

THE UTILIZATION OF DIGITAL LITERACY IN CHARACTER-BASED ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

Salmia Syarifuddin¹, Abd. Madjid², Irmawaty Hasyim³

^{1,3}English Education Study Program of Universitas Muslim Indonesia, Indonesia.

²Communication Science, Universitas Muslim Indonesia, Indonesia.

Email: salmia.syarifuddin@umi.ac.id

Abstract: The purpose of this research is to understand how digital literacy is utilized in English language learning within the Faculty of Letters, Universitas Muslim Indonesia (UMI). In addition, this research also aims to provide solutions to the problems and obstacles faced by English lecturers when operating the features on the Learning Management System (LMS) Kalam UMI while still adhering to character education. This research uses a quantitative method with a survey approach. The population in this study consists of lecturers in the English Literature and English Education programs at the Faculty of Letters, UMI. The research sample uses total sampling. The research sample includes lecturers from these programs who teach English both within the Faculty of Letters and across faculties at UMI, who have been using the LMS Kalam UMI for several semesters in the teaching process. The findings of this research indicate that the difficulties faced by lecturers in implementing learning through the LMS Kalam UMI lie in the use of web/live conference features and student reports in the LMS Kalam UMI. The research results show that the utilization of digital literacy in English language learning within the Faculty of Letters, Universitas Muslim Indonesia, has been implemented massively and comprehensively in the learning process.

Keywords: *digital literacy, character education, English language learning, e-learning, Learning Management System*

INTRODUCTION

Starting from the concerns about the implementation of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, and of course with the demands of the current era, it is very necessary for higher education institutions such as the Universitas Muslim Indonesia (UMI) Makassar to have an independent Learning Management System (LMS) that becomes the pride of the university. UMI, as the only private university outside Java Island accredited with excellence and the largest private university outside Java Island, is very capable of having its own LMS. This was proven with the launch of Kalam UMI on Saturday, August 29, LP2S UMI (2020). The presence of LMS Kalam UMI is certainly a breath of fresh air that greatly helps and supports UMI's current vision with the Smart University branding. In addition, the presence of LMS Kalam UMI will inevitably compel the academic community, including lecturers, academic staff, and students, to be able to operate the LMS Kalam UMI.

LMS Kalam UMI provides various features that can assist UMI's academic community in conducting the learning process, ranging from Zoom meetings, Google Meet, material uploads, YouTube channels, assignments, discussion forums, and much more. With the availability of features on the LMS Kalam UMI, it certainly supports the performance of lecturers in the digital age. Currently, lecturers not only have the task of teaching and educating but also serve as content creators, facilitators, and designers of the learning process. This is in line with the statement by Astutik and Hariyati, which states that the role of teachers as sources of learning, facilitators, managers, demonstrators, mentors, motivators, and evaluators must be optimized and integrated with technology, so teachers are also required to actively improve their digital skills Astutik, P., & Hariyati, N. (2021). Therefore, in this digital age filled with constant changes and ever-updating technology, it cannot be denied that the role of lecturers as course designers is becoming increasingly challenging to keep up with technological advancements.

When we engage with the digital world, there are several things that must be considered,

namely digital skills or competencies, digital culture, digital ethics, and security while surfing the digital world. These four components have become areas of competence designed by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, Siberkreasi & Deloitte in (2020). Digital literacy can generally be defined as the ability to use digital media such as iPads, tablets, gadgets, laptops, and other screen-based media that no longer use print media (books or paper). Digital literacy does not automatically replace the importance of traditional (print) literacy as a stage. Thus, digital literacy is more about the ability to read, write, and analyze digital objects that are usually presented on screens rather than in print, Hairul, M. (2017).

In the use of the LMS Kalam UMI, the role of digital literacy certainly has a significant impact on the success of the English language learning process. This is inseparable from the function of language as a communication tool used in the learning process on the LMS Kalam UMI. Therefore, the role of digital literacy is very much needed in the language learning process. This is necessary to build the character of students as the next generation of the nation who are honest, disciplined, patriotic, and, of course, digitally literate to face the digital era filled with information openness that can be accessed wherever there is internet.

The use of features on the LMS Kalam UMI, thankfully, has been widely utilized in the online learning process at UMI. However, there are still many misunderstandings in the use of these features. For example, in accessing independent assignments and quizzes. Students sometimes are not selective and do not pay attention to assignment deadlines, the difference between assignments and quizzes, or digital footprints, and do not maximize the use of features available on the LMS Kalam UMI for completing tasks. In previous research, the researcher conducted a study on the digital literacy of students in the Faculty of Letters. In that research, it was found that the average students were at the medium-low level (54.8%) and medium-high level (42.3%). This indicates that students have a preference for the prosuming function, meaning their skills are at a moderate-low level where they are capable of accessing, understanding usage methods, selecting needs, distributing, and producing in the use of digital media Syarifuddin (2022). Furthermore, for students who are at the level of critical consuming preference, your skills are at a moderate-high level where you are capable of accessing, understanding usage methods, selecting needs, distribution, production, analysis, verification, and evaluation in the use of digital media. On the other hand, lecturers as course designers are also required to utilize the features available in the LMS Kalam UMI so that the learning process runs as optimally as possible and achieves the learning objectives. Therefore, the purpose of conducting this research is to determine the extent of digital literacy utilization in character-based English learning processes on the LMS Kalam UMI.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a survey method. The approach taken in this study employs a descriptive approach, which is research aimed at providing symptoms, facts, or events systematically and accurately regarding the research data. According to Gay & Diehl (1992), the survey research method is a method used as a general category of research that employs questionnaires and interviews (16).

A questionnaire or survey is a technique for collecting data or information by providing a set of questions or statements to respondents in a research study. The questionnaire was given to respondents in digital form (Google Form). In this research, statements are used as questionnaire instruments that are compiled and adapted based on the competency indicators established by the Digital Literacy Activists Network (JAPELIDI). This competency questionnaire will provide information about the utilization of digital literacy in the English learning process at LMS Kalam UMI.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the questionnaire that was distributed to lecturers of the English Education and English Literature Study Programs, there were 17 respondents who filled out the questionnaire, consisting of 41.2% respondents from the English Literature Study Program and 58.8% from English Education.

The results of this research show the level of digital literacy among lecturers in the English Education and English Literature Study Program at LMS Kalam UMI-based character education language learning, which is divided into four categories: Function Consuming (Basic), Function Prosuming (Medium-low), Critical Consuming (Medium-high), and Critical Prosuming (Expert). The level of digital literacy among lecturers is measured based on 10 indicators of digital literacy competence formulated by the Digital Literacy Activists Network (Japelidi).

The first is the ability to access, where 70.6% of respondents are categorized as proficient in digital literacy, 23.5% as intermediate-high, 11.8% as intermediate-low and 0% as basic. In this ability, respondents predominantly fall into the intermediate-low category, where they exhibit preferential critical prosuming, meaning they are capable of accessing, understanding usage methods, selecting needs, distributing, producing, analyzing, verifying, and evaluating in the use of digital media.

The second is the ability to select, where 23.5% are categorized as proficient, 29.4% as intermediate-high, 47.1% as intermediate-low, and 0% as basic. In the ability to select, respondents are more likely to fall into the intermediate-low category, where they exhibit Preverensi Function Prosuming.

The third is the ability to understand, where 47.1% of respondents are at the proficient level, 41.2% at the medium-high level, 11.8% at the medium-low level, and 0% in the basic category. In the ability to select, respondents tend to be at the medium-low level, where at this level respondents have a preference for critical prosuming. Then the fourth is the ability to analyze, where in this ability 17.6% of respondents are at the proficient level, 11.8% at the medium-high level, 70.6% at the medium-low level, and 0% at the basic level. In this ability, respondents are very dominant at the medium-low level, where at this level respondents have a preference for function prosuming.

The fifth ability is the ability to verify, where 11.8% are at the expert level, 11.8% at the intermediate-high level, 52.9% at the intermediate-low level, and 23.5% at the basic level. In the ability to verify, respondents are more dominant at the intermediate-low level. Similar to the previous abilities, at this level, respondents have a preference function for prosuming. The next ability is evaluating. In this ability, 23.5% of respondents are categorized as proficient, 5.9% as intermediate-high, 70.6% as intermediate-low, and 0% at the basic level. In this ability, respondents also fall into the intermediate-low level of preference function prosuming. Next, in the ability to distribute, respondents are more dominant at the intermediate-low level, with 17.6% in the proficient category, 23.5% as intermediate-high, 58.8% as intermediate-low, and 0% in the basic category. In this ability, respondents have a preference function for prosuming. The eighth is the ability to produce, where the data shows that 11.8% of respondents are in the proficient category, 29.4% in the medium-high category, 58.8% in the medium-low category, and 0% in the basic category. In this ability, respondents are predominantly at the medium-low level, where they have a preference function for prosuming. Then, in the ability to participate, 17.6% of respondents are in the proficient category, 11.8% in the medium-high category, 64.7% in the medium-low category, and 5.9% in the basic category. In this ability, respondents are also more dominant in the medium-low category. On the other hand, respondents in the basic category increased by 5.9%. This indicates that the use of the discussion or forum features available in the LMS Kalam UMI is not optimal. In this ability, respondents predominantly fall into the moderate-low category, which means their competence is at the Preverensi Function

Prosuming level. And lastly, the ability to collaborate. In this skill, the data shows that 47.2% of respondents are in the proficient category, 41.2% in the moderate-high category, 11.8% in the moderate-low category, and 0% in the basic category. In this skill, respondents predominantly fall into the proficient level, where they exhibit a preference for critical prosuming.

Overall, the level of digital literacy among students can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Respondents' Digital Literacy Levels

Interval	Category	Percentage
71-100	Proficient	28.7
41-70	Moderately High	22.8
21-40	Moderately Low	45.6
0-20	Basic	2.9

The table above shows the overall digital literacy levels of the respondents. The average respondents are at the moderate-low (45.6%) and proficient (28.7%) levels. This indicates that the respondents possess a preference for function prosuming. This preference is a skill that shows the respondents are at a competency level capable of accessing, understanding usage methods, selecting needs, distributing, and producing in the use of digital media. On the other hand, the preference for critical prosuming (28.7%) is a skill that indicates the respondents are at an advanced level where they are capable of accessing, understanding usage methods, selecting needs, distributing, producing, analyzing, verifying, and evaluating in the use of digital media. Nevertheless, based on the findings of this research, it was found that 2.9% of respondents are at the basic level within the preference of function consuming. This indicates that the respondents are able to access and use the learning features available in the LMS Kalam UMI.

Similar research has also been conducted, focusing on the digital literacy competencies of students in using the features of the LMS Kalam UMI. Students have a preference for functioning prosuming, which means they are proficient in accessing, understanding usage methods, selecting needs, distributing, and producing in the use of digital media Nudiati, D., & Sudiapermana, E. (2020). Thus, the digital literacy competencies possessed by the respondents, in this case, the samples in this research, are aligned. On the other hand, as baby boomers, Generation X, and millennials face the digital era, they must stay updated in honing their skills and competencies in using digital media in the learning process. This is to keep up with Generation Z, as the students or university students being educated today.

As a result of the observations and findings conducted during the online learning process on the LMS Kalam UMI, it has been noted that respondents face certain problems and challenges during the learning process, including

- Availability of internet network
- Differences in weather conditions in the respondents' areas and among different students
- Respondents' ability to use web live conference features (GMeet/Zoom), manage quizzes, and report cards (grades) during the learning process on the LMS Kalam UMI.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the education system in Indonesia has been forced to keep up with the developments in digital technology during the online learning period from the COVID-19 pandemic to the early new normal. Similarly, as a leading private university with superior status, Kalam UMI has become an important part of the learning process at UMI. The existence of Kalam UMI proves that UMI is a smart university with hybrid online and offline learning.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions that can be drawn based on the previous findings and discussions are as follows.

- (1) The level of digital literacy competence of respondents in the character-based English learning process on the LMS Kalam UMI is categorized as low, with a presentation of 45.6%. This indicates that respondents have the preference that demonstrates the respondents' ability level in using digital media to access, comprehend, select, distribute, and produce content.
- (2) The obstacles or difficulties faced by respondents during the English learning process on the LMS Kalam UMI are very diverse. However, broadly speaking, they are related to the use of the grade feature (report card), the use of web live conferences (Google Meet/Zoom), and the organization of quizzes during the learning process on LMS Kalam UMI.

The suggestion that can be made is that both lecturers and students use the LMS Kalam UMI for offline, online, and hybrid learning. This is done to achieve UMI's vision of becoming a world-class university and a smart university ready to face the current digital era. In addition, the research team would like to thank the Research and Resource Institution (LP2S) of UMI, which has provided support and funding to ensure that this research runs smoothly and is completed on time.

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