"Success is in your hand": Digital literacy to support students' autonomous learning in speaking class

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Article Info	Abstract
	The objectives of this study are to obtain a concrete picture of students 'digital literacy mastery in the Transactional Conversation course and to find out the effect of students' digital literacy mastery on the quality of autonomous learning in the Transactional Conversation course. In particular, this study will examine theories on digital literacy and autonomous learning in the Transactional Conversation course. The approach to be applied in this research is interdisciplinary using qualitative methods. The research design implemented in this study is case study. The technique of collecting data uses participatory observation techniques, interviews, and documentation studies. The data validity technique used triangulation, which mainly consisted of source data triangulation, methodological triangulation, and theory triangulation. The results show that there is a relationship between digital literacy mastery and the quality of autonomous learning which in the same time is influenced by students' motivation and belief in terms of oral skill mastery. The role of the lecturer as a facilitator invites students to have the courage to evaluate the quality of their own learning.

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INTRODUCTION

Trends about autonomous learning are being rediscussed in the world of education because of technological advances in the world of digital literacy which allow a person to learn independently through various internet facilities in cyberspace. In various universities both in Indonesia and abroad, learning is not only focused on face-to-face but also on distance learning. In addition to distance learning that serves students remotely, lectures can also be carried out by online learning to refer to learning using the internet and blended learning when learning is mixed between face-to-face and online teaching.

Autonomous learning in language education according to Jack C. Richards (2012) is a principle which provides opportunities for learners to be more independently responsible for what they learn and how they learn it. It is said that autonomous learning can make students more focused and can get better learning outcomes. This is because there is no coercion from the instructor on what learners should learn and how learners should learn it.

The digital literacy skills of students in the era of distance learning should be researched because most students who enroll in Indonesian public universities assume and expect face-to-face learning where lecturers provide material and students understand and practice in class. Learning using digital methods is still new for Indonesian's students and lecturers since the implementation seems suddenly obliged because of the covid-19 pandemic. However, learning using internet should be more helpful for students in terms of application and theory. The role of the teacher is a bridge for the uncertainty and confusion of learners when trying to find sources of knowledge independently in cyberspace.

Digital literacy skills according to Eshet-Alkalai (2004) are not just about certain software mastery nor about operating certain digital communication tool; beyond that, it also includes complex cognitive, motor, social, and emotional abilities including understanding complex instructions on internet pages and evaluating information from the internet pages. Abundant of information presented on the internet requires filters to ensure the validity of knowledge given. Mistakes in understanding an instruction in cyberspace can lead to misunderstandings in interpreting the science or broader the information contained in the internet.

Since the beginning of 2020 in particular, the world of education has been faced with the challenges of distance learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic which requires teachers/ lecturers and students to learn from home using internet. Of course, this requires education activists and students to have digital literacy skills that are pursued individually through experience. The problem is, with the abundance of information on the internet, and the lack of preparation for educators and those being educated for distance education, it requires a conscious personal effort to research and filter the information that is widely circulating on the internet. Thus, the need for digital literacy mastery, specifically, the ability to understand and sort out the sources of knowledge provided online and use those sources legally is needed by both students and lecturers.

At Universitas Negeri Semarang, since about a decade ago, online learning has actually started with the introduction of Elena, which facilitates student e-learning. In the last three years, learning using the online method has been obliged by the policy to conduct online lectures at at least 4 lecture meetings. While, the rest of meeting can be done face to face. The university named this activity as blended learning. Online lectures itself can be conducted by providing online material, face-to-face via video conferencing and online assignments with multiple choice and descriptions.

In the English Department, there are various courses, both theoretical and practical. For the English Education Study Program in particular, in addition to theoretical material about pedagogy and language, there are also materials that are skills based, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Especially in speaking lectures, students' digital literacy skills are not yet fully known because of the lack of learning activities in this course to be able to be conducted online. Lectures still tend to practice speaking with performance and practicing roles during class. For this reason, when the online lecture obligation is enforced, the activities provided by teachers or lecturers to students are still limited to recording activities or uploading video conversations between students on the UNNES online page. This activity is sufficient as an introduction to online speaking activities, but it does not yet support autonomous learning which should be accepted by students through this online learning effort.

In this study, researchers aim at finding out students' digital literacy skills in transactional conversation classes and how the digital literacy skill of the student plays a significat role in maximizing the students' autonomous learning efforts. The problem to be examined in this study is a novelty because the previous researches available which have discussed a lot about the relationship between

autonomous learning and digital literacy are not yet discussing any proofs about relationship between the digital literacy and autonomous learning in the area of oral teaching and learning, especially transactional conversation. Thus, this study is conducted to obtain a concrete picture of students 'digital literacy mastery in the Transactional Conversation course and to determine the effect of students' digital literacy mastery on the quality of autonomous learning in the Transactional Conversation course.

Digital Literacy Skills in Language Learning

Digital competence and digital literacy in universities are increasingly being discussed because of the widespread use of blended learning or online learning in universities. Martin & Grudziecki (2006) define digital literacy as an individual's awareness, attitude, and ability to appropriately use digital tools and facilities to access, organize, and evaluate digital resources to learn new knowledge and reflect on the process.

Chan, Churchill, and Chiu (2017) have researched digital literacy learning in Higher Education by introducing a method called Digital Storytelling. Chan, et. al. conducted a study by examining three (3) participants, namely Cindy, Rita, and Alex. Those three subjects were students in Multimedia Technology and Applications class who had been selected by purposive sampling. The research objective is to find out how students in higher education develop digital literacy skills through an activity called Digital Storytelling. As a result, this approach succeeded in developing students' abilities in digital competence, digital use, and digital transformation. Pedagogically, research also shows that this approach is successful in increasing students' willingness to learn, motivation in learning, including the ability to make narrative stories through narrated videos.

Autonomous Learning in Language Learning and Teaching

Autonomous learning in language is a new thing. Autonomous learning has been a subject matter in the field of language, especially English since the 1990s when Nunan in 1997 introduced the five stages of the autonomous learning model, namely learner action/ awareness, involvement, intervention, creation, and transcendence. Learners are believed to have succeeded in becoming independent learners after they have the awareness to learn, they involve themselves in learning, they have critical thinking for certain learning, they have an intention to try new innovation by creating new things, and finally they have the ability to master the material being studied.

Benson (2006) coherently and in detail has explained the development of the study of autonomous learning in language learning. Benson said that the development of autonomous learning in English is closely related to the communicative approach in English and its relationship with socio-cultural theory where a person can learn language on their own because of technological developments and the desire to master the language.

Autonomous learning is defined and closely associated with the independence of a learner, namely "learner independence", "self-direction", and "independent learning" (Masouleh & Jooneghani, 2012). Autonomous learning is then the ability of a learner to independently learn and strive to master the desired knowledge. Although, some experts had argued about the role of teachers in autonomous learning, in fact, until now, autonomous learning is often still associated with goals or indicators of learning success. Kumaradivelu (2006) states that the role of the teacher in autonomous learning in the classroom is as a motivator, a guide for students, and a facilitator for students so that what is learned is effective, efficient, and right on target. Thanasoulas (2000) added that autonomous learning can be achieved more quickly if learners have the awareness to (1) evaluate their own learning abilities, (2) dare and consciously always record their own learning progress, and (3) communicate actively and persuasive with the facilitator.

Digital Literacy in Autonomous Learning in Transactional Conversation Courses

The current demand for distance learning, online learning, and so on, directly or indirectly directs students or learners to become autonomous learners. Even though the material has been presented online by the teacher or facilitator, the limitations in face-to-face meetings force learners to interact more with the virtual world in looking for supporting sources and looking for other learning sources.

The study of digital literacy and/ or autonomous learning in speaking or conversation courses is rarely done. It can also be said that the source of literacy is still rarely found. In essence, learning to speak includes many factors, namely fluency which contains contractions, vowel reduction, elision, etc., pronunciation or accuracy in pronouncing words, intonation, and other elements (Brown, 1994).

In the English class, several variations of learning activities are carried out to train students' fluency in speaking. As stated in Lazaraton (2001), activities in learning to speak generally include discussion, giving speeches, role playing, and conversation. Although, it does not rule out many other activities that are often carried out in class.

Risdianto, et al. (2019) conducted a study on the possibility of implementing autonomous learning in speaking classes, namely by teaching drama to learners or college students. With the demand for students to master drama scenarios, students will independently learn how to pronounce vocabulary, intonation, and pronunciation.

CONTEXT INFORMATION

This study was conducted in English Department of Universitas Negeri Semarang specifically on the teaching speaking. Teaching speaking in English Department of Universitas Negeri Semarang usually conducted on a practical basis. It means the students will take turn in practicing speaking in class and will get a direct feedback after practicing. It based on the belief that learning oral skill will be more effective when the students able to implement what they know directly by talking to their friends in English, and that they will receive feedback as the source of oral skill improvement. With the covid-19 virus outbreak, since March 2020, students are obliged to attend their classes online through several virtual teaching platforms, i.e. Zoom, Google Meet, Jitsi, etc. and some moodle based teaching platforms including the one provided by the university named UNNES' Elena (E-Learning platform owned and developed by Universitas Negeri Semarang). The problem arose when Transactional Conversation as one of course subject taught in the second semester required students to keep practicing English yet the fact that the students are not able to meet face to face to practice with friends become one of the boundaries. One attempt done by the lecturers was to ask students to practice in virtual class. It works for some students with good internet access, but it did not quite work for those with limited access to the internet. Thus, one way to make students keep practicing is by giving them task to listen to some videos and give assignments to them to record their own speaking. Here, the responsibility for the success of the speaking class did only lay on the teachers' responsibility, but also on the students' themselves. Finally, when it comes to give grade to the students, the variety of abilities and skills are shown. Some students who had an average skill in speaking in the beginning of the speaking class, suddenly is improved in terms of speaking ability and some are in constant ability. The researchers come up with the idea of creating this study to check whether the ability and motivation of students in doing self study by becoming an autonomous learner does give impact to the succeed of the students in producing oral skill.

METHODS

The data collection technique applied in this study used participatory observation techniques, interviews, and documentation study. The participatory observation technique was chosen because the researcher was involved as a research subject because the researchers were lecturers of the Transactional Conversation Course in the class to be studied. Kawulich (2005) states that participatory observation allows researchers to participate as subjects and simultaneously observe the object under study. This is used to obtain a deeper understanding of the object of research being researched. After collecting data through participatory observation techniques, interviews were conducted to complete the data. attending Transactional Conversation course. In an effort to complement the data from the results of observations and interviews, it will be seen that documentation relating to the teaching and learning process and related to research theory.

Data analysis techniques in this study will apply the descriptive qualitative used by Nasution (1996) in analyzing natural learning phenomena. Likewise, such data analysis in the writings of Miles and Huberman relates to learning in the context of educational psychology (See Miles and Huberman in Rohidi, trans. 1992). Further in analyzing the data, interactive model analysis which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/ verification are implemented in this study. The main data to be analyzed is the application of students' ability in digital literacy and autonomous learning. Data which was analyzed were portfolio of student work results during the research process, as well as the results of interviews and observations, all of which is linked with Digital Literacy and Autonomous Learning theories.

The Questionnaires

This study conducted on a qualitative basis. Here, the questionnaire is important since the analysis is based on the questions given to the interviwees. The questions are related to how students master the students' literacy, including what media they use to search on material related to speaking. The second question is related to the influence of students' ability in digital literacy and how it impacts to their motivation for becoming an autonomous learners, the last one is related to students' own belief and motivation for they need to uphold during the online learning as they have to find learning sources themselves to keep up with the materials and to make sure that their ability on speaking is upgraded though they might not have peers to practice English Conversation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Mastery of Student Digital Literacy

Students' mastery of digital literacy in learning to speak, especially transactional conversation subject, was researched starting with asking students' general opinions about what the students' definition of mastery of digital literacy was. Even though the answers of the students differed in the way they express their statements, it can be concluded that as many as 20 students had an understanding that mastery of digital literacy was related to the ability of students to find learning resources on the internet and understand the contents of knowledge pages on the internet. Source 1 (S1), Source 7 (S7), Source 15 (S15) said that:

"S1: Literasi digital itu seperti melek digital. Artinya bisa menggunakan internet. Bisa mencari sumber untuk belajar.
S7: Literasi digital itu seperti paham dengan website-website yang ada di internet-internet. Mencari internet untuk belajar. Mencari internet untuk upload-upload tugas untuk belajar.
S15: Literasi digital itu mengerti dengan internet, isinya internet, dan cara menemukan sumber-sumber untuk belajar sendiri. Karena sekarang kan online. Jadi harus belajar sendiri dan juga dosen kadang memberi link. Kemampuan untuk buka link, mengumpulkan tugas."

"S1: Digital literacy is like digital literacy. This means that you can use the internet. Can find resources to learn.
S7: Digital literacy is like understanding websites on the internet. Search the internet to study. Search the internet to upload assignments for study.
S15: Digital literacy means understanding the internet, the content of the internet, and how to find sources for self-study. Because now it's online. So you have to study on your own and the lecturer sometimes provides a link. Ability to open links, collect assignments. "

From the example of the interview results above, it can be concluded that students already understand what is meant by digital literacy.

The definition of digital literacy according to students is students' ideas and ideas about what they understand about digital literacy and not the explanation they receive in class considering that distance learning is a sudden activity that inevitably has to be done in learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Knowing the explanation from the students, then they were asked how far the students' mastery of digital literacy was. What is unique here is the fact that no student can confidently measure their own digital literacy skills. So that the answer given is an answer to a description of what students can do, such as: opening websites, looking for links and websites based on keywords on Google, olinks provided by lecturers, collecting assignments according to the links given. Referring to the notion of digital literacy according to Martin & Grudziecki (2006) defines digital literacy as an individual's awareness, attitude, and ability to appropriately and appropriately use digital tools and facilities to access, organize, and evaluate digital sources for learning new knowledge and reflecting on the process, it can be concluded here that students already understand and have an understanding of digital literacy.

On the questions related to how students master the students' digital literacy, including what media they use to search on material related to speaking, most students answered that they did not have any direct intentions to master a certain ability on digital literacy. Student number 8 for example, mentioned that his willingness to open his laptop, browse on some websites, youtube links, or social

media was because of his attempt to finish the assignments given by the lecturers well. Another answer from student number 20 for example, mentioned that his ability was from the discussion he had before with his pears through WhatsApp chat. When they decided to do a certain assignment, then they decided to follow a certain topic of speaking, he and his pears decided to browse as much as video sources to be used as examples so they can finish their work. From there, it will be hundreds of links, and these links will connect one website to another websites. When the topic is interesting, he can indirectly learn from the content that he saw and heard.

About the websites that the students usually visited to support their oral skills, the students agree to mentioned Youtube as their top choice in finding learning sources. In youtube, almost all contents that the students were searching were available, starting from the video-taped lessons about certain English expressions taught in Transactional Class up to the example of assignments of previous students or students from other universitites. Student number 7 mentioned that he enjoys to surf on youtube because not only the content that explaning and providing example about certain expressions in teaching speaking, but some similar assignments are provided so they can get insights from the sample they found on youtube on how to start formulating their ideas and do their own assignments. Some other sources were websites from big Language Courses like British Council which actually provided with some video examples of conversation in English which also can be used in this course. The rest are some social media like facebook or twitter where some students were trying to connect themselves and communicate with native speakers.

The Influence of Digital Literacy and Its relation to Autonomous Learning

The effect of digital literacy and its relation to autonomous learning is also discussed in this study. It was asked by researchers about the influence of digital literacy and autonomous learning. Before discussing its effects, it was asked about autonomous learning according to students. Students understand autonomous learning as self-learning, independent learning, and there are some students (S3, S6, S13, S19) who do not know what autonomous learning is. In relation to the influence of digital literacy and autonomous learning, it is conveyed that the ability to search for material on the internet helps students to learn independently. "S5: I go to the internet, search the web to study on my own."

It was actually not understood by students that what they were doing when attempting to browse and learn from the internet was an act of digital literacy enhancement and that when they were studying by themselves was actually an autonomous learning activity. What they were aware was that they wanted to be succeed in their study by doing the assignments as perfect as possible and submitting assignments on time.

However, among the students being interviewed, there were some students who were actually enjoyed and liked to hear native speakers speaking. Their intention to be one of the native speakers and to be as fluent as them, led them to browse deeper and learned as much as possible about English eventhough they have no assignments to do (S5, S7). Here, actually, the students belong to the outstanding students. Their good marks were not only shown in speaking classes but also other classes like grammar, reading, and writing. Their digital literacy was developed because they could understand instructions provided in the internet and their hobby in mastering and understanding native speakers of English makes them one step ahead nearer to what so called as autonomous learner, to be able to indepentlu learn and be succeed in mastering the learning itself.

On the other hand, for students with lower grade in transactional conversation, the activity to autonomously learn the teaching material was rarely done. The act of enhancing digital literacy is possible when the students are active in surfing or browsing some materials online in the internet. However, some students are rarely do so because they only read the dialogue provided by their peers when doing the assignment of transactional conversation. His peer was the one trying to 'cultivate' the internet, meanwhile, he is just waiting for the dialogue and read that for video assignment purposes. He mentioned that the assignment was for peers to do together. His friend must need him to be the peers, and his friend is smarter. Thus, he convinced that he will be able to do the assignment just by reading the dialogue provided by his friend. When researchers try to look at the grade this student got last semester, it shows that his grade was not as good as his other classmates in terms of pronunciation and fluency.

The Relationship between Autonomous Learning and Motivation and Belief in English Learning

Here, the questions are related to students' motivation and belief in English Learning, especially speaking skill. Some students who are succeed in achieving high score in Transactional Conversation were actually belief that they have to speak with native to be able to become a fluent English speaker. These motivations and beliefs let them to volunteerily looking for peers from other countries through some social media and to be friend with them in order to keep sending chats using English. On the other hand, for students who were not successful in achieving good score in speaking were less motivated because they are not confident enough in delivering oral English. It is influenced by their belief that English will be understandable when the grammar used is correct. As a result, when the students feel that they are not mastering English grammar very well, they choose not to speak because they are afraid that their interlocutors will find them not understandable.

Most of the students mentioned that they knew that to be succeed in achieving grades or mastering English skill was by doing independent works, however some students are not doing so because they are less motivated. With the current situation, since the covid-19 outbreak requires students to learn from home, students also feel confused on how to start learning which cause them stuck in doing nothing. Some other students feel burdened with some house works and to help their parents to work. They argue that learning independently requires time to study alone and not to be disturbed or burdened with other businesses.

From the interview that had been conducted related to students' own belief and motivation they need to uphold during the online learning, we found that the best motivator is actually the assignment itself. The feeling of insecurity and afraid of being failed in speaking class has given them motivation to learn from many sources as the belief that teaching and learning online is not optimal. Students are aware that they have to find learning sources themselves to keep up with the materials and to make sure that their ability on speaking is upgraded though they might not have peers to practice English Conversation directly or offline.

The integral part which cannot also be separated from the existence of autonomous learning and the one which impacts motivation of the students is internet connection. In the era of online learning, we indeed cannot separate ourselves with the internet connection. Here, most all of the students mentioned that the availability of internet connection actually play a significant part in making the success of autonomous learning. The students mentioned that when the internet was too difficult to access, then they have no choice rather to stop learning. Having internet connection is in line with providing themselves money to buy the credit for data connection. It means when there is no internet connection, then there is no learning. For some students who believe that successful learning needs sacrifation, they will go downtown or to public area which provides students with free wifi. Their belief says that success will never come without any sacrifation (S2, S16).

Discussion

The relationship between autonomous learning and motivation and belief in learning is the most important point we get from this research. We can conclude that students who have good grades in transactional conversation courses have the will or motivation and a belief in themselves that they have to learn to be better, especially in the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak when learning is conducted full online. On the other hand, students who have lower grades in transactional conversational subjects have less motivation to learn to speak autonomously. Self-study is very important especially for learning to speak because speaking is a skill that can be achieved when it is practiced frequently.

To support students' mastery of the material, and to be able to learn more autonomously, the role of the lecturer as a facilitator is needed. Kumaradivelu (2006) states that the role of teachers in autonomous learning in the classroom is as a motivator, a guide for students, and a facilitator so that students know how to learn effectively, efficiently, and on target. Meanwhile, for students, in order to become autonomous learners, they must be learners who can evaluate their own abilities, be brave and honest in recording personal experiences of their independent learning activities, as well as actively and persuasively in communicating with the facilitators.

In its relation to the success of autonomous learning for students in online teaching era, it turns out that even the teachers' instruction is important. It is essential to give students assignments that allow students to learn independently and also which can motivate them to learn more and deeper. As it was discussed in the finding section, most students felt the need to learn by themselves and to find many sources when they think they want to succeed in doing the assignments or tasks provided by the lecturers. Therefore, it is important to make sure that assignments given by lecturers

are not only act as an obligation for students but also a lead for them to get better understanding of a certain topic or teaching material. It was mentioned by Johnson and Aragon (2003) that educators must see teaching and learning as means of knowledge construction and discovery, rather than seeing it as knowledge transfer as the students only act as passive receivers. Thus, in giving assignment, lecturers should think of the activity which can motivate students to be more advance in terms of digital literacy which will then let them to become a more autonomous learner.

From the students' perspectives, autonomous learning should also come from students' own intention and belief in which success is in their own hand; that the lecturers or other parties cannot take part in the way students want to maximize themselves in cultivating their potential. While leacturers have play their parts in giving a more motivational assignments and tasks, students should motivate themselves to belief in the success that they will reach when they are learning automously. As mentioned by Kitsantas (in Steiner, 2016), "to be successful in the academic challenges they will face, college students must gobeyond surface-level learning, taking ownership of learning by choosing and using the best resources and strategies for the task, as well as reflecting upon and monitoring their progress toward learning goals". It needs two dancers to play a tango. Thus, the role of lecturers and students are integral to ensure the autonomous learning in speaking class to happen.

Back to what has been mentioned by Martin & Grudziecki (2006) about digital literacy as an individual's awareness, attitude, and ability to appropriately use digital tools and facilities to access, organize, and evaluate digital resources to learn new knowledge and reflect on the process. With the online learning that has been widely done in all over the globe, we think there will be more attempts from the government or policy maker to try implementing online learning as part of education system. Thus, this ability of digital literacy will be beneficial of future generation.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion from the research carried out is that there is a mutually influencing relationship between students' digital literacy mastery and the quality of student autonomous learning. Autonomy does not mean releasing students to study independently, but lecturers still play a role as facilitators. To support the success of autonomous learning, motivation of students to learn more and their belief of success should require independent learning, are very important. Thus, lecturers have to provide students with a motivational assignment which can direct students to start an independent learning, while students have to be confident and set a mindset that success will be sure when they maximize their potentials to learn autonomously.

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