

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study including the problems that occur in the research context and the gaps presented. In addition, this chapter presents the research problems, purposes, significance of the research, scope and limitation, and definitions of key terms.

A. Research Background

The world is currently transitioning into a digital era where all activities can be carried out in a more sophisticated manner. In general, the digital era is a time of technological advancement from analog to digital in all spheres of life.¹ This shows that Humans today lead a new lifestyle that is inextricably linked to all electronic devices in this digital age. Most human needs can now be met with the aid of technology. Humans have used technology to simplify a variety of tasks and jobs. The development of the digital era will also continue to run without stopping because it is actually the people themselves who expect, ask and demand that everything can be more practical and efficient. This important role of technology has brought human civilization into the digital era.

All areas of life have been significantly impacted by technological advancements and the proliferation of information, including education. The nature of teaching has changed as a result of technology. Essentially, technology is involved in altering the nature of knowledge to develop more innovative, active, communal, and individual ways to create an educational process that is more interactive and successful.

Digital technology, which is now regarded as one of the primary educational media in the 21st century, is currently surrounded by the educational staff in this instance, which consists of teachers and students.² Essentially, technology is involved in altering the nature of knowledge to develop more innovative, active, communal, and individual ways to create an educational process that is more

¹ Julian Fraillon, et al, *Preparing for life in a digital age: The IEA International Computer and Information Literacy Study International Report* (Wellington: Springer Open, 2014), 308.

² Ibid., 310

interactive and successful. In recent years, technology has also been applied in the teaching of foreign language (English) classes. To support their instruction, involve students in the learning process, give real-world examples of the target culture, and connect their classrooms, teachers have combined various forms of technology.

Technology has been used specifically for language learning to support and speed up the educational process.³ Teachers can use a variety of technological tools to support their instruction, motivate and involve students in the learning process, provide actual instances from the target culture, and connect your classes to it. To enhance the language learning experience, teachers enable the use of technological tools to facilitate and mediate language learning for their students. Furthermore, some technological tools give teachers the ability to differentiate instruction and modify homework assignments and classroom activities, which improves the experience of learning a language. Additionally, the proficiency of a certified language teacher who oversees and supports the language learning environment determines the efficacy of any technological tool.

The idea of a study method known as "technology-enhanced language learning" is connected to the topic of using technology to support teaching and learning activities in an EFL class (TELL). TELL is defined as a learning scenario or setting where computers, the internet, and other language learning-supporting technologies are used to facilitate the learning process. In Indonesia, TELL is a good effective choice to be used in situations where Indonesia cannot conduct full online learning, particularly for learning English as a foreign language. By using TELL, English teachers aim to increase the students' interest in, and understanding of, the teaching and learning process. Here, teachers try to fill themselves with the technology skills they need.

Digital technology devices are one of the essential components in the success of the learning process because they are thought to foster the 21st century skills

³ K Kranthi, "Technology Enhance English Learning (TELL)," *International Journal of Business and Management Invention* 6, no. 2 (2017): 33.

needed in this century.⁴ A teacher must therefore be able to incorporate the application of technology to the process of learning and teaching in the 21st century. All educators and students must continue to advance their digital literacy in light of the technology's rapid advancement and its implications for the educational landscape.⁵ Digital literacy is the ability to comprehend and apply a range of technological tools to various contexts.⁶

In order to improve learning quality, support student participation, adjust learning personalization, and foster learning innovation, teachers need to understand the significance of digital literacy. Because using, comprehending, information access, management, gathering, and evaluation from sources based on information and communication technology (ICT) constitutes the core of digital literacy competence.⁷ If all teachers do not become digitally literate, it will become more and more difficult to locate information that is truly useful. In order to support the achievement of science and technology goals, teachers must facilitate the learning of digital literacy. Technology development is anticipated to increase with the use of the internet for learning. As an example of how to recognize and comprehend digital media, the teacher serves as a source of knowledge for all students. It is better to train students to use digital media for the sake of learning because digital is not only a means of playing for students, but is a way to gain more knowledge about the educational system. Consequently, teachers need to be fully adept at imparting language skills using these technologies.

In fact, the ability of teachers to use digital is currently lacking due to the low level of digital use by professional teachers. Teachers who struggle with technology claim that their slow understanding of information and communication technology

⁴ Shifan Thaha Abdullateef, "Remote Learning: Fostering Learning of 21st Century Skills Through Digital Learning Tools," *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)* 7, no. 14 (2021): 191.

⁵ Reza Dashtestani, "English as a Foreign Language – Teachers' Perspectives on Implementing Online Instruction in the Iranian EFL Context," *Research in Learning Technology* 22, no. 1 (2014): 2.

⁶ Oktavian Mantiri, Garth K Hibbert, and Jeanette Jacobs, "Digital Literacy in ESL Classroom," *Universal Journal of Education* 7, no.5 (2019): 1303.

⁷ Niek B Siero, "Guidelines for Supporting Teachers in Teaching Digital Literacy," (Thailand: Master's Thesis University of Twente, 2017), 9.

is caused by their advanced age, and they are rarely even reluctant to use ICT to carry out learning activities. Nearly 20% of teachers, in line with the OECD International Survey of Teaching and Learning (TALIS 2018), feel that more training is urgently needed, and 40% of teachers lack professional development in using technology in learning activities. The majority of teachers appear to support the use of technology, but lack of training is a significant barrier.⁸ This is clearly the second reason for the lack of teachers' ability to process technology in addition to the age factor in the previous discussion. According to the data, almost a quarter (23.3%) of teachers lack training in using technology to teach literacy. When used properly, technology can be a valuable tool in the classroom, so teachers need to know when and how to use it. However, the level of teacher competence in mastering and using digital technology facilities is not solely related to age. This level can be viewed from various social aspects and geographical location of a teacher which is demanded in integrating digital technology in English learning activities at school.

In terms of social aspects, it can be seen from how gender classifies differences in competence. Women had rigor and foresight in finding information and filtering out existing information, while men were skilled in the use of technology.⁹ This is a reality that often occurs to date, so this makes gender a factor that significantly affects teachers' digital literacy levels. Apart from that, another social factor is the difference in school status between public and private schools. The geographical location factor is also very influential in the teacher's digital literacy competence, namely between urban and rural areas. The demographics of the school's location exerted a significant influence on a person's literacy level.¹⁰ In some literature it is also written that in areas that have experienced the zone of underdeveloped areas in Indonesia, there are still many

⁸ Irene Picton, *Teachers' Use of Technology to Support Literacy in 2018. A National Trust Research Report*, (London: National Literacy Trust, 2019), 21.

⁹ Trung Tran et al, "How Digital Natives Learn and Thrive in the Digital Age : Evidence from an Emerging Economy," *Sustainability* 2, no. 9 (2020): 4.

¹⁰ Ming-Te Wang, and Jacquelyn S Eccles, "School context, achievement motivation, and academic engagement: A longitudinal study of school engagement using a multidimensional perspective," *Learning and Instruction* 28, no.9 (2013): 12.

students and a few teachers who do not understand what digital literacy means both in terms of understanding and implementation.¹¹ This is certainly a broad study that is important to find the truth and reality on the ground.

In this study the researchers chose to focus on the competence of English teachers in the context of digital literacy. This is intended to determine the extent to which English teachers know and interact with digital areas known as digital literacy which are used by teachers in learning activities. Because at this point, to support students' understanding of quality information, teachers must understand the importance of digital literacy in education. Besides being simpler, the use of digital media also offers a more accurate media representation.

Based on this complexity, the teacher's digital literacy competence can be used to enable the effectiveness of teaching and learning activities in the classroom or in other positions outside the classroom by using the required technological media facilities. Digital literacy techniques for English teachers are known to play a role in developing English learning achievement, digital literacy is very important for student education, and teachers must be aware of this. The purpose of this study was to determine the level of teacher competence in English class learning at the Islamic high school level in the digital literacy context under review and from various angles through the criteria used in digital literacy elements. Seeing the justification given, the researcher hopes to find out more about the competency level of English teachers in providing detailed and clear digital literacy-based teaching which will be contained in the thesis title "The Investigation of Teachers' Competence in Digital Literacy in The Teaching of English at Islamic Senior High School".

B. Research Problems

Based on the research's background, The issues are stated as follows:

- a. How are the digital literacy levels among English teachers at Islamic Senior High Schools?

¹¹ Mustofa, and Heni Budiwati, *Proses Literasi Digital Terhadap Anak* (Ponorogo: Pustaka Lokal, 2019), 11.

- b. How are the differences between Public-School and Private-School English teachers' levels of digital literacy competence at the Islamic Senior High School level?
- c. How are the differences between male and female English teachers' levels of digital literacy competence at the Islamic Senior High School level?
- d. How are the differences between rural and urban area English teachers' levels of digital literacy competence at the Islamic Senior High School level?

C. Research Objectives

The purpose of doing this research becomes one of the ways to rich the perspective of the study. The purposes to do this research are:

- a. To find out the digital literacy levels among English teachers at Islamic Senior High Schools
- b. To find out the differences between Public-School and Private-School English teachers' levels of digital literacy competence at the Islamic Senior High School level.
- c. To find out the differences between male and female English teachers' levels of digital literacy competence at the Islamic Senior High School level.
- d. To find out the differences between rural and urban area English teachers' levels of digital literacy competence at the Islamic Senior High School level.

D. Research Significance

The purpose of this study is to analyze, determine, and describe how the competence of English teachers at the Islamic high school level is viewed from various angles. Practically, this research has the potential to offer more detail about the current condition of English teachers' digital literacy. This research has the potential to provide great benefits for principals, teachers, students, future researchers, and scientific purposes.

- a. School Leaders

For school leaders, this research can encourage school leaders at the Islamic high school level to pay more attention to the condition of teachers' digital literacy, especially English teachers, and also to make organizational plans for

program implementation and better technology integration in their schools.

b. Teacher

This research is anticipated to be able to improve English teachers' interest and literacy in using technology media in the teaching and learning process. It may also provide a good opportunity for their voices to be heard and their needs for programs to improve their digital literacy and use of technology to be identified.

c. Student

It can also be beneficial for students, in the sense that they can benefit from the more effective use of TELL by their teachers which is applied to learning English to make it more enjoyable.

d. The Next Researcher

Insight and knowledge about the benefits of digital literacy are expected to be added by future research, which will also be used to design the best strategy for the next teacher digital literacy improvement program, specifically for English teachers at the high school level.

e. For scientific purposes

This research can be used as a crucial component of the study of digital literacy and use, as well as lectures that are anticipated to be used as a resource in acquiring knowledge of digital literacy.

E. Research Scope and Limitation

This study focuses on investigations related to the level of digital literacy competence of teachers in learning English in Islamic high schools. The assessment of the English teacher's digital literacy competence is based on the development of a digital literacy element theory which includes four important indicators. In this study, researchers did not focus on one particular research location, but this research involved 13 different schools in Jombang and Blitar districts. From these schools, the researcher obtained research subjects randomly without any specific teacher restrictions in one school through the distribution of online questionnaires in the form of Google forms which were distributed through

the MGMP forum for public school teachers and met directly with the intended teacher for private school teachers. In determining the level of digital literacy competence, the researcher classified the assessment based on the overall competency level for 20 teachers which was calculated based on all indicators as well. The researcher also focused on determining the level of competency through a comparison of public and private school teachers, a comparison of teachers based on gender, and a comparison of teachers based on rural and urban area schools which was determined by how far the school was from the center of Jombang city.

F. Definition of Key Terms

a. Technology

The Greek words "techno" and "logos," from which the word "technology" is derived, which respectively denote science, word, learning, and mental state and willingness, skills, knowledge of ways, rules, and tools. Technology is defined as the result of human work for helping to solve problems faced or facilitate human activities and is expected to improve human performance.

b. TELL (Technology-Enhanced Language Learning)

TELL is a teaching approach that deals with the impact of technology on second language teaching and learning (L2). Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) is the study of how technology is used to teach and learn languages. In other words, the enhancement and facilitation of educational learning come from the use of technology. These technologies could be used interchangeably with Computer Assisted Language Learning.

c. Digital Competence

Digital competence is a set of abilities, skills, and attitudes required for using ICT and digital media to perform tasks, solve problems, manage communication, share information, collaborate, create and share content, and develop knowledge for work, leisure, learning, socializing, consuming, and empowerment.

d. Digital Literacy

The capacity to use and create technology-based content, such as locating and exchanging information, responding to inquiries, interacting with others, and programming computers, is known as digital literacy. It is the confident and critical use of digital information and technology to enhance academic, personal and professional development.