

Internet_Loiteracy_An_Analysis_ towards_its_challenges.pdf

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Internet Literacy: An Analysis Towards its ChallengesRiza Weganofa¹, Rizky Lutviana²

English Education Department University of Kanjuruhan Malang

¹rizaweganofa@unikama.ac.id, ²lutviana.rizky@unikama.ac.id

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Abstract

This study emerges by the fact that the vision of English Education Department of University of Kanjuruhan Malang is to be an established study program in English teaching and learning development based on IPTEKS and to produce highly competitive English teachers in 2025. English Education Department has done several efforts as milestones to achieve this vision. Lecturers push their students to integrate technology into classrooms. However, students' backgrounds and culture are so various that it might give some challenges for them to adjust with classroom's atmosphere. There is no certain required subject that guide students how to use technology to help them study. This happens since the assumption lies on the fact that today's students are already familiar with technology. However, the fact that there are only a few students who bring laptop to classrooms might indicate that the use of internet outside classroom is still rare. Thus, this study will describe students' internet literacy and its challenges. Taking as the subjects of this study is English education department students who come from outside Java.

Keywords: Challenges, Describing, Internet Literacy

Introduction

As the word 'IPTEKS' is stated in the vision of English Education Department in University of Kanjuruhan Malang, it is reflected on the curriculum and further it should be applied in the curriculum. The word 'information technology' urges the lecturers to integrate many kinds of technology as deep as possible into classrooms. There have been some studies reported the use of technology, such as the use of social media in learning (Alfarhoud, Y, 2016; Tess, A. 2013; Julia, 2012; Mc Corkindel. T, 2010), the use of blog (Prabowo, D. & Laksono. A, 2013). Most of these studies favor the use of internet, the most favorable technology invention, in teaching-learning process. Sari (2014) summarizes that blogging provides opportunity for studentbloggers to enrich their learning experience by shifting from

surface levels of learning to deeper levels of learning. This might happen because students have more 'real' readers of their pieces of writings, which they will get direct feedback to achieve what they really think. By having more readers, students will learn how to negotiate means, how to accommodate ideas, and later how to make their own 'voice' through writing. The process when students are engaging with internet, is actually shaping their knowledge on how to use internet for the purpose of self satisfaction, can be for academic purpose, work purpose, or entertainment.

There are some debates on how we should define the word internet literacy. Colwell, Hunt-Barron, and Reinking (2013) argue that digital literacy consists of the ability of to search and validate information provided by internet. Meanwhile, Semas in Johnson (2003) tends to use the term internet literacy to point specifically at the ability of online search competence. Further, Hofstetter in Johnson (2003) mentions that the definition of internet literacy covers the ability to connect, secure, communicate, multimedia, and web development. Walker and White (2013) add that it is paramount for today's students to comprehend digital competency, such as procedure, socio-digital, digital discourse, and strategic competence.

However, teachers and curriculum decision makers may not generalize and take it for granted that all students have the same internet literacy capacity without seeing its possibility, context, students' environment, culture, and accessibility. The tendency would be teachers come to the class and directly demand the students to perform well on the tasks given online. Teachers might assume that their students have been familiar with the internet, and thus they will have no technical difficulty.

Students bring their own background knowledge and their past experience of learning into classrooms. This condition sometimes will contribute to the success or failure of learning. When students enter a university, they bring their past experience on how to be successful, and how to avoid failure in learning. But of course, they need to adjust themselves quickly to this new environment. Besides adjusting themselves to new learning habit, they need also to adjust how to build a good communicate among friends, and to teachers.

Most of students in University of Kanjuruhan Malang come from East islands of Indonesia, such as NTT, NTB, West Borneo,

North Borneo, few are from Sulawesi and Papua. When they come to Java, they bring along their past experience in learning, including their

experience in using the internet. Accessibility of internet might be different from what Javanese students might experience. Thus, this study tries to describe how far they use the internet for learning purpose, and what the challenges are for them when the lecturers demand the use of internet.

Method

This is a descriptive qualitative study. There are eight volunteer students of English Education Department participated in this study. All of them are from outside Java and it is their first time studying in Java. The researcher provided two instruments to answer the research questions: internet literacy questionnaire and in-depth interview. To analyze the data, the researcher calculated the mean score of the questionnaire. Later, she transcribed the result of the interview, gave code, and eliminated unimportant answers. The discussion of this study is limited to students come from outside Java and have lived for less than one and a half years in Java. The result of this study may not be generalized to all students come from outside java.

Result and Discussion

The total statements of internet literacy questionnaire were twenty, asking about students' ability to use the search engine, the ability to find information, such as article and validate the information, and the ability to do technical things with internet, such as send emails, type keywords, subscribe to online news, and others. After the subjects filled in the questionnaire, the researcher counted the score and it was found that the mean score was 57.6 out of 80. This was categorized as Advance user, and when it was traced back to each subject's score, none of them got below 53 with the highest score was 64. This indicates that students are already familiar with internet and how to make use of it. Students whose parents are teachers and have better social economy facilitate their children with the internet. However, student MI mentions that his parents do not have the internet at home; he only accessed the internet using school's computers in junior high school. He also mentions that there is no internet connection in his village because it is far away from the city centre. Students MA, who comes from the same region as MI, confirms that there is only one internet tower in the region, that is in the city center.

Although the subjects in this study are categorized as advance users of internet, they are only four students who admit that they prefer to read English article than Bahasa Indonesia. However, all of them are agree that internet helps them learn English. Student IR and MI use the internet to help them learn grammar and writing, because it provides examples. Meanwhile, YY and MM argue that they use google translate a lot to help them reading books. Further, when the researcher interviewed them and were asked the first activity that they did when they are connected with the internet, 7 out of 8 students answered checking their social media, such as WhatApps and Facebook. Student RS who confessed that he only had one Facebook account and one WhatApps account, surprisingly loves reading English article. When he was asked how he distinguished between true and hoax information, he said that he first read the official websites, which are written in English. *Researcher* : “How do you validate the information?”

RS : “First, I search the official website and most of them are English. Next, I read other webs that are mentioned by the article to compare the info”

However, student MI answered that he asked his friends and sometimes asked teachers when he wanted to validate the information. Students who are already in the third semester, student MA and MD, prefer journal to validate the information. However, they had limited access to reputable journal. Most of the subjects state that they have no difficulty in using internet, but mostly for social media usage. Only one student who knew about online news, such as The New York Times, but others did not even know any of it. Student MI measured his ability to use the internet 5 out of 10. When he was asked whether it is possible if the lecturers assign task using the internet, such as download learning material in the repository, make vlog, write blog, or send email, he answered that it is okay as long as the lecturers teach him to do it. Student IR and AL also confirmed that they need to be taught how to do the task using internet prior to the assignment. IR mentioned that she sometimes could not make precise keywords choice that it took some time to find the correct information.

The facilities provided by campus become major consideration if the lecturers and students want to maximize the use of internet. Student MD said that her lecturers integrate the internet in her class by having an online course, however she found no internet connection in the classroom that she could not open the learning video.

Conclusion

Students basically know how to use the internet, mainly for social media. However, they still need some assistance to make use of internet for educational purpose. Teachers should be aware that they need to guide and give clear instruction on what the students have to do with the internet. Teachers should also regard the facilities as the main consideration.

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