THE CORRELATION BETWEEN DIGITAL LITERACY AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY OF UNIKA MUSI CHARITAS FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT: This study aimed to discover the correlation between digital literacy and English proficiency of first-year students at Unika Musi Charitas. One hundred seventy three students were involved by using purposive sampling technique. The data were collected by using questionnaire which elaborates students' digital literacy as well as the score of their English proficiency. To analyze the results, Pearson Product Moment formula was used to measure the relationship between the two discussed variables. Findings were described into the results of participants' English proficiency level, digital literacy insight as well as the correlation test. Viewing from the proficiency level, 64.2% of the participants were categorized as basic users which can perform limited language use on daily topics. In addition, the mean score of their digital literacy insight was 66.99 with the maximum and minimum scores were 100 and 10 descriptively. The correlation test obtained significant correlation between digital literacy and English proficiency with Pearson correlation value of 0.394 at significance level of 0.000. This strongly confirms that the ability of using digital things and language carry positive intercourse.

Keywords: *Digital literacy, English proficiency*

KORELASI ANTARA LITERASI DIGITAL DAN KECAKAPAN BAHASA INGGRIS MAHASISWA TINGKAT PERTAMA UNIVERSITAS KATOLIK MUSI CHARITAS

ABSTRAK: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan korelasi antara literasi digital dan kecakapan Bahasa Inggris mahasiswa angkatan baru tahun akademik 2019/ 2020 di Unika Musi Charitas. Seratus tujuh puluh tiga mahasiswa dilibatkan dengan menggunakan teknik sampling purposif. Data dikumpulkan melalui instrumen kuisioner yang bertujuan memberikan gambaran mengenai kemampuan literasi digital mahasiswa dan juga data nilai kecapakan Bahasa Inggris mereka. Informasi tersebut dianalisa dengan menggunakan formula *Pearson Product Moment* untuk mengukur keterkaitan antara dua variabel yang dibahas pada penelitian ini. Temuan pada penelitian ini digambarkan ke dalam hasil level kecakapan Bahasa Inggris peserta, wawasan literasi digital, dan tes korelasi. Ditinjau dari kecakapan Bahasa Inggris, 64.2% dari pesera berada pada level basic user yang artinya dapat menggunakan bahasa dengan terbatas dalam konteks keseharian. Selain itu, nilai rata-rata dari wawasan literasi digital peserta adalah 66.99 dengan nilai maksimum 100 dan minimum 10. Tes korelasi menunjukkan bahwa terdapat korelasi signifikan antara variabel literasi digital dan kecakapan Bahasa Inggris dengan nilai Pearson korelasi 0.394 (level signifikansi 0.000). Hal ini sangat memperjelas bahwa kemampuan menggunakan media digital dan bahasa membawa keterkaitan yang positif.

Kata kunci: *Literasi digital, Kecakapan bahasa Inggris*

INTRODUCTION

Industrial Revolution 4.0 has brought automation and digitalization trends in Industry. The influence and importance of this Industrial Revolution 4.0 are reflected in all aspects of our lives. A lack of digital culture, training, knowledge, and languages are among challenge found in this revolution era (Hariharasudan & Kot, 2018). In relation to educational context, it is necessary to address and anticipate the challenges in order to minimize the potential barriers which may hinder students' academic success.

Digital literacy and English proficiency are among important skills required by students to support their academic success. Both skills are interrelated each other since English is the most widely used language in digital era. Vice versa, in order to master English in digital era, digital literacy is a highly important skill for students living and studying with making use of technology.

As digitalization is one of characteristics of Industrial Revolution 4.0 (Afrianto, 2018), it therefore demands students to equip themselves with digital literacy in order to be competitive in this revolution and digital era. Digital literacy is having knowledge and the ability to use technological devices for various purposes. A digitally literate person uses technology to discover and evaluate information, connect and collaborate with others, produce and share original contents, and use internet and technological tools to achieve academic, professional and personal goals (Mantiri et al., 2019). In ELT context, proper digital literacy skill enables students to be effective and independent learners who can use digital tools and resources for English learning (Son et al., 2017).

English is the most preferred language used in Industrial Revolution 4.0. It is the top internet language used by people around the globe (Hariharasudan & Kot, 2018). The global economic and economic development brought by Industrial Revolution 4.0 requires students to be proficient in English communication (Christinawati, 2019). English proficiency implies the ability to communicate in English fluently by maximizing the active use of language skills and components. In terms of digital literacy development, English plays important role as it is the main language of technological devices and internet. Thus, to have English proficiency brings benefit to the students in order to have proper digital literacy.

In conjunction with the facts above, many researchers have conducted studies related to the role of digital literacy in ELT and Industrial Revolution 4.0 as studies conducted by Mantiri et al in 2019; Son et al in 2017; Hariharasudan, A & Kot, Sebastian in 2018. There were also studies investigated about the importance of integrating English proficiency to support the development of digital literacy in Industrial Revolution 4.0, for instance: research conducted by Afrianto in 2018 and Christinawati in 2019.

Various research discussed about digital literacy and English proficiency issues. However, only a few studies focused on investigation the interconnection between the two topics. This study shed lights the correlation between digital literacy and English proficiency of Unika Musi Charitas first-year students. It also concerns with identifying students' perceptions toward the correlation between the variables. In addition, it is expected that the results of the study will provide beneficial insight for the development of ELT process which lead to support the improvement of students' English academic achievements.

METHODOLOGY

This study investigated the relationship between digital literacy and English proficiency. This type of research design provides opportunity to predict scores and explain the relationship among variables.

The population of this study were the first-year students of Unika Musi Charitas in academic year 2019/2020. The total numbers of the students were 432 students from four faculties. Through purposive sampling techniques, one hundred seventy three students were selected as samples. The samples have taken an English Proficiency Test conducted by the University Language Center.

The instruments of this study were Digital Literacy Questionnaire- Language Learners (DLQ-LL) and English Proficiency Test. The DLQ-LL questionnaire was made by Son et al (2017). It consists of five sections, namely: Background, self-ratings of computing and digital skills, questions related to the use of digital technologies; digital literacy test; and factors affecting the use of digital technologies for language learning and personal views of the use of digital devices. Meanwhile, the English Proficiency test which assesses listening, structure, and reading was created by Language Center team of Unika Musi Charitas.

To find out the correlation between the variables, the data were analyzed by using Pearson Product Moment formula. This type of formula also might interpret the strong or weak the relationship between students' speaking anxiety through their achievement.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding
Students' Digital Literacy

Students from ten different study programs of three faculties involved as the respondents of this study with 66% female and 34% male. The range age of participants is from 17 years old to 21 years old. The participants have different main languages and most of their target is English.

Most participants (67%) are familiar with technological tools. They have used the tools for about 7-10 years. Handphone, PC, and Laptop are common technological devices used by the participants. They learnt to use the devices by themselves, asking their family, friends, or teachers, reading books or other sources, and accessing related websites.

Students have various responses dealing with their ability in using digital apps. Around 52% of students stated that they were very good at using Google and 43% of the students also stated that they were very good at using Youtube. Furthermore, about 40% of students said that they were good at utilizing MS Word, MS Power Point and Facebook. Moreover, 31% of students mentioned that they are good at utilizing MS Excel. In addition, around 20% of students asserted that they are quite good at operating MS Access, Skype, Moodle, Second Life, Blog, Wiki, Podcast, Dropbox, Picasa, Dreamweaver and Dictionary.

In relation to digital literacy insight, students' responses is classified into 5 categories from very poor to excellent categories. Based on the data analysis, it was found that there are 34.1% in excellent category, 23.1% in good category, 22.5% in average category, 9.2% in poor category, and 11% in very poor category.

Students' responses related to factors affecting the use of digital technology for language learning. From the most dominant to the least dominant factors are stated in this chronological order, namely facilities, students' interest, training, supporting sources, time, students' skill, students' knowledge, teachers' skill, teachers' knowledge, learning material, budget, and other factors.

Students also responded statements related to digital literacy and language learning. 51% of students expressed their strongly agreement on the statement of the use of digital tools brought sense of comfort, 49% of students also stated their strongly agreement on the importance of learning and using digital sources. Then, 45% of students showed their agreement on the statements that using digital tools was fun, knowing various digital tools, and willingness to learn technology. Next, 42% of the students agreed that they had to improve their language learning through technology and 47% of them also agreed that technology training should be included in language education program. After that, 37% of the students mentioned their agreement on their understanding of digital tool use. Finally, around 20% of students showed their uncertain responses towards the statements related to potential threat of technology and lack of technological ability.

Students' English Proficiency

The results of English Proficiency Test revealed that 64.2% of students are categorized in A2 level (Basic User). Furthermore, 30.6% of the students are included in B1 level (Independent User). Moreover, 4.6% of the students are classified into B2 level (Independent User). In addition, 0.6% of students are included in C1 level (Proficient User).

Correlation between Digital Literacy and English Proficiency

The result of correlation test is presented in the following table.

Table 1. The Result of Correlation Test

N	Pearson Correlation	Sig.
173	0.394	0.000

The table showed that the Pearson correlation was 0.394 at significance level of 0.000. Since the significance level was lower than 0.05 (<0.05), this revealed that there was significant correlation between the two observed variables.

Students' Perception on Digital Literacy and English Proficiency

The results of Digital Literacy and Language Learning questionnaire that have been previously described also provided information dealing students' perceptions toward correlation between digital literacy and English proficiency. For instance, 42% of the students showed their agreement on the statement that they had to improve their language learning through technology and 47% of students also agreed that technology training should be included in language education program.

The results of questionnaire are in line with students comments which highlight their perceptions towards the correlation between digital literacy and English proficiency. Several students stated that having good digital literacy helping them to understand various lessons including English more. Furthermore, other students pointed

out that it was important to have good digital literacy in order to improve English proficiency. In addition the other students said that they were eager to improve their digital literacy as it could influence their English proficiency.

Discussion

The findings on students' English proficiency revealed that most participants were in the A2 level (basic user). Language learners on this level have the ability to use the simple, direct and familiar sentences in routine context. In other words, the basic user learners perform limited language use on daily topics.

Yuan et al (2019) describe that language learning has been shifting from the time when teachers and students relied on tangible tools to access learning material to the 21st century classroom with broader options of digital access. Therefore, students are demanded to have digital literacy in order to be competitive in this revolution and digital era. In addition, it is also globally known that English is the most preferred language used in Industrial Revolution 4.0. This condition requires students to be proficient in English communication (Christinawati, 2019). To indicate someone's ability to perform a language use in real context, language proficiency is used.

Language proficiency is a person's skill in using a language for a specific purpose (Richard, 1997). Thus, a language proficiency test is designed to obtain the information of language proficiency level. Identifying language proficiency can also be beneficial for both preparing and evaluating the merit implementation of language learning, especially in this automation and digitalization era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0.

The correlation between digital literacy and English proficiency lies between the ability to take advantage of the digital tools for learning and understand the learning materials which are mostly available in English language. As stated by Son et al (2017), digital literacy skills improvement would benefit students to be independent learners who can make use of the tools and resources for learning the language in authentic context. In addition, Mantiri et al (2019) stated that this current generation is exposed to all kinds of digital technology that allows them to communicate in ways that incorporate these four language skills while creating new skills. In short, a digitally literate person can use technology to use technology effectively in order to achieve academic goals including English proficiency or achievements.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

The result of correlation test appears as the core finding in this current study. It was found out that there was significant correlation between digital literacy and English proficiency. This was indicated by the Pearson correlation value of 0.394 at significance level of 0.000 (<0.05). This result clarifies that both the ability of using digital tools and the language in real context carry beneficial connection.

Suggestion

It is suggested that future researchers to conduct more studies related to the influence of digital literacy towards students' English skills. The findings of the type of study will provide fruitful insight on how significant the influence of digital literacy to support the improvement of students' listening, reading, speaking and writing skills. In addition, it is recommended for teachers and other practicioners to use more digital tools

and digital materials in ELT. The use of the tools and materials will give students more chances to enhance their digital literacy which promote the enhancement of English achievement. For teachers and other practicioners, it is recommended to use more digital tools and digital materials in ELT. The use of the tools and materials will give students more chances to enhance their digital literacy which promote the enhancement of English achievement.

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