



How to Enlarge Students' Literacy Culture in the Digital Era?

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Abstrak

Kebiasaan membaca masyarakat Indonesia masih rendah. Alih-alih membaca, aplikasi game di ponsel dan media sosial mengambil alih perhatian siswa daripada membaca. Untuk mengatasi tantangan tersebut, diperlukan strategi untuk meningkatkan literasi budaya siswa di era digital. Penelitian ini bermaksud untuk mendeskripsikan berbagai elemen yang mempengaruhi keterampilan membaca pemahaman, serta taktik yang sejalan dengan upaya meningkatkan kebiasaan membaca siswa di era digital. Metode kualitatif diterapkan dalam penelitian ini. Sample dari penelitian ini merupakan lima orang mahasiswa jurusan bahasa Inggris di Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara. Peneliti mengumpulkan data dengan melakukan wawancara kemudian mengkaji secara metodis dengan menggunakan teori Miles dan Huberman yang terdiri dari transkrip hasil wawancara, mereduksi data dengan memilih poin utama dan menentukan tema, menyajikan data, dan menjelaskan data. Berdasarkan hasil temuan, ada banyak strategi bagi siswa untuk meningkatkan budaya literasi mereka di era digital, seperti memilih bahan bacaan yang menarik dan menanamkan kesadaran pada pembaca bahwa membaca sangat penting dalam kehidupan dan memiliki komunitas membaca.

Kata kunci: literasi, budaya, membaca, era digital.

Abstract

The reading habits of Indonesians remain low. Instead of reading, game apps and social media will take over as the primary reading medium on mobile phones. To tackle this challenge, strategies to improve students' cultural literacy in the digital age are required. This study intends to describe a variety of elements influencing reading comprehension skills, as well as tactics that are consistent with efforts to enhance students' reading habits in the digital era. The qualitative method was applied in this study. The samples of this study were five University students of English majors at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra. The researchers collected the data by doing interview and then examined in a methodical manner using Miles and Huberman's theory that consist of transcribing the interview result, reducing the data by selecting the main point and determining the theme, presenting the data, and explaining the data. According to the finding results, there are numerous strategies for students to improve their literacy culture in the digital era, such as choosing reading material that is interesting and instilling awareness in readers that reading is very important in life and having a reading community.

Keywords: literacy, culture, reading, digital era.

INTRODUCTION

Sari and Pujiono describe literacy as a person's language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing, that are used as a means of communication in order to accomplish their goals. While literacy is defined narrowly as the ability to read and write (Teale & Sulzby, 1986:4 ; Grabe

& Kaplan, 1992:7 ; and Graff, 2006:5), in the academic world, a literacy culture is necessary to ensure the educational process's success, as literacy is the first step in the learning process that assists students in acquiring information and knowledge. As a result, literacy and education are inextricably linked. By establishing a strong literacy culture, a country may generate high-quality resources. As a result, the establishment of a literacy culture in Indonesia will undoubtedly contribute to the development and advancement of the Indonesian country.

In today's era of globalization, where technology has advanced at a breakneck pace, all activities, including literacy, are dependent on technology, as digital technology has become an integral part of the world of education (Benson & Kolsaker, 2015: 318) and the internet has become ingrained in daily life (Kurnianingsih, et al., 2017:62). As a result, digital literacy is a critical talent for instructors and students to grasp at the moment, particularly in the realm of education as a means of developing the learning process. Because digital literacy enables someone to access information from all around the world. This, of course, facilitates students' and teachers' quests for knowledge.

Paul Gilster coined the phrase "digital literacy" in Shopova (2014: 29), defining it as an individual's understanding and competence to use technology and digital facilities precisely and effectively. This indicates that anyone with digital literacy skills is expected to be capable of efficiently utilizing, accessing, managing, and analyzing digital information. It is capable of generating fresh knowledge and communicating with a large number of people. When it comes to defining digital literacy, some experts define it as the relationship between the abilities and competences required to use the internet and digital technologies effectively.

As Falloon, G. (2020:6) states, digital literacy entails the integration of several forms of literacy, including information technology literacy, information literacy, technological literacy, media literacy, and visual literacy, all of which have assumed new and increasingly important roles in the digital environment. Additionally, digital literacy is the capacity to effectively use and analyze digital resources, tools, and services and to incorporate them into lifelong learning processes in order to develop successful communication mastery abilities (Bhatt, de Roock, and Adams, 2015:480). According to the experts' statements, digital literacy is the capacity to manage, sort out the appropriate applications to use, and have a thorough comprehension of the substance of digital information. According to Mayes and Flower in Yuniawatika & Kurniawan (2018:285), digital literacy can be introduced to children by the family from an early age and progressively.

When pupils are learning, the majority are less active and conversational. They simply copy and paste without rereading the required assignments. Students cannot recount the outcomes of their work because many current pieces of information may be retrieved fast and readily via the internet. Additionally, students frequently ask questions before carefully reading the assignment instructions, even though the solutions to their queries are stated in the task instructions section. This demonstrates that literacy rates remain extremely low in the digital era. As a result, the researchers wish to do research on techniques for fostering a literacy culture in the digital era, as seen through the eyes of students at the Islamic State University of North Sumatra.

METHOD

The researchers utilized qualitative approach in this study because they wanted to describe a variety of elements affecting students' reading comprehension skills and tactics, which aligns with attempts to enhance students' reading habits in the digital era. According to Bogdan and Taylor in Moleong (2006:6), a qualitative approach is a method for generating descriptive data that includes both spoken and written language as well as observed human behavior. Five students majoring in English at the State Islamic University of North Sumatera were the subjects of this study. The data were gathered through interviews and then examined in a methodical manner using Miles and Huberman's theory (2014; 79). The following diagram illustrates the data analysis steps.

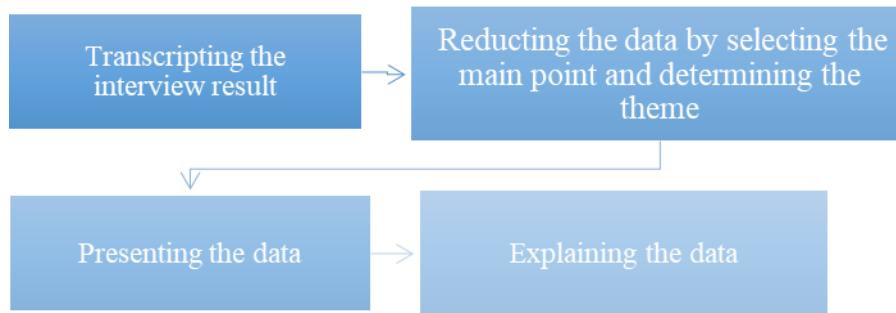


Diagram 1: Miles and Hubberman's procedure

After completing all processes, the researchers choose and assessed a sample of respondents' responses for inclusion in the research findings and discussion

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The need of digital literacy has a beneficial effect on life since it enables individuals to readily get all necessary information and communicate with everyone on the planet. Not only that, but digital literacy helps a person develop critical thinking skills by allowing them to compare the information they see and read. If a someone possesses adequate digital literacy, he or she will be able to sort through the information collected and transmitted via the internet. As we all know, there is a lot of bogus news floating about in cyberspace at the moment, making it difficult to discern between right and incorrect if we lack enough digital literacy. Along with falsehoods, the internet is rife with hate speech, extremism, and fraudulent enterprises.

On the other hand, the researchers discovered three techniques for enhancing students' literacy cultures in the digital era after evaluating the data. The following strategies will be discussed:

1. Choosing reading material that is interesting

According to the interviews, the majority of the participants believed that in order to instill the habit of reading, they needed to start by reading something that piqued their interest and that they liked, because reading materials that appeal to students will motivate students to read books seriously, which will motivate students to read books seriously. It will help children with their reading comprehension. This is exemplified by the quotes below:

“Reading that is packed with interesting themes, in my opinion, will pique the readers' curiosity and entice them to read it. (Excerpt 1, interview)

“I like reading webtoons or novel on apps, but i always look at the topic or tittle first, if it's interesting then i'll read it but if i dont find a novel that interst me i wont read it i do it every night before sleep and i think it has become my habit (Excerpt 2, interview)

In this case, researchers took three statements from the five participants interviewed by the researchers. According to the two statements above, everyone responded that an interesting topic was one of the criteria that prompted them to read it. Everyone selects diverse reading materials, such as novels and webtoons, implying that people select intriguing reading materials when reading something. As teachers or lecturers, we might be able to provide teaching materials packaged in the form of novels or webtoons that correspond to the material to be studied on an online platform, so that when teachers provide interesting reading materials, it can improve students' reading literacy culture in this digital era.

2. Instilling awareness in readers that reading is very important in life

Instilling in readers the importance of reading is a tactic that can be utilized to enhance literacy culture in the digital era. In this situation, if children are already aware of the importance of reading, they will attempt to begin reading slowly, which will eventually become a habit. According to interview data, most students began to try to read on a regular basis since they recognized there were numerous benefits to reading. This could not be divorced from the influence

of parents and the environment that instilled in them the importance of reading. This remark will be backed up by a representative of the participant's response in the following areas:

"When I was in kindergarten, my teacher always told me that she was brilliant because she read a lot of books, so I've been reading books ever since in the hopes of becoming a smart person like her." (Excerpt 4, interview)

According to the excerpt above, the teacher has implicitly implanted a sense of awareness that reading is vital. He doesn't just utter clichés; he backs them up with his knowledge so that students are encouraged to follow what he does and says. As a result, it may be inferred that instilling a sense of reading awareness can help kids develop reading habits.

3. Having a reading community

In the digital world, having a reading group is an excellent technique for developing a literacy culture. In this situation, students can form groups in apps like Whatsapp, Telegram, and others to discuss and exchange thoughts about books, novels, and news that they have read with their peers. Aside from that, the reading community can remind and even motivate one another when they are too lazy to read, because one of the things that causes someone to be too sluggish to read is a lack of motivation. This assertion is backed by the students' responses during the interview, which are presented below

"At first, I simply followed my friends' lead and joined the reading community group, but after joining, I got encouraged to read since I saw how enthusiastic my friends were about reading."(Excerpt 5, interview)

This statement recognizes that in the digital age, we can form or join a reading group to expand our literacy culture. With a readership, it will push those who were previously lethargic to do it because our surroundings influence what we do.

Reading literacy culture can be revitalized through the use of electronic books on cellphones in the digital era. However, modern innovations such as mobile phones that can be used as a reading medium have been surpassed by game applications and social networking platforms such as Instagram, Tiktok, and others. As a result of this, it is clear that literacy culture in the digital era, particularly in reading, is deteriorating. This is also demonstrated by the observations of various undergraduate English majors during the learning process, particularly when learning from home or online, essentially remote education that makes use of information technology for online or virtual instruction.

CONCLUSION

Several conclusions can be drawn from the previous description, as follows. The younger generation is the target audience to build a reading culture, especially in this digital era, therefore we must provide early awareness of the importance of literacy culture in this digital era, especially in the field of reading. If not then, technological advances will make the younger generation trapped on the wrong path, some strategies that we can do as educators are: choosing interesting reading materials, this can be related to teaching materials, then instilling awareness in readers that reading is very important in life and the last is educators can create a community group of readers so that children are motivated by each other, so that the culture of literacy in the field of reading will increase day by day.

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