has an important role in the online learning system in Indonesia because in the learning process, both students and teachers use the online platform as a place of learning process and also as medium to search additional English language sources. However, online learning has been running for two years, but high school students in Singaraja still do not have the adequate digital literacy skills they need. The goals of digital literacy are that students can use the Internet properly and appropriately and receive benefits from the Internet. Moreover, digital literacy aims to make students aware that the Internet can help develop their potential and is not only entertainment and communication tools.

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