SENIOR ENGLISH TEACHERS' IMPLEMENTATION OF DIGITAL LEARNING IN ENGLISH CLASSES: PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine teachers' practices and challenges in implementing digital learning in English classrooms, including the types of digital learning platforms they use, the challenges they face, and the strategies they use to address them. This study used a qualitative method. The researcher used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions and observations to collect the data. This study was conducted at MAN 1 Purbalingga with four English teachers as the participants. This study used thematic analysis to analyze the data from interviews and observation, the steps were: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing the themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. This study showed that teachers use various digital learning platforms, including Kahoot!, Canva, Google Classroom, and Google Docs. Teachers face several challenges in implementing digital learning, those are technical issues and connectivity problems, limited access to technology, equitable access to technology, and resistance to change. Teachers have implemented several strategies to address these challenges, including collaboration with colleagues and the IT department, attending professional development, alternative offline activities, and troubleshooting. In addition, digital learning offers advantages such as enhanced student engagement, personalized instruction, and interactive learning opportunities. Teachers believe that digital learning has made learning more competitive and enjoyable, allowing students to take control of their learning. The study highlights the importance of ongoing professional development and technical support for teachers to effectively integrate digital learning into their teaching practices.

Keywords : digital learning, practices, challenges, strategies

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji praktik dan tantangan guru dalam menerapkan pembelajaran digital di kelas Bahasa Inggris, termasuk jenis platform pembelajaran digital yang mereka gunakan, tantangan yang mereka hadapi, dan strategi yang mereka gunakan untuk mengatasinya. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Peneliti menggunakan wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan pertanyaan terbuka dan observasi untuk mengumpulkan data. Penelitian ini dilakukan di MAN 1 Purbalingga dengan empat guru Bahasa Inggris sebagai partisipan. Penelitian ini menggunakan analisis tematik untuk menganalisis data dari wawancara dan observasi, langkah-langkahnya adalah: pengenalan data, pembuatan kode awal, pencarian tema, peninjauan tema, pendefinisian dan penamaan tema, dan pembuatan laporan. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa guru menggunakan berbagai platform pembelajaran digital, termasuk Kahoot!, Canva, Google Classroom, dan Google Docs. Guru menghadapi beberapa tantangan dalam menerapkan pembelajaran digital, yaitu masalah teknis dan masalah konektivitas, keterbatasan akses terhadap teknologi, akses yang merata terhadap teknologi, dan resistensi terhadap perubahan. Guru telah menerapkan beberapa strategi untuk mengatasi tantangan ini, termasuk kolaborasi dengan rekan kerja dan departemen TI, menghadiri pengembangan profesional, kegiatan offline alternatif, dan pemecahan masalah. Selain itu, pembelajaran digital menawarkan keuntungan seperti keterlibatan siswa yang lebih baik, instruksi yang dipersonalisasi, dan kesempatan belajar yang interaktif. Para guru percaya bahwa pembelajaran digital telah membuat pembelajaran menjadi lebih kompetitif

dan menyenangkan, sehingga memungkinkan siswa untuk mengendalikan pembelajaran mereka. Studi ini menyoroti pentingnya pengembangan profesional dan dukungan teknis yang berkelanjutan bagi para guru untuk mengintegrasikan pembelajaran digital secara efektif ke dalam praktik mengajar mereka.
Kata kunci*: pembelajaran digital, praktik, tantangan, strategi*

INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution has significantly impacted education by providing accessible learning environments outside traditional classrooms, increasing global access to knowledge (Redhana, 2024). Digital learning platforms and online courses have evolved to include interactive content, videos, simulations, and online tests, making learning more flexible and accessible. Online interactions can operate asynchronously or synchronously, with asynchronous interactions allowing students to access and complete learning materials at their own pace, while synchronous interactions involve real-time interaction between students and teachers.

Digital learning is not intended to replace traditional teaching methods, but rather to supplement and enhance traditional instruction (Ko & Rossen, 2017). Teachers continue to play a crucial role in directing the learning process, giving helpful feedback, and encouraging critical thinking. English teachers in Senior High Schools play an important role in integrating digital learning into their classrooms, as it allows students to practice language skills more interactively and engagingly (Stickler et al., 2020). However, not all teachers are equally ready to integrate digital learning, as some lack the needed skills, knowledge, and confidence, while others face challenges with access to technology, internet connectivity, and digital resources. Innovative methods, such as professional development programs, workshops, and training sessions, can help overcome these challenges.

MAN 1 Purbalingga is a Senior High School that has integrated digital learning into its English classrooms, providing teachers with the resources and support they need to implement digital learning. English teachers have used various digital learning strategies, including instructional software, internet resources, digital learning platforms, and multimedia presentations. Despite these limitations, English teachers at MAN 1 Purbalingga are excited about the potential of digital learning to improve English language instruction. They are eager to expand their skills and expertise in this area.

Previous research on English language teachers' challenges in integrating digital learning into their classrooms highlights the importance of overcoming technical expertise, limited access to technology, and plagiarism concerns. Teachers believe digital games can boost student motivation and language acquisition, but face challenges like limited access and educational usefulness. Technical issues, lack of training, curriculum constraints, and student engagement are key obstacles. Blended learning improves language skills and motivation, but lacks training and technical issues. Teachers' beliefs and practices in implementing digital literacies are influenced by their views on technology's role in teaching and learning. The researcher aims to conduct qualitative research on digital learning in English classes.

Studies have demonstrated that digital learning can improve English language instruction results, boost motivation and engagement among students, and give teachers additional opportunities for professional growth. However, further study is needed on the practices and challenges faced by Senior High School English teachers when using digital learning in their classrooms. This study examines English teachers' practices and challenges in implementing digital learning at MAN 1 Purbalingga, including the types of digital learning platforms that they use, the challenges they face when implementing digital learning, and the strategies they take to overcome these challenges.

METHODOLOGY

This study examined teachers' practices and challenges in implementing digital learning in English classes including the types of digital learning platforms they use, the challenges they face, and the strategies they use to address them. This study used a qualitative method. The researcher used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions and observations to collect the data. This study was conducted at MAN 1 Purbalingga with four English teachers as the participants with a minimum of 5 years of teaching experience, certified status, and digital learning training. The researcher collected the data through semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions and observation. The observation served as secondary data in this study, helping to contextualize the core data collection findings and offer a more thorough understanding of the research problem. This study used thematic analysis to analyze the data from interviews and observation, Thematic analysis involves finding, examining, and summarizing patterns (themes) in data (Braun & Clarke in Heriyanto, 2018). The steps were: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing the themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To make it clearer to be understood, the table below is the overall results from the interview and observation:

Table 1. Interview and Observation Results

No.	Digital Learning Platforms	Challenges	Addressing Challenges
1.	Kahoot!	Technical issues and connectivity problems	Collaboration with colleagues and the IT department
2.	Canva	Limited access to technology	Attending professional development
3.	Google Classroom	Equitable access to technology	Alternative offline activities
4.	Google Docs	Resistance to change	Troubleshooting

The Types of Digital Learning Platforms

Based on the interview and observations, results showed that teachers employed various digital learning platforms, including Kahoot!, Canva, Google Classroom, and Google Docs, to improve student participation, motivation, and engagement in English lessons.

The first digital learning platform is Kahoot!. Kahoot! represents types of gamification. Kahoot! is a platform that creates quizzes, discussions, and surveys using gamification techniques. Kahoot! launched in 2013 and quickly became a global educational brand. Kahoot! has unique features that distinguish it from other interactive and competitive teaching and gaming models. Kahoot! aims to provide students with an engaging, competitive, and game-based learning environment. Kahoot! encourages students to play, learn, and socialize instead of simply reading textbooks and notes (Graham, 2015).

Kahoot! is a useful digital learning tool for English instruction since it facilitates the development of cooperative and competitive learning environments. This is in line with the study that teachers can build quizzes that assess students' vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension skills using Kahoot!'s game-like features, which are especially helpful when teaching English (Raths, 2017). Kahoot! is a flexible tool for English language learning because it may also be used to introduce new topics, review content, and assess student understanding. It has also been demonstrated that Kahoot! improves student participation in English lessons. Kahoot! can boost student motivation and participation in the classroom by offering an engaging and dynamic learning environment (Dziuban, Moskal, & Williams,

2018). Additionally, Kahoot! can help fulfill the needs of English language learners by offering a visual and interactive way for students to acquire new grammar and vocabulary and by letting teachers customize the material to fit the needs of their particular class.

The second digital learning platform is Canva. Canva represents online collaboration tools. The teacher uses Canva for visual projects. Canva is a digital tool that allows students to design visually appealing projects such as infographics, posters, and presentations. Research has indicated that incorporating visual aids into instruction can improve student learning results, leading to better information recall and retention (Liu et al., 2020; Sung et al., 2020). Liu et al (2020). identified that the retention of students and recall levels were higher for those who used visual aids in their learning than for those who did not.

Similarly, Sung et al (2020). discovered that visual aids can help students understand and retain complex concepts. Teachers can foster creative thinking and help students improve their visual literacy by utilizing Canva. It has also been demonstrated that Canva improves student participation in English classes. Canva can boost student engagement and participation in the classroom by giving them a creative platform to express themselves and share what they have learned (Dziuban, Moskal, & Williams, 2018).

The third digital learning platform is Google Classroom. Google Classroom represents a learning management system (LMS). The teacher utilized Google Classroom for discussions and assignments. This is in line with studies that show increased motivation and engagement among students using Google Classroom (Hew, 2020). Teachers can use Google Classroom to make and distribute quizzes, assignments, and assessments. Students can turn in their work online. This not only saves time but also reduces paperwork and reduces the possibility of missing assignments. Furthermore, Google Classroom provides a platform for online discussions, allowing students to interact with one another and the course material more interactively and collaboratively (Iftakhar, S., 2016).

Google Classroom is a useful digital learning tool for teaching English since it makes task development and assignments simple and offers a forum for student participation and interaction. According to Dziuban, Moskal, & Williams (2018) Google Classroom's assignment and grading features are very helpful for teaching English since they let teachers monitor their students' progress and provide them feedback. Google Classroom gives teachers the ability to make and offer writing projects, vocabulary tests, and reading comprehension activities. It also gives students a centralized, well-organized platform to access resources and assignments.

Additionally, it has been demonstrated that Google Classroom improves student engagement in English classes. Google Classroom can boost student engagement and participation in class by giving students a platform to access resources and tasks ((Raths, 2017). Additionally, Google Classroom can help fulfill the needs of English language learners by giving students access to resources and assignments in their mother tongue and enabling teachers to modify the content to suit the needs of their students.

The last digital learning platform is Google Docs. Google Docs represents online collaboration tools. Google Docs is an effective digital learning tool for teaching English because it enables real-time collaboration and feedback on writing assignments. Google Docs' comments tool is very helpful for teaching English since it lets students give feedback to one another and participate in peer review exercises (Dziuban, Moskal, & Williams, 2018).Teachers can use Google Docs to help students with their writing assignments and to support peer review and collaborative writing activities.

It has also been demonstrated that using Google Docs increases student engagement in English classrooms. Google Docs can boost student interest and involvement in writing assignments by giving them a platform to interact with each other's writing (Raths, 2017). Additionally, Google Docs can help meet the needs of English language learners by allowing

students to practice writing in a group setting with support, and by enabling teachers to give students immediate feedback and assistance. It may be possible to improve learning results, motivation, and student engagement in English lessons through the implementation of digital learning platforms.

Teachers' Challenges in Implementing Digital Learning

Based on the interview and observation results, implementing digital learning in the classroom presents several challenges for teachers, including technical issues and connectivity problems, limited access to technology, equitable access to technology, and resistance to change.

The first challenge is technical issues and connectivity problems. Technical issues and connectivity problems are essential challenges to digital learning and can negatively affect student learning results and the quality of education. This presents a serious problem since it may restrict students' participation in online learning activities. Technical issues can also cause a lesson's flow to be disrupted, which can frustrate both teachers and students. The analysis's findings are in line with earlier studies that found technical issues and connectivity problems to be a significant barrier to the successful application of digital learning tools in the classroom (Raths, 2017). Recent studies have emphasized the necessity of resolving technical challenges in digital learning, such as the requirement for strong infrastructure, dependable technology, and enough technical assistance (Raths, 2017). Furthermore, studies have demonstrated that technical issues can negatively affect learning results, student engagement, and teacher well-being (Knez & Hygge, 2015; Picciano, 2017). (Knez & Hygge, 2015; Picciano, 2017).

The second challenge is limited access to technology. The challenge develops when teachers and students do not have consistent access to devices like computers, laptops, or tablets, as well as internet connectivity, which is required for online learning. When a student has limited access to technology, it means that they may not have internet connectivity or other forms of technology, which might make it more difficult for them to complete assignments and engage in class. Limited access to technology has been linked to communication challenges and lower student engagement when implementing digital tools into teaching practices (Rahman, 2020). Furthermore, teachers may lack the ICT skills, motivation, and training required for successfully implementing digital tools into their teaching practices (Rahimi & Yadollahi, 2017).

The third challenge is equitable access to technology. For students, unequal access to technology can have serious consequences. In the absence of gadgets, internet connectivity, or digital tools, students can find it difficult to finish projects, take part in online forums, or interact with digital learning materials. This might have serious negative effects since students who do not have access to technology might lag behind their classmates and widen the achievement divide already present. Equitable access to technology means that all students have equal access to technology and information, regardless of race, socioeconomic background, age, physical ability, or other characteristics. It all comes down to making sure that every student gets the chance to learn from a teacher who is proficient in using digital abilities and is aware of how to use technology.

The last challenge is resistance to change. This phenomenon is defined by a reluctance to relinquish established teaching methods and a hesitancy to adopt new technologies. Recent studies have found that teachers' resistance to change can be linked to a variety of causes, including a lack of training and support, fear of the unknown, and a perceived danger to their professional identity (Ertmer, 2019). Another study discovered that teachers' attitudes and views on the integration of technology have a big impact on how eager they are to use new tools (Rutherford, 2018). It means that even if new technologies or creative

teaching methods have the potential to enhance student learning results, teachers may be resistant to implementing them. Addressing these challenges is essential for ensuring effective and engaging digital learning experiences for all students.

Teachers' Strategies to Address the Challenges

Based on the interview and observation results, there are various strategies that teachers use to address these challenges including collaboration with colleagues and the IT department, attending professional development, alternative offline activities, and troubleshooting.

The first strategy is collaboration with colleagues and the IT department. One of the most important strategies for overcoming challenges in implementing digital learning in English classrooms is collaboration with colleagues and IT departments. Collaboration is crucial for breaking down challenges to digital learning, and this has been more acknowledged in recent years. According to Midlund et al (2021), teachers frequently prioritize digital products over the process of communication and collaboration. This emphasizes the importance of specific education on effective collaboration and communication practices using digital tools.

The second strategy is attending professional development. Attending professional development is an important part of a teacher's ongoing progress and growth. Professional development has gained more attention in recent years as a means of improving teachers' content understanding, pedagogical abilities, and general teaching practices. Professional development opportunities can significantly influence teachers' teaching practices and student outcomes. Kelentrić et al (2017) found that professional development and teamwork can improve teachers' digital competency. Additionally, participating in professional development can give teachers the chance to evaluate their methods, exchange best practices with peers, and foster a sense of community and collaboration. According to a study by Midlund et al (2021), teacher morale and job satisfaction can be raised by professional development programs that emphasize community building and collaborative learning. Professional development can also assist teachers to stay up to date on the latest educational practices, technologies, and standards.

The third strategy is alternative offline activities. Alternative offline activities are an important feature of digital learning, especially when students do not have access to gadgets or internet connectivity. According to Hysaj (2021) found that while online learning platforms offer a conducive environment for self-directed learning, it is essential to offer alternative offline learning opportunities for students without device access. Furthermore, Lanjuan et al. (2020), emphasized the need to develop and implement flipping classrooms in blended learning settings, which can incorporate alternate offline activities. When compared to traditional classroom instruction, this method can improve students' retention of the material. Additionally, a study by Rueangsirarak and Temdee (2021), discovered that flipped classrooms and horizontal blended learning can be combined to create mixed-learning methodologies that can effectively support student learning. Alternative offline activities can be an important component of these blended learning systems. To sum up, alternative offline activities are essential to digital learning because they give students the chance to learn on their own even when there are no gadgets or internet connections available. Teachers can ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to learn and succeed by integrating alternate offline activities into digital learning.

The last strategy is troubleshooting. Troubleshooting is an important part of digital learning deployment because it allows teachers to identify and handle technological difficulties that may disrupt the learning process. Research by Lysenko et al. (2023) claims that quality assurance systems, which include technical assistance and troubleshooting, can handle challenges with online learning. Additionally, as noted in a study by Rueangsirarak

and Temdee (2021), troubleshooting can be made easier by working with colleagues and IT departments. Through this collaboration, teachers will be able to acquire the technical know-how required to diagnose and fix issues in digital learning. Moreover, Hysaj (2021) underscored the significance of online learning resources in providing students with a conducive learning environment. Technical support and troubleshooting can be used to resolve the occasional technical issue with these programs.

The findings of this study are important for assisting and instructing English teachers in the efficient implementation of digital learning. To deal with the challenges of digital learning and learn how to use digital tools efficiently, teachers must continue their professional development. These strategies can be used continuously so that digital learning can run smoothly.

The findings of this study have important significance for English language instruction in the digital age. The results show that although digital learning technologies can be a useful tool for teachers, their effective use requires a thorough assessment of their challenges and limitations. Teachers need to be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of digital learning and come up with plans to deal with all of these challenges.

Finally, the findings of this study demonstrate the benefits of digital learning in English classes, including increased student engagement, personalized learning, and interactive learning experiences. However, teachers must be aware of the challenges associated with implementing digital learning tools and develop strategies to address them. Teachers may build ways to overcome the challenges and limitations of digital learning and establish a more productive and inclusive learning environment for all students by acknowledging these challenges. Additionally, there is a need for more individualized feedback to support student learning. Improved student learning outcomes, higher levels of student engagement, and more interactive learning opportunities can all result from the efficient use of digital learning resources.

CONCLUSION

The study explores the types of digital learning platforms by English teachers, revealing that they use Kahoot!, Canva, Google Classroom, and Google Docs to enhance student engagement, personalized instruction, and interactive learning experiences. These platforms have made learning more competitive and enjoyable, empowering students to take charge of their learning. However, challenges include technical issues, limited access to technology, equitable access, and resistance to change. To overcome these, teachers employ strategies such as collaboration with colleagues and IT departments, attending professional development, alternative offline activities, and troubleshooting. Schools can support successful implementation by providing resources, fostering creativity, and encouraging teachers to explore new digital learning strategies. The study emphasizes the importance of ongoing professional development and technical support for teachers to effectively integrate digital learning tools into their teaching practices.

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