



THE INTEGRATION OF DIGITAL LITERACY IN EFL CLASSROOM

Astuti Dwi Cahya¹, Istiqlaliah Nurul Hidayati², Asih Wahyuni³

¹English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training And Educational Sciences, Pakuan University

²English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training And Educational Sciences, Pakuan University

³English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training And Educational Sciences, Pakuan University

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*Correspondence Address:

astutidwicahya97@gmail.com

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to find out the integration of digital literacy in the EFL classroom. The qualitative approach was employed in this study, which took place at SMPN 4 Magetan. Two participants were involved in the study, and data collection utilized two instruments: observation and interview. The collected data was analyzed through observation and interview techniques and steps. The research findings indicate that teachers at SMPN 4 Magetan exhibit competent classroom management skills in implementing digital literacy. They demonstrate the ability to effectively prepare learning materials and deliver clear explanations, particularly in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). It is essential for EFL teachers to consider the elements of digital literacy. The result shows that the integration of digital literacy in EFL classes at SMPN 4 Magetan has not been fully implemented, with the teacher's role being crucial in supporting the findings observed in this study.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, language learning has undergone significant changes. Many things, such as technological, cultural, social, and economic advances, have changed the role of the modern English teacher. The way students learn today is different from the past, and teachers must upgrade their knowledge to teach in innovative ways. Digital literacy is an important skill in the evolving digital age, and teachers must understand their students' digital development.

Digital literacy must be understood as basic skills to use a computer confidently, safely, and effectively, including the ability to use software such as word

processing, presentations, and email, the ability to create and edit images, audio, video, and the ability to use source engines (Alagu & Thanuskodi, 2019). More broadly, experts define digital literacy as not just about the ability to use digital tools and information effectively (Ariawan & Pratiwi, 2020). Moreover, Silber-Varod et al. (2019) defined that digital literacy as complex thinking competencies, involving cognitive, motor, emotional, and social skills that enable users to operate intuitively and effectively in digital environments for work, learning, and daily functioning. According to Neokleous (2023), there are eight essential elements of digital literacies which are cultural, cognitive, constructive, communicative, confident, creative, critical, and civic.

The National Literacy Movement (GLN) is the Indonesian government's effort to improve literacy and skills in the modern era. To encourage innovation in the teaching and learning process and improve the quality of learning, teachers are responsible. Digital literacy is related to the use of certain media, and teachers must have knowledge of digital literacy so that they can find important information. With internet-based learning and the teacher's role as a mediator for students, technological developments are expected to increase.

Therefore, students should master 21st-century skills to deal with such rapid technological advances. According to Mantiri (2019), the relationship between digital literacy and computer technology, and the challenges faced by many educators trying to develop digitally literate students, as EFL teachers it is the duty to make digital literacy a focal point of teaching plans.

Students need literacy skills to find and interpret information that is relevant to the subject matter (Sutisna & Vonti, 2020). The purpose of this research is to find out how educators incorporate digital literacy into EFL classes, especially junior high school educators who use digital media or tools. English teachers must embrace the integration of digital literacy in their classrooms. This not only equips students with the skills necessary for success in the digital age but also addresses the different strengths and challenges that learners of various age groups may possess. By fostering digital literacy, teachers can empower their students to become confident and competent users of the English language in the ever-evolving digital landscape.

The researcher focuses on studying the elements of digital literacy that the teachers integrate into their EFL classrooms. Besides that, the readiness of Junior High

School English teachers to be literate in digital technology becomes the most important thing in order to face digital teaching.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Since the researcher investigates the integration of digital literacy in EFL classrooms, the approach used in this study is a qualitative approach. Siedlecki, (2020) states that descriptive analysis is a fundamental component of this process because of its role in helping us observe the world or phenomena and, subsequently, in identifying research questions and generating hypotheses based on what has been observed. Therefore, descriptive analysis was chosen as the method of this research. Nassaji (2015) states that descriptive analysis involves qualitative and naturalistic data without any intervention or manipulation of variables. They have obtained data through various data collection tools such as class observation, field notes, interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, etc. However, some have taken a more descriptive approach, focusing on describing what has happened and analyzing data in a quantitative manner. Since the researcher describes the integration of digital literacy in EFL classrooms after investigating it through a qualitative approach, there are several steps in collecting data during this research. Interviews with English teachers using digital tools to get details on digital literacy integration in their classrooms. The research was conducted at SMPN 4 Magetan. Located on Jl. Major General Sungkono No. 70 Magetan, East Java (63319). There were two participants involved in this study. Previously, researchers conducted pre-observations and found that only two out of five English teachers used digital tools during the teaching and learning process. Researchers use two instruments to collect data, such as; observation, and interview. Observations were chosen to support the data collected by the researcher. Then, the researcher conducted interviews with the participants to get details about how the participants integrated digital literacy into their EFL classes.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The data were collected from the classroom observation that was held twice for each participant assigned in 8th and 9th grade. These observations were focused on how teachers integrate digital literacy during the teaching and learning process, and it was described based on the eight aspects which are; cultural,

cognitive, constructive, communicative, confident, creative, critical, and civic by Nadhira (2020).

A. *Cultural*

The cultural component of digital literacy means being able to move easily between different digital environments and using learning technologies in a variety of different contexts. During the teaching process, both teachers used digital tools such as laptop, speaker, and LCD or projectors to deliver the materials. As Teacher A used a laptop and speakers in the context of listening to the song materials. Meanwhile, Teacher B also used a laptop and connected it to the LCD or projector in order to present a PPT about the "Asking, Giving, and Refusing Permission" topic. Based on the observation above, it can be seen that the cultural element appears when teachers used laptops, speakers, and LCDs or projectors as digital tools.

B. *Cognitive*

The cognitive element means mastering the 'how-to's of specific tools and technologies that are essential to the development of someone's digital skills. Based on the observation, Teacher A used digital tools to present the materials by using PPT that she found on the Internet. The materials contained how to construct and the examples of giving, asking, and refusing permission expressions.

Meanwhile, Teacher B asked students to listen to a song entitled "Bridge over the Troubled Water" that she found from an online source. She gave them instructions to complete the lyrics of the song by choosing one word between two different words but with almost the same pronunciation in the lyrics, for example, "...when time gets (rough - tough)". After choosing a word that matches the lyrics they heard, they were asked to find the meaning of the word through Google or the Internet.

The cognitive element appears in Teacher A because she knew how to find materials and download it from online sources then presented it to her students. On the other hand, students of Teacher B were asked to find out the meaning of song lyrics on the Internet.

C. *Constructive*

Constructive itself refers to the ability to understand and demonstrate how to take existing resources and content and then re-use/remix it to create something new that can benefit someone's learning. During whilst-activity, Teacher A after presenting the material by using PPT was making a short dialogue or conversation

in pairs. After that, she asked students to present the dialogue or conversation that has been discussed in front of the class. Meanwhile, the activity that was asked by Teacher B asked students to make five sentences in English by using or choosing the words in the song lyrics. Furthermore, those activities did not characterize the presence of a cognitive aspect.

D. Communicative

Teachers and students need to understand the importance of networks and communication and the important role they play in developing their digital literacy. This includes understanding the many different ways they can communicate with different devices, including mobile and other digital devices.

When Teacher A delivered the PPT materials, almost all students paid close attention to it. Besides the materials displayed were quite interesting, there were several moving animations, and there were also several picture examples of the expressions. On the other hand, students became active and were able to answer questions from Teacher B regarding the word meaning of the song lyrics and figure out what the song was talking about. Thus, those were the activities of direct communication, not the example of communication aspect in digital literacy.

E. Confident

The confident element of digital literacies involves solving problems and managing one's own learning in digital environments. This can be encouraged by the kind of practices that work well in all kinds of learning experiences. Teacher A asked students to present dialogues or conversations that have been made with their classmates in front of the class. Meanwhile, Teacher B and her students discussed defining the song lyrics. She repeated the difficult words and the way of pronouncing the words in the song lyrics. Based on the observation above, those activities were not included as the confident aspect.

F. Creative

The Creative element of digital literacies is about doing new things in new ways that somehow add value. It is about using digital technologies and techniques to create or achieve things previously impossible or at least out-of-reach to most people.

During teaching and learning, Teacher A asked students to make dialogues or conversations of asking, giving, and refusing permission according to the conditions or situations they wanted. Then she asked them to present the

dialogue or conversation results in front of the class and gave them feedback after presenting it.

Meanwhile, Teacher B asked students to make five sentences in English by using the words contained in the song lyrics. Based on the observation, the activities of both teachers had not indicated the characteristic of the creative aspect of digital literacy.

G. *Critical*

The definition of the critical element is using technology to reflect, develop arguments, draw conclusions, and identify implications. During the teaching and learning, Teacher B asked students to look for the meaning behind the song lyrics on the Internet. The song entitled "Bridge Over Troubled Water" contained a message about loyalty and inspiration to faithfully support friends and loved ones, especially relatives when they are in difficult times. Thus, the critical element can be seen from the activity above that students had to find out the meaning by searching it through online sources.

Meanwhile, critical elements did not appear during whilst-activity of Teacher A, because she only asked students to make dialogues or conversations with their peers based on the materials that was shown in PPT form.

H. *Civic*

Civic element means whether teachers or students need to make use of digital technologies in order to prepare themselves to participate as fully as possible in society. From the beginning until at the end of Teachers A and B's lesson, both of them did not convey or mention the civic aspect. So it was known that they did not include or consider the aspect during the lesson.

Thus, based on the observations of Teacher A and Teacher B, there are points that describe the use of digital technology in learning, but not all aspects of digital literacy, such as communicative, creative, critical, and citizenship, are applied or emphasized by the two teachers.

INTERVIEW RESULT

- a. The culture question reveals which digital tools or platforms teachers use most often and why they choose them. They use applications or online platforms such as YouTube, WhatsApp, Telegram, Google Classroom, Google Meet, Moodle, Blog, and Tik Tok. As stated in excerpt #1.

“The technological equipment that I usually use in class are smartphone, LCD projector, and laptop. The social media that I usually use are YouTube, Whatsapp, Telegram, and Tik Tok. I chose those media because those kinds of digital media are easy to use and almost all of my students also use the same social media to communicate.”

- b. Cognitive questions find the most effective collaboration platforms for students in the context of learning English. Respondents mentioned platforms such as YouTube, WhatsApp, Telegram, Tik Tok, and Google Classroom which have interactive and communicative features. As stated in excerpt #1.

“Platforms such as YouTube, WhatsApp, Telegram, and Tik Tok are the most effective social media because almost all students have these media and they are easy to use when creating videos or sharing links relevant to English topics.”

- c. Constructive questions reveal how teachers support students in building their knowledge of English through digital resources. The teacher gives assignments using digital technology or applications in learning English and facilitates class discussions about learning and the benefits of this technology. As stated in excerpt #2.

“Providing a list of recommended websites or platforms and how to use them to help students broaden their understanding of English.”

- d. Communicative questions ask for strategies teachers use to help students develop written and oral communication skills through digital platforms. Teachers have students create presentations, and videos, or participate in written discussions on online platforms such as Google Classroom. As stated in excerpt #1.

“Asking students to make presentations or videos in English using technology or social media. So that students can practice speaking in a structured manner and conveying information.”

- e. The confidence question explores how teachers help students understand the importance of personal data privacy and security when using technology in learning English. Teachers remind students not to share personal information with strangers and involve parents in guiding the wise use of technology. As stated in excerpt #2.

“Engaging parents or guardians by providing advice or guidance to

parents to help support their children in using technology safely and responsibly."

- f. Creative questions illustrate how teachers encourage students to express their creativity in learning English using digital technology. Teachers provide assignments that encourage students to use digital technologies and introduce students to creative tools and applications. As stated in excerpt #2.

"Introducing students to a variety of creative tools and applications with which they can express themselves in English."

- g. Critical questions ask how teachers help students develop critical thinking skills in evaluating information in digital sources. The teacher holds group or class discussions, asks students to share opinions or arguments, and helps students distinguish factual information, opinions, and hoaxes. As stated in excerpt #2.

"The teacher facilitates or helps students to recognize the difference between factual information, opinions, and hoaxes."

- h. Civic questions seek to find out social or ethical issues that arise in the use of technology in learning English. Students need to pay attention to technology use policies, netiquette principles, and digital ethics, as well as polite and respectful behavior in online communication. As stated in excerpt #2.

"There needs to be social issues that students pay attention to such as the principles of netiquette and digital ethics when interacting in a digital environment. They must learn about polite behavior, respect for others, and not to harass or intimidate in online communications."

DISCUSSION

The data below are the analysis of eight aspects of digital literacy, the following is the explanation that has been concluded;

a. Cultural

Based on observation, the teachers are already integrating digital literacy in cultural aspects. It can be improved, when teachers use laptops, speakers, and LCD or projectors in delivering their materials. Even more in interview results, teachers use social media and online platforms, such as YouTube, WhatsApp, Tik

Tok, etc. in teaching English. It can be concluded that in the cultural aspect, teachers have integrated digital literacy in the EFL classroom. It is suitable with Mega's (2022) statement that digital literacy must be understood as basic skills to use a computer confidently, safely, and effectively, including the ability to use software such as word processing, presentations, and email, the ability to create and edit images, audio, video, and the ability to use search engines.

b. Cognitive

Based on the observation, teachers find the materials through online sources, such as the song lyrics and PPT. It can be seen that teachers know how to find information related to the topic and then present it using a laptop, speaker, or projector as the digital tools. Then, interview results show that both teachers said similar answers which were the most effective online platforms are platforms that have interactive and communicative features, such as Youtube, Instagram, Google Classroom, etc. According to Tejedor et al. (2020), digital literacy is described as complex thinking competencies, involving cognitive, motor, emotional, and social skills that enable users to operate intuitively and effectively in digital environments for work, learning, and daily functioning.

c. Constructive

There is no constructive aspect that appears during classroom observation. Meanwhile, in the interview both respondents said to expose students to various applications or technology in learning English, such as making videos or presentations to build students' knowledge through digital technology. As Cetindamar et al. (2021) stated, "...digital literacy entails using digital tools effectively to promote positive social action. What it means to "construct" something is altered by the ease with which one may accurately duplicate another person's art. "

d. Communicative

Communicative aspect also did not appear during the classroom observation. Nevertheless, in the interview, the teacher gives assignments to make presentations and videos and then use online platforms in order to improve their spoken and written communication skills. It is suitable with Nguyen & Habók (2023) statement which is understanding the many different ways someone can communicate with different devices, including mobile and other digital devices.

e. Confident

Based on the observation, the confident aspect did not appear during the teaching and learning process. Meanwhile, in the interview, teachers said the importance of reminding students to keep their data private and also engaging the parents that they should guide their children to use technology wisely. As Ahmed et al. (2022) stated, "...while each aspect should be worked on collaboratively, the Confident element calls for tying the pieces together. It entails being aware of and utilizing the differences between the analog and digital worlds."

d. Creative

Even though the creative aspect did not appear in the classroom observation, both teachers said in the interview that exposing the various technologies to students, such as making videos or presentations can build and improve their creativity in the context of learning English. According to Reddy et al. (2020), "creativity in digital domains arises through creating something new (not necessarily "original") that is useful in a specific context."

f. Critical

Based on classroom observation, critical aspects did not appear during the teaching and learning process. Meanwhile, in the interview, the first respondent said creating group discussions facilitates students in expressing arguments or sharing about the information they found on the internet to build students' critical thinking. Then, the second respondent also said to guide or give the students understanding about the fact, opinions, and fake information that they found through the Internet. Furthermore, it relates to Vonti & Grahadila (2021) statement that thinking about one's own literacy practices is a necessary step in developing one's critical digital literacy. It entails thinking back on how things came about, what influences one has, and how behaviors affect other people.

g. Civic

According to Belshaw (2014), civic element refers to individuals having the knowledge and ability to use digital environments to self-organize; to be part of a movement bigger than themselves. Based on classroom observation, The teachers did not consider the civic element. Meanwhile from the interview, both teachers said that students need to pay attention to policies and principles of netiquette when interacting in digital environments.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on classroom observation and interview, it shows that the two teachers who are the participants of this study have not fully integrated digital literacy in the EFL classroom. In addition, it can be proven from the interview that both participants understand how to integrate digital literacy in EFL classrooms. However, in classroom observation, not all aspects are proven to appear during the teaching and learning process. There are cultural and cognitive aspects that can be seen during the teaching and learning process.

Meanwhile, from the interview, it can be inferred that teachers understand about the integration of digital literacy in EFL classrooms in six aspects, which are cultural, cognitive, constructive, communicative, creative, and critical. It can be concluded that only cultural and cognitive aspects are found based on classroom observation and interview results. Furthermore, the integration of digital literacy in EFL classrooms at SMPN 4 Magetan has not been fully implemented.

In line with the conclusion, there are some suggestions given by the researcher to the parties. The researcher finds that there are several aspects of digital literacy that did not appear during the teaching and learning process such as constructive, communicative, creative, confident, critical, and civic. Teachers can use applications or online platforms such as Quizzes, Edpuzzle, Mentimeter, and so on. In order to make learning English in the classroom more interactive. In order to avoid data incompatibility and confusion in concluding data results, it is recommended for the future researchers to use other alternative methods.

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