Representation of Reading Literacy in Higher Education as Digital Learners

Arjulayana[1]*, Tri Pujiati[2], Nasikhatul Ulla Al Jamiliyati[3], Lukmanul Hakim[4] and Roveneldo[4]

[1]*English education department, Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang, Banten, Indonesia*
[3]*Social Science Department, Universitas Trunojoyo, Madura, Indonesia*
[2]*Social Science Department, Universitas Merdeka, Malang, Indonesia*
[4]*Language preservation research, National Research and Innovation Agency-BRIN, Indonesia*

ABSTRACT

Reading literacy for university students still needs to be advocated due to their contribution, as digital learners are very demanding through involving comprehensive understanding and reading information digitally. This paper aims to find out and represent university students' reading literacy in their responses as digital learners because university students need a clear understanding of information to contribute well in the digital era and to understand how students can analyze digital information and engage with digital content effectively. This qualitative descriptive research used some research instruments such as observation, interview, and documentation. The sample of this research was 2nd semester students of Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang, with a total sample of 31 students. The observation is done at the beginning to gain students' reading literacy after utilizing the digital platform. The interview was used to find out the students' reading literacy during the spot time, and the last was documentation; the documentation used some digital platforms that contained information. The data were analyzed based on PISA 2018 indicators. This research found that university students' reading literacy can be divided into three levels: high, medium, and low levels of reading literacy students. Besides, the representation of reading literacy also shows that there has been a significant increase over time. This is due to students' awareness of continuing to foster their reading skills and habits.

Keywords: Digital learners, digital, literacy, reading literacy

INTRODUCTION

Digital learners can connect with individuals from around the world. They can engage in

cross-cultural learning experiences, collaborate on international projects, and gain a global perspective, which is increasingly important in our interconnected world. Meanwhile, digital learners need to adapt rapidly to understand technological landscapes (Tan & McWilliam, 2009). Students can be comfortable with ever-evolving digital tools and platforms to gain information and improve their reading literacy digitally.

Furthermore, as one of the fundamental skills, students' reading literacy is really advocated for, and it should be fostered by university students as digital learners are the core of the bright future in education, professional endeavors, and everyday life. It enables individuals to access information, think critically, and communicate effectively (Ebert & Weinert, 2013; Horarik et al., 2018). As technology and how we consume information continue to evolve, digital literacy has become increasingly important alongside traditional reading literacy, as individuals need to navigate and understand digital texts and multimedia content (Akbar, 2014).

Hence, some of the concepts of reading literacy representation could be seen based on The ability to recognize and sound out words accurately, called decoding, Understanding the meaning of the text, including grasping main ideas, identifying supporting details, and making inferences based on the information presented called comprehension ability, Having a strong and diverse vocabulary to understand and interpret the meanings of words in context, and Drawing connections between different parts of the text, making predictions, and forming interpretations (Ebert & Weinert, 2013).

Indonesian University students' problems related to reading literacy can vary due to their difficulties in reading and understanding texts, especially in English (Mayuni et al., 2020). This limited reading literacy can hinder their ability to understand academic material, especially if most of the teaching materials are in EFL (Lawhon, 1976). Besides having a Low interest in reading among college students, Many college students prefer to spend their time on social media, entertainment, or other activities, which strongly lowers their critical thinking and comprehension skills (Al-Zidjaly, 2019).

Otherwise, digital Learners may have basic reading skills, but it looks like they lack the ability to analyze the text in depth. So, this research will investigate digital learners reading literacy to cover the representation of reading literacy among digital learners. The research question is limited to (1) how the digital learner's reading literacy is implemented in university and (2) how the representation of students' reading literacy as digital learners is investigated clearly.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The research method used in this paper is Qualitative descriptive. The purposive sampling was 31 students from the second-semester class of Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang; this class belongs to middle-aged university students who still need to adapt to their

condition and schedule to complete any kind of academic tasks and university organization. The research instrument consists of observation, interview, and documentation. For observation, the researcher carries out some observation forms to observe students' reading interests and social conditions.

The observation is used to measure students' understanding of their self-condition related to the aspect of reading literacy indicators, such as readiness in reading and understanding the reading strategy (Ho & Lau, 2018). The second instrument was an interview with 10 questions through ordinal scale analysis to find out the level of students' awareness of reading literacy and their preferences. The last instrument is documentation. The researcher gives some texts to the sample, and they need to read the text and then represent their understanding through an oral presentation to gain their text's understanding in-depth.

The data analysis refers to three dimensions of reading literacy assessment proposed by PISA 2018 (OECD, 2018): (1) Text: related to the type of reading materials that students often read, texts in print, such as magazines, newspapers, or online texts, (2) Aspects: related to the reading process involving cognitive skills, and (3) Situations: This aspect is closely related to the context of the text, how the text is constructed, whether there are personal matters, such as biographies, or about academic texts, or perhaps about social events in society (OECD, 2018; Sen et al., 2019).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Concerning the data analysis based on reading literacy observation, interview, and documentation, the data can be elaborated on based on the limitations of the problems.

University Student's Reading Literacy Process as a Digital Learner

Based on the data obtained, EFL undergraduate students of the University of Muhammadiyah Tangerang understood the importance of reading in improving reading literacy. This is evidenced by the representation of 82% of the sample who strongly agree that reading literacy is a basic skill, and as digital learners, they need to improve their reading literacy to understand information clearly. 0.5% of students are neutral; it seems those students could not find the motivation to learn or utilize any platform to improve their skills (Ismawati et al., 2023; Miles & Fletcher, 2023; Pratiwi, 2019). On the other side, 13% doubted their understanding of reading literacy, and the rest, 4.5%, disagreed that reading literacy is the most fundamental aspect of gaining others' literacy, as digital learners prefer to use social platforms for speaking literacy or finding information virtually.

Furthermore, when students' reading skills are improved, they will have good reading habits and do their reading properly. Since their reading habit is improved, they will be aware of three dimensions of reading literacy (Thomson et al., 2013): where they can find

the resources to enhance their knowledge, utilize any kind of online platform to boost their reading literacy; they will gain their own strategy to understand the text, can find any kinds of reading construction based on their preference with the objective to improve their reading literacy (Morrell, 2014; Sen et al., 2019; Zashchitina & Moysyak, 2017).

The Representation of Students' Reading Literacy as a Digital Learner

The data of student reading literacy assessed consists of three basic domains: (1) text, (2) aspect, and (3) situation (Thomson et al., 2013). Those three dimensions are strongly related to reading and literacy, which need the process of high-order thinking skills (Damaianti et al., 2020). The basic things that students should know are about their understanding of the importance of reading literacy, and most of them understand reading literacy in line with their awareness of reading and skills as digital learners (Becker, 2021; Dewi, 2020).

Before evaluating students' reading literacy to gain representation, the need to know and understand what reading literacy is is crucial. 83.9% of students know that reading literacy is one of the fundamental skills in this digital era. Otherwise, students' reading literacy will improve over time because they know the importance of that skill (Elsner, 2011). While 0.5% of students have a known understanding of reading literacy and its importance, reading literacy still becomes one of the problems for Indonesian students. Nevertheless, university students are no longer beginning readers. Otherwise, their reading literacy would be easier to advocate for.

This research uses the PISA (Program for International Students Assessment to evaluate reading literacy because The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) has become a widely recognized and influential barometer for evaluating reading literacy, as well as other skills in mathematics and science (Mayuni et al., 2020). PISA is an international assessment conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2018). It evaluates the performance of students from a wide range of countries and regions, making it a global benchmark for education quality and reading literacy. The global scope allows for cross-country comparisons and the identification of trends and disparities in reading proficiency (Koyuncu & Fırat, 2020; Linnakyla et al., 2004). Otherwise, evaluating reading literacy through the PISA indicator is strongly matched due to the standardized assessment methods and questions that are carefully developed well by the expert and tested to measure students' reading literacy. It ensures the assessment is consistent and comparable across different countries, cultures, and languages.

Hence, reading literacy cannot be fully assessed by a single test and by a single level of student literacy (Damaianti et al., 2020). Therefore, PISA should be considered one of several tools to evaluate educational outcomes and should be used in conjunction with other assessments and evaluations to provide a comprehensive view of education quality (OECD, 2018). Hence, this research data shows that students who have good critical

thinking skills will have good reading literacy because they are really familiar with the analysis of the text (Kaur & Sidhu, 2014) and represent students reading literacy. Medium level 60 to 70 score has a medium level of reading literacy related to their cognitive skill in representing their understanding and context analysis. The other level is low-level students, and only 20% are not motivated to utilize any platform to foster their reading literacy. At this level, students have difficulties understanding the text and the context and involving their cognition properly, such as gaining their own strategy to analyze the text (Linnakyla et al., 2004).

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CONCLUSION

Based on the results and data analysis from the research that focuses on the reading literacy of 2nd-semester students at the University of Muhammadiyah Tangerang, several things related to literacy, such as understanding the text and context, the cognitive aspects of students and situations, where the students grow and develop, and from the family environment that has what kind of educational background are become the limit of this research.

In conclusion, the representation of students' reading literacy shows a significant improvement over time. This is due to students' awareness of continuing to improve reading skills and habits. Because, as a digital generation, they have realized there are many platforms that they can use to improve their reading literacy as digital learners, they are also aware that having a cognitive strategy in understanding reading is a good trick to improve reading literacy because reading literacy does not distinguish between female and male.

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