

How Indonesian Junior High School Students Comprehend the Reading Text? A Digital Media Literacy Utilisation

Dwi Bambang Putut Setiyadi and Hersulastuti

Abstract

Digital media is currently very familiar with the students' daily activities. However, as one of school policies, most Junior High Schools in Klaten, including SMPN 5 Klaten, prohibit their students from using digital media, specifically Smartphones, in the learning process. The objective of this present study was to describe the improvement of students' ability in comprehending the reading text through digital media literacy. This research applied Classroom Action Research with its cycles. Each cycle was executed through sets of activities consisting of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. By involving the eighth graders of SMPN 5 in Klaten, tests, observations, interviews, and document studies were used to obtain the data, and the data were qualitatively and quantitatively analysed. The results showed that the use of digital media literacy could improve the students' ability in comprehending the texts. The improvement was shown by the increase of the percentage of the students obtaining the mastery criteria stated by the school by 22% in pre-cycle, increased to 63% in the first cycle, and 100% in the second cycle. How their ability in comprehending texts improved by the use of digital media literacy is also discussed.

Keywords: digital literacy, digital media, reading comprehension skills, e-learning media

¿Cómo comprenden la lectura de los textos los estudiantes indonesios de la secundaria? Una utilización de la alfabetización de medios digitales

Los medios digitales están actualmente muy familiarizados con las actividades diarias de los estudiantes. Sin embargo, como una de las políticas escolares, la mayoría de las escuelas secundarias en Klaten, incluido el SMP N5 Klaten, prohíbe a sus estudiantes usar medios digitales, específicamente Smartphones, en el proceso de aprendizaje. El objetivo del presente estudio fue describir la mejora de la habilidad de los estudiantes para comprender la lectura del texto a través de la alfabetización de los medios digitales. Esta investigación utilizó la Investigación-Acción en el aula con sus ciclos. Cada ciclo se ejecutó a través de un conjunto de actividades que consistieron en planificar, actuar, observar y reflexionar. Al involucrar a los alumnos de octavo grado de SMPN 5 en Klaten, se utilizaron pruebas, observaciones, entrevistas y documentos de estudio para obtener los datos y los datos se analizaron cualitativa y cuantitativamente. Los resultados mostraron que el uso de la alfabetización en los medios digitales podría mejorar la habilidad de los estudiantes para comprender los textos. La mejora se mostró por el incremento del porcentaje de estudiantes que obtuvieron los criterios de dominio es-

tablecidos por la escuela en un 22% en el pre-ciclo, se incrementó al 63% en el primer ciclo y al 100% en el segundo ciclo. También se discutió como su habilidad para comprender textos mejoró por el uso de la alfabetización de medios digitales.

Palabras clave: Alfabetización digital, medios digitales, habilidades de comprensión lectora, medios de aprendizaje electrónico.

Introduction

The reading ability of Indonesian students at the international level is classified as low, based on the literacy test by PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) in 2011 and the PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) in 2012 (Wiedarti & Kisyani, 2016, Eds.). In this regard, it is necessary to improve students' literacy skills. To that end, the government has made efforts to improve the literacy capability by conducting the National School Literacy Movement (Gerakan Literasi Sekolah – GLS) which is then called the National Literacy Movement (Gerakan Literasi Nasional – GLN). Literacy activities then become part of students' activities in schools.

This article is focused on the students' ability or capability (literacy) in using the digital media in order to enhance their reading interest in comprehending the various texts. We believe that the students' lack of interest in reading would be solved by improving their digital media literacy; knowledge and ability in using or utilising digital media. We do not only define literacy as the ability in writing, reading, and mathematics, but literacy has now a broad definition that refers to the ability or capability in certain area or aspect, including the digital or electronic media use. We hope that their literacy on digital media will become their learning experiences, especially in how they comprehend the texts in various contents and contexts. We hope that the schools would be concerned with providing their students more digital or electronic media of reading to enhance students' interest in reading.

However, it turns out there are still many schools that lack reading materials, what is more digital or electronic reading materials in the context of learning at Junior High School, specifically digital reading materials provided by the schools. For this reason, it is necessary to provide reading materials not only from printed books, but also electronic reading materials obtained through digital media and at the same time “reduce the cost of using printed books” (Medley-Rath, 2018) and the students' familiarity with such media can improve their skills in literacy, especially for comprehending the reading texts (Pischetola, 2011). Digital media requires other tools in the form of internet networks. With the internet network, digital devices such as computers and smartphones can be used. However, Babarinde, Babarinde, & Dike (2017) suggest that “interesting books are still available and accessible to students. In addition, students must find ways to utilise electronic media to read”. Things that need to be considered in this regard are the age of the child, because 1-4 year olds prefer to read printed books rather than electronic or digital books, specifically printed picture books (Strouse & Ganea, 2017), likewise for children in grades four and five of elementary school, Halamish & Elbaz (2019) and Kao, Tsai, Liu, & Yang (2016) show that children's reading comprehension is better when reading on paper (improving motivation, understanding, and chromatic concepts) rather than on screen, because reading on the

screen (electronic) can interfere with children's understanding, compared to reading on paper (print).

In addition to the implementation of the GLS programme, in the teaching and learning process, various media have also been used by teachers. Among the various media, there are some that have not yet been utilised, namely digital media while still considering the results of research on the age and use of printed reading material. Moreover, research conducted by Hou, Rashid, & Lee (2017) shows that it is not a matter of reading material; printed or electronic, but on the issue "the extent to which text presentations facilitate or hinder the reader's ability to construct cognitive maps that affect the reading process". Indeed, if it is associated with reading comprehension, children have more significant results when reading on paper, however, if it is associated with preferences then children prefer to read on a digital screen (Dahan Golan, Barzillai, & Katzir, 2018). Digital media is currently very familiar in student life, but in the teaching and learning process has not been widely used and this preference can be utilised. It can be said that in this era, digital media has never been separated from student activities, since they were in elementary school. The familiarity of students with the media can be utilised to improve their skills in literacy, especially in understanding reading texts.

For the implementation of the use of these media, the presence of digital media in schools is crucial. The lack of digital media in schools is also an obstacle in this activity. However, the lack of it can take advantage of smartphones that are currently generally owned by students. Thus, the prohibition on carrying a smartphone needs to be reviewed. As long as the smartphone is used as a learning medium, it can be tolerated while using it to prevent dyslexic use in children (He, et al., 2014). The use of newer technology, such as the internet, can also increase students' interaction with a reading text (Peregoy & Boyle, 2013). The advantage of using media also makes students' knowledge increase. Based on his knowledge of all things (knowledge of the world) obtained through the readings contained in digital media, students are expected to be able to more easily understand various kinds of texts, so that they can more easily understand different types of reading.

Based on the description, the problem was formulated: (1) Can digital media literacy improve the skills in comprehending reading texts of junior high school students in Klaten Regency? (2) Does the habit of using digital media make it easier for students to understand reading texts? While the specific objectives of the study are to: (1) reveal increased reading comprehension skills through digital media literacy for junior high school students in Klaten Regency, (2) describe the level of activeness and ease of students in understanding reading text using digital media?

This research has urgency for the development of education and teaching technology, in this case digital or electronic media, which is expected to be an alternative learning model. With digital media literacy, it is also expected to be able to improve students' skills in reading according to the type of text. Because the ability to understand reading is related to understanding knowledge and with digital media literacy, it is hoped that it can improve the digital media literacy rank, not only their reading literacy, of students at the international level. With successful reading, learning can simultaneously support the development of the Indonesian nation's Science, Technology, Social, and Culture (IPTEKSOSBUD).