

Upgrading Students' Reading Skills through Digital Literacy Practices

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KEYWORDS**ABSTRACT**

Students' Improvement,
Reading skills, Digital literacy.

Digital literacy activities in schools, particularly in classrooms, are essential for educating students for the twenty-first century. Furthermore, digital literacy is a set of skills that allow a person to use digital devices effectively in the digital era, including easily obtaining, applying, assessing, analyzing, and synthesizing data, as well as producing new information. Furthermore, reading activities are one of the effects of this technological development. The transition from printed to digital text necessitates new literacies, such as collecting and interpreting online data. Thus, proficiency in reading is required to evaluate and interpret information from digital tools. Referring to that, this study aims to determine the extent to which digital literacy can help students improve their reading skills. A content analysis method was used in this study. This paper's data source is based on various scholarly journals. Digital platforms that are often used to improve reading skills are Facebook and Whatsapp.

INTRODUCTION

In the twenty-first century, there has been an emergence of digital tools and resources for academic purposes, particularly in English language education (Cochrane, 2021). Since the revolution of digital tools, the way information is disseminated and how people get news has changed. The revolutions of digital also supplied everyone with facts on some of the roles of digital literacy in literacy education. Kaeophanuek, Na-Songkhla, & Nilsook (2019) highlighted that educational digital literacy is defined as the ability to read, interpret, and produce digital material that is valued in academia. It is in line with Soifah, Jana, and Pratolo's (2021) statement that digital literacy is the ability to read and analyze data using automated controls, as well as the ability to deconstruct and apply new knowledge obtained via sophisticated settings. Therefore, the previous research proved that, learning through the usage of digital tools can help students enhance their reading skills. Svensson (2021) showed that the use of assistive technology appears to have a positive impact on reading ability and to be helpful, particularly for kids with the most severe challenges. Furthermore, Marsa, Kuspiyah, & Agustina's (2021) research revealed that the use of Kahoot! in the classroom has a significant influence on engagement, perception, motivation, and a good attitude. It had an effect on the students' reading comprehension results. These findings might be useful for English teachers who want to take advantage of digital learning to improve students' reading skills.

Today's digital culture faces a variety of issues, including hoax or fake news, privacy violations, cyberbullying, violence and pornographic content, and digital media addiction. Hence, ada beberapa komponen penting yang ada pada digital literacy

(Ahmad, 2022): 1) Understanding the diverse environments of digital world users via culture; 2) Cognitive, or the ability to think critically about content.; 3) Constructive.; 4) Communication, including understanding network and communication performance in the digital environment; 5) Responsible self-confidence; 6) Creative, accomplishing new things in new ways; 7) Critical in addressing the material; and 8) Socially responsible.

Moreover, according to Martin & Grudziecki (2006) there are three degrees of digital literacy: 1.) digital competence, 2.) digital usage, and 3.) digital transformation. Koinfo & Deloitte Consulting (2021) added that Digital literacy consists of four components: 1.) digital technological proficiency (digital skills), 2.) digital culture (digital culture), 3.) digital ethics (digital ethics), and 4.) digital safety literacy (digital safety). It relates with Son, Park, & Park (2017), Digital literacy consists of five components: 1.) the capacity to seek and assess information, 2.) the ability to be creative (to make something), 3.) the ability to communicate, 4.) the ability to cooperate, and 5.) online security. To summarize, studying digital literacy teaches kids how to be creative with technology while also using the internet responsibly.

Buckingham (2007) states that the most important basic digital literacy skills for teachers are: (1) using Microsoft Office software, such as Word, Excel, and PowerPoint applications, (2) using internet services and applications, (3) selecting digital learning resource media, and (4) utilizing ICT-based learning media in learning and assessment. Thus, digital literacy should be used to help teachers with things like operating learning and assessment tools and using the internet.

This research should be investigated due to several aspects. The blended learning model, which is a development of e-learning, is currently popular because it is useful for creating a new and dynamic environment while learning to read English according to the target (Syakur et al., 2020). He added, the positive responses of students to blended learning based on "absyak" learning based on the Media Website on learning to read English demonstrates adoption of new technology-based learning innovations. Grabe and Stoller's (2020) assured that teachers may engage students in reading digital texts and analyzing sources online while developing and upgrading both their reading and digital literacy abilities by thoughtfully integrating digital devices into guided reading teaching. In brief, students' reading skills can be upgraded through digital literacy activities, which can be done through a different platform: a website or specific applications.

Previous studies showed that the web, applications, and social media can help enhance reading abilities. The use of social media is currently in demand by students to read information. It relates with Lewis (2010) statement that social media is a term used to describe digital technology that allows individuals to attach, interact with, create, and share content information. According to Kurnia & Astuti (2017), as could be predicted, social media is the most often visited Internet material. Social media is used by 97.4% of Internet users, or 129.2 million people.

Therefore, this research will focus on upgrading students' reading skills through digital literacy activities. The digital platform used is social media. Referring to the background of this research, there is a research question that has been proposed: "What kind of digital literacy form improves students' reading skills?"

The aim of this research is to analyze how students' reading skills have improved by utilizing digital tools. This research needs to be researched so that researchers who are interested in conducting research in the same field get the benefits. It is also beneficial for students and teachers when using digital literacy to improve students' reading skills.

METHOD

The research methodology used in this research is content analysis. Content analysis focuses on analyzing and interpreting recorded material to learn about human behavior. It is included in the category of qualitative methods. According to Shahmohammadi (2013), content analysis is a research technique that focuses on the content and internal characteristics of media. It's used to find and quantify the occurrence of certain words, concepts, themes, phrases, characters, or sentences in texts or groups of texts. He added that books, book chapters, essays, interviews, discussions, newspaper headlines and articles, historical documents, speeches, conversations, advertising, theater, or essentially any occurrence of communicative language can all be considered texts.

The data source in this paper is based on some scientific articles. The publications of the articles used are from 2018 to 2022. Content analysis was utilized to examine 20 peer-reviewed journal publications on digital literacy for purposes of enhancing reading skills study. This allows for a comparison of the range of procedures used in previous literature reviews and the identification of their strengths and weaknesses. Hence, the writer analyzed some related previous research. Then, identify the strengths and weaknesses of digital literacy for improving reading skills based on the previous research.

The classification of content is important in content analysis (Uysal & Madenoglu, 2015). First, the data will be gathered to identify the digital platforms that are utilized for digital literacy activities. Second, the data analyzed is a digital platform that is often used to improve reading skills in recent years. Third, the examined data is another skill that must be possessed when using social media.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Digital literacy processes are inherently changing, as they are linked to rapidly changing technology in a world characterized by complicated connections. It consists of understanding instructions from visualizations (photo-visual literacy), using digital reproduction in learning (reproduction literacy), building knowledge from non-linear navigation (lateral literacy), and assessing information (information literacy) (Eshet, 2002). The goal of this study was to learn about student impressions of digital technology for reading. The focus of our study was on digital literacy using social media. They chose to integrate it into their lesson to help students enhance their reading skills. Silva (2021) highlighted that in the post-coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic era, where social media users and digital readers are growing, and blended and remote learning is becoming more popular. Moreover, since reading practices have always involved text circulation among readers, the social element of reading is emphasized in the digital era, with social media making the creation and consumption of a variety of textual forms more convenient (Turner, Hicks, and Zucker, 2020). Email apps, instant messaging (IM) programs (e.g., Skype), blogs, wikis, social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter), and social news websites are examples of ICT-based social media (e.g., Reddit; see Kong, Lai-Ku, Deng, & Yan-Au, 2021).

The social media platforms that are often used to improve students' reading skills include: Facebook (FB) and Whatsapp (WA). Al-wazeer & Ashuja (2022) mentioned that students claim that WA and FB help them enhance their reading and writing abilities as well as their ESP vocabulary. This definition is similar to that found in Mccall (2017) statement that the students are enthusiastic about using Facebook to learn both to read and write. Facebook is frequently used by not only students but also adults these days as a source of edutainment (education and entertainment) or impacts on their learning (Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019). It plays a pivotal role in enhancing basic receptive skills (Al Momani, 2020). Furthermore, WhatsApp may be used to teach people how to read

narrative text (Yeni & Gunaldi, 2021). They add that WhatsApp may be utilized in the classroom to help students improve their reading skills. It is because they like using WhatsApp to communicate information, tasks, assignments, video, audio, and pictures, as well as to solve difficulties outside of class and to avoid boredom from reading. It is similar to the finding of Pelenkahu & Liando (2022) it shows that using WhatsApp for online learning can help students improve their reading skills when it comes to narrative content. However, many posts on social media are not valid. It relates to Moravec, Minas & Dennis (2018) statement that over the last several years, the frequency of fake news (i.e., disinformation) on social media has grown. Hence, critical reading abilities are needed while reading a social media post.

The validity of the ideas expressed in the writers' writings must be verified by the readers. Par (2018) highlighted that students' critical reading abilities are essential because they impact the critical thinking skills required today and, as a result, help them become critical thinkers and readers. Thus, when critical readers receive new information through reading for readers, listening, or reading for thinkers, they first gain a basic understanding of it, then interpret and integrate it to gain a deeper understanding, and finally reflect on and evaluate it by applying their outside knowledge and experience. (Kaeophanuek, Na-Songkhla & Nilsook, 2019).

In all circumstances, the development of the digital literacy scale, the outcome demonstrates that the assessment tool closely fits the model initially presented.

- a. Technological or Instrumental Ability: The ability to use digital technology successfully.
- b. Communication Capability: The ability to communicate through digital technology.
- c. Information Ability: In a nutshell, information skill refers to the capacity to locate, access, and analyze information in a digital context.
- d. Critical Thinking Ability: The ability to critically assess the information acquired.
- e. Personal security competence: The ability to use interactive communication without putting minors' personal safety at risk.
- f. Device security Knowledge: Take care to keep digital devices safe and avoid potential risks like viruses and malware.

Thus, before we can engage in digital literacy activities, we must first grasp what phases of reading material incorporate digital literacy. Students are required to have certain technical abilities as part of the technology literacy curriculum. The ability is essential for locating and determining information from an infinite number of sources, interacting via computers, and altering particular information for specific reasons like completing assignments, giving presentations, and analyzing information.

However, there are several problems, especially in developing countries, with running digital literacy programs to increase students' interest in reading. The level of digital literacy in Indonesia remains low. According to the 2015 PISA results, Indonesia's reading/literacy level ranks 62nd out of 70 nations, with an average score of 397. 70 nations have an average reading/literacy score of 493. This signifies that Indonesia's reading level/literacy is still poor and below average (OECD, 2015).

The following is the certain issues that prevent digital library research and growth in still developing countries (Chowdury, 2002)

- a. The reduction in library budget requires library administration to fight to maintain a basic level of services, leaving little opportunity for new projects and improvements.
- b. Inadequate funding assistance, particularly for digital library research and development
- c. There are no completely established and up-to-date OPACs, and there is minimal access to online information resources like as databases and e-journals.

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- d. Computers and networks facilities are in poor condition.
- e. Strict government and institutional Internet access policies
- f. An abundance of qualified employees
- g. Inadequate information literacy results in a lack of understanding for current information services and their utilization.

To overcome the problems that exist in Indonesia, the government held a school literacy movement. The School Literacy Movement (GLS) was launched in March 2016 by the Ministry of Education and Culture's Directorate General of Primary and Secondary Education through socialization and coordination with all Provincial Education Offices and/or City/District Education Offices. In this movement, digital literacy is also central to the objective of developing kids' potential in classrooms. Furthermore, the government's consistent move in establishing digital literacy in the education sector is carried out through the 2013 curriculum, which implements Information Communication Technology (ICT) integrated learning in all courses.

In a nutshell, technology is quickly evolving into an indispensable source of education and self-education, as well as a vital tool for the creation of new literacy. This research demonstrates that enhancing students' digital literacy and technological abilities is a key requirement for effective performance and attaining improved results in the learning process. Social media is the most common used by the students. The writer found that students have improved their reading skills by using Facebook and Whatsapp as digital platforms for learning, especially in reading comprehension. In this case, digital literacy can also help students improve their critical reading skills. Critical reading is useful for filtering reading on social media. This is also useful so that students are not deceived by fake news and students are able to criticize the news. Thus, having necessary skills in digital literacy is a necessity for extending access to information and communication technology in order to increase the workforce competitiveness of young people.

CONCLUSION

Digital literacy is the capacity to understand and utilise information obtained from diverse digital sources. The social element of reading is emphasized in the digital era, with social media making the creation and consumption of a variety of textual forms more convenient. Digital literacy makes students pleased and assists them in improving their reading abilities. In the recent years, Facebook and WhatsApp applications are digital literacy platforms that have been often used in recent years to improve reading abilities. It's because both of them contain edutainment (education and entertainment). Both have features to share information in various forms, such as photos, videos, and text. Furthermore, many posts on social media are not valid, hence, critical reading abilities are needed.

Therefore, students must get digital literacy instruction from their school. The teachers must be more aware of technological developments, especially in digital literacy. Some things that need to be supported include adequate technological facilities in each school. Choose interesting material to increase children's interest in reading. Also, developing teacher competency in order to increase teacher professionalism through digital literacy initiatives such as attending numerous trainings.

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