STUDENTS' VOICE OF DIGITAL LITERACY

IN LEARNING ENGLISH

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Abstract

Digital literacy competence played an essential role in the growth of university students to achieve their goals of learning. This study was carried out to define the students' perception of the use of digital literacy in learning English. The participant consists of the students of the Accounting and Information system program, at Bina Sarana Informatika University. 50 students were chosen by purposive sampling technique. The students had a distinctive response regarding the use of digital literacy competence and how they perceive it. This study was a qualitative case study. The data was gathered through open-ended questionnaires and classroom observation. The findings showed that the students had a positive voice regarding the use of digital literacy competence in learning English, they perceived that digital literacy needs willingness and critical thinking skills. Moreover, students' willingness played a role to find students' strengths and weaknesses, and students critical thinking skills played an essential to analyze the information and developing their competencies to achieve the learning goals.

Keywords: *Digital Literacy, Students' Voice, English*

Background

Digital literacy nowadays is mostly concerned with the use of ICT (information, communication, and Technology), this is a necessity for educators and students. Especially for students at the university level who require them to adapt more quickly to ICT advances because of the implementation of lectures. Lee (2014) noted that integrating digital literacy into teaching enhanced engagement, communication, and interaction, and improved skills beneficial for future careers. At Bina Sarana Informatika University, one of the lectures held in online is English. The reason why English is held online is that the material consists of theoretical material and is not needed for any specific practice in the offline class. Therefore, the term digital literacy played an important role in teaching and learning activities. Despite the concern about the implementation of digital literacy in English lectures, the student's awareness of embedding digital literacy has to increase, it is essentially needed for gaining their ability to master, finish the task and implement English in their daily life. The ideal classroom model for teaching digital literacy could possibly use via digital devices.

The lecturers use LMS or E-learning in delivering material. The use of ICT also greatly impacts student learning outcomes, students who successfully master ICT will tend to understand the material faster than students who do not master the use of ICT. Azmi (2017) stated that the use of information technology in the language classroom boosts autonomous learning, maximizes targeted outcomes, motivates learners, and helps them improve their performance in the EFL classroom. In line with ICT, digital literacy becomes an essential issue concerned with the growing trend of the internet which offers the ability to be digitally literate. Khan et al. (2022) state that digital

literacy improves both academic performance and employability. In brief, digital literacy brings many benefits to learners.

The education ministry stated in Wijayanti, et.al (2019) that the latest independent learning curriculum requires students to be more creative, critical, and innovative. Students must be able to explore the concept of learning with digital content to make it more optimal and strengthen competence. On the other hand, Some of these goals must be in line with the digital literacy skills possessed by students, in fact, many students in the class have a distinctive response to the use of digital literacy in learning English. They use digital tools for individual learning at home.

To do so, with the phenomenon, the researcher offers an idea to reveal students' perceptions of the use of digital literacy in learning English. students' perceptions play a very important role in their needs to achieve learning goals.

Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is defined as an ability that covers the skills and ability to use digital tools and applications to create communication using digital devices. Murtafi'ah (2019) stated that digital literacy covers the cognitive, socio-emotional, and technical abilities to use digital technologies. Gilster (1997) stated that every people has to have the ability to understand and use information from digital sources. Digital literacy competence must be developed and improved in higher education settings. Buckingham, (2015); Pudjiati & Fitria (2022); Murtafi'ah & Putro (2019); Hicks & Turner (2013), Kadayuman & Battal (2020), Hall, nix & Baker (2017), Mega (2020), argued that students should optimize the use of digital literacy competence in their learning process, especially in the growth of their capability in using

technology. Digital literacy competence has many advantages in engaging students' abilities. Therefore, digital literacy is a skill that requires the users to comprehend and be capable of using technology to gain information. Gilster (1997) stated that there are 4 competencies necessary to have, there are knowledge assembly, internet searching, hypertextual navigation, and content evaluation.

First, knowledge assembly. Bowden in Lanskekhar (2008) stated that knowledge assembly is the ability to arrange knowledge, and build set information from various sources. According to Giltser in Pool (1997) This competence covers four components; 1) the ability to search information by using the internet, 2) the ability to design persona updates or discuss several topics by following newsgroups, 3) the ability to crosscheck founded information, and 4) the ability to use all various media to prove the truth of information and to re-arrange information found in the internet to real life.

Second, internet searching. Eshet (2012) stated that it is the ability to use the internet and do various projects/activities on it. Zhang, et., al. (2019) asserted that internet searching as the ability to enhance and support the user in gaining information through the internet. Gilster in Pool (1997) stated that This competence covers two components; 1) the ability to search information updates by using the internet search engine and 2) the ability to do projects/activities. From internet searching competence, the user is capable to look for information and finish the task by using internet access.

Third, hypertextual navigation. Mills, et., al. (2016) asserted that it is the ability to read and understand to master the navigation of hypertext in the web browser. Gilster in Pool (1997) argued that this competence requires the user to not only focus on hypertext but also

capable to differentiate the information from the internet and information from the textbook. This competency covers four competence; 1) knowledge about hypertext and hyperlink along with how it works, 2) knowledge of the differences between reading textbooks and browsing sources through the internet, 3) knowledge of the web works, and 4) the user has the ability to understand the web page characteristics.

The last is content evaluation. Mayers, et., al (2013) stated that it is the ability to think critically and give feedback/assessment to the information found on the internet, whether is a real or hoax. According to Gilster in Pool (1997) This competency covers five components, there are; 1) the ability to differentiate between information layout and content which is the users' perception in understanding the web page layout visited, 2) the ability to analyze the background of information that is people's awareness to search for further information and the creator, 3) the ability to evaluate web address through understanding the various domain for each country or institution, 4) the ability to analyze the web page, and 5) the knowledge about FAQ in newsgroup or group discussion.

From the statement mentioned above, each competence has components to be mastered by the users, in this case, the students must have that competence in learning English. Many previous researchers had conducted research regarding the use of digital competence to assess learning sources, but then this research is more prioritized analyzing students' perceptions and challenges in the use of digital literacy competence in learning English. The theory from Gilster (1997) also will be a guideline to conduct the research. Hence conducting this research is expected to enlighten in-depth information regarding digital literacy and its implementation in English and EFL students.

Research Methods

This study employed a qualitative case study due to the details to explain students' perception in the use of digital literacy in learning English. Qualitative focused on understanding people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, and behaviors (Cresswell, 2012). The participant consists of fifty students from Non-English department of Bina Sarana Informatika University, it consists 25 of students from accounting and 25 students from the information system program. The researcher chose these study programs because the researcher is a lecturer who directly teaches these 2 classes. Among the several classes being taught, the students in this class showed a special response to the use of digital literacy in class, this is evidenced by the observations that the researcher made while teaching in class.

The method used to collect the data was by using an open-ended questionnaire and students' observation. The open-ended questionnaire prompts to give the students free-from answers to gather their perceptions on the use of digital literacy in learning English. Students' observation was used to observe their activities and responses during learning English by using digital literacy. The instrument used list of structured questions and students' observation field notes, those due to collect an in-depth understanding of their perception of the use of digital literacy in learning English.

Finding & Discussion

The findings and discussion presented the data from the analysis of the questionnaire response and field note observation. Those to explain the student's perception of the use of digital literacy in learning English.

Students' positive perception in the use of Digital Literacy in Learning English

In collecting the information about students' perceptions, I employed an open-ended questionnaire and classroom observation. These factors below were found as the highlight point of responses from the students.

1. **Digital literacy enhances students' willingness in understanding English**

The following are some exemplary responses that show their willingness to better understand in their use of digital literacy to learn English.

"In my opinion, since the lecturer applied digital literacy such as the use of media digital to deliver the material, I am more understanding and like to learn English better." (Student 12, 2022, questionnaire).

"Using digital literacy in learning English makes lessons more fun and easy to understand". (Student 19, 2022, questionnaire).

"Digital literacy requires students to be able to understand the material well, the lecturer provides appropriate instructions on the use of digital media so that students can follow it and understand it easily". (Student 22, 2022, questionnaire).

From the description above, it can be concluded that the use of digital literacy impacts positively the learning of English for students. It is appropriate for the need of students in the new era. Moreover, English is easier to learn individually through their respective digital devices, so they can repeat to read information and understand it gradually by repeating material that has been uploaded using digital media. This is also supported by their attitude in class. In class, it was shown that when the lecturer explained using the zoom meeting and asked the students to do some tasks using the digital platform, the students were

enthusiastic about responding and finishing the task, the students were also willing to repeat if their scores were not optimal, at first they had difficulty because they were not used to it but finally, they can use it to finish the task in English. (Classroom observation, 2022).

The two instruments' results above show students' positive perceptions of the use of digital literacy implemented in the class. The students show their interest in learning English, they could find their strengths and weaknesses by exploring their willingness in the use digital literacy in learning English, they also share their voice that digital literacy is needed and becomes a bridge to understanding English.

2. **Digital literacy enhances students' critical thinking**

The following are some exemplary responses that show students' critical thinking in their use of digital literacy to learn English.

"In using digital literacy to get information, especially in learning English, I feel compelled to use my critical thinking in the process of receiving and understanding the material". (Student 8, 2022, questionnaire).

"I feel that my critical thinking skills must be raised to understand all material using digital literacy". (Student 25, 2022, questionnaire).

"Critical thinking skills when using digital literacy are needed to understand web use and understand the information presented" (Student 2, 2022, questionnaire).

From the description above it can be concluded that critical thinking is needed in the use of digital literacy because there are several stages in understanding and analyzing the

information in learning English. The process of critical thinking involves the process of analysis and evaluation. Students requires using this ability to analyze information and material in English. The attitude of critical thinking is also seen in the process of explaining material in class, students discuss and ask questions to lecturers and colleagues to do the assignments given.

" In class the students respond and ask the lecturer about the material presented on digital media, then they discuss one another in doing the assignment". (classroom observation, 2022).

From the results of questionnaires and classroom observations, the use of digital literacy requires students' critical thinking skills, because in it there is a process for analyzing, understanding, and evaluating related to the learning process in English, so the ability to think critically is a necessity in the use of digital literacy.

To sum up the result, it can be stated that students had positive voices in the use of digital literacy in learning English in all skills, from reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This discovery complements the previous findings written by Hamidah (2021) regarding digital literacy in EFL teaching from students' point of view, the results of which state that students who are familiar with the technology significantly improve their skills. Indeed, the results of this study had a new perspective that not only students familiar with technology will improve their skills, but they have to have the willingness and critical thinking to use digital literacy in learning English.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed the use of digital literacy in English. Thus, it presents the ideas of students' responses to the teaching and learning activity. The findings have indicated that students had a positive voice in the use of digital literacy in

learning English. Based on the questionnaire and observation results, there are two factors that impact the students' using digital literacy in learning English. First, students' willingness will be the main factor to support students in learning English especially in finding the strength and weaknesses of the students. Second, students' critical thinking skills as their need to use digital literacy in learning English especially in analyzing the information. Therefore this research had limitations in the result not statistically representing the population, the need for future research may explain other factors that influence the students to use their critical thinking skills in fixing the problems in the use of digital literacy in English.

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