

The Issues of Academic Literacy in Conversation Practice During Online Learning

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Submission date: 23-Oct-2022 09:44PM (UTC-0600)

Submission ID: 1933569331

File name: 5137-22934-1-CE.docx (1,014.67K)

Word count: 4135

Character count: 23938

The Issues of Academic Literacy in Conversation Practice During Online Learning

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Abstract

University students are required to be more independent in the learning process, this is because university students already have greater responsibilities, both in terms of following the campus' rules where they study, as well as in terms of discipline in doing assignments as students. Low academic literacy will result in not achieving responsibilities and learning objectives, campus facilities, student abilities, and lecturer competencies. This study aims to investigate the issues of academic literacy faced by students and lecturers during online learning. The sample of this study was 40 first-semester students from the University of Muhammadiyah Tangerang, Visual Communication Design study program. The instrument of the research is observation, interview, and document study based on student learning outcomes. In conclusion, the first result of this study indicates that the use of technological facilities has not been utilized optimally by students in the effort of improving their knowledge, self-awareness, creativity, and initiative to support their understanding and represent their academic literacy practice. The second result indicates that the facilities provided by the campus are not optimal to support students studying online, through the disclosure of university information that can be accessed at any time on the website, such as exam schedules, academic events, competitions, festivals, and other campus activities. The third result shows that students' conversation practice during online learning can run well, due to clear instruction from the lecturer and conversation partners cooperatively

Keywords: Literacy, Academic literacy, Conversation Practice, Online Learning

INTRODUCTION

Online learning is a learning model that is a necessity to be implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic to avoid the massive spread of the virus. Online learning is a smart solution in implementing education in the current pandemic era because lecturers' and students' literacy can be implemented in real terms by synergizing several things such as institutional facilities, technology facilities; internet, and also students and lecturers' academic literacy (Marzal & Borges, 2019). Mover, the teaching and learning process can take this situation as an advantage to implement the existing technological developments to support comprehensive learning and competent technological literacy competitiveness (Suhayati & Haryati, 2021; Yeh, 2018). However, to be able to carry out good and comprehensive online learning, it is also necessary to understand the conditions that occur both internally for students and lecturers as well as externally (Shi, 2021).

In the sense of comparative learning, online learning and conventional learning are different, because in conventional learning lecturers and students conduct face-to-face learning, have direct discussions, and understand each other's attitudes and habits, but when there must be online learning, lecturers and students need to adapt accordingly, academically, both internally and externally (Barton & Lee, 2013). Meanwhile, online learning provides lots of new knowledge for students, not only positively but also negatively (Bingley & Burgess, 2012; Hardini & Dewi, 2021; Nursobah et al., 2020). Through online learning, lecturers and students both improve each other's ability to take advantage of existing technological development (Ali, 2020; Balbay & Kilis, 2017; Pasaribu & Wulandari, 2021). Moreover, students are able to get information, search for information and various information online and are not limited by time and conditions, but on the other hand, online learning also able to make some students have a rather high-stress level, because of the

difficulty of participating in online learning with network constraints, inadequate quotas, devices/laptops that are not owned and so on (Ali, 2020).

On the basis of these things, academic literacy needs to be understood fundamentally by students, lecturers, and institutions (Kidd et al., 2008; Shi, 2021; Supratman & Wahyudin, 2017). Academic literacy is closely related to the understanding of students and lecturers in the continuity of learning, especially online learning today (Duchi et al., 2012). On the other hand, academic literacy is very necessary for those who are already at the tertiary level, because studying in college is different from studying in high school. The awareness of the importance of academic literacy for university students might be the most fundamental reason to do this research because without practice the of academic literacy, students, institution, and lecturer will not be able to achieve the higher education target during remote learning (Lillis et al., 2015; 132). Hence, academic literacy as a list of language skills can drive students' critical knowledge (Lillis et al., 2020). In the digital age, all education instrument needs to have a good adversity quotient, good discipline, self-awareness, innovation, creativity, good independence, and learning engagement (Bingley & Burgess, 2012; Ginting, 2021). Those requirements are the demands of academic literacy for higher students because they need to be aware of their duties and responsibilities correctly as part of the digital generation.

In addition, Academic literacy is a competency that is needed by students, because with this literacy they are able to participate academically, such; as conferences, seminars, workshops, etc. With academic literacy, students are also required to have the sharpness and practical skills, such as writing, speaking in a public space, and texts in various scopes so that they are able to prove that ability in real in front of the public (Bossi, 2015; Demangeot et al., 2019; Miller & Schulz, 2014). A study conducted by Schulz & Miller (2017) stated that academic literacy includes the ability to read, write, and speak academically, to understand the types of academics, to plan and create the research and conclude data academically, understand the assignment test references, plagiarism, academic integrity, and ability to follow existing guidelines. In simple terms, academic literacy can be interpreted as the ability to use and practice conventional academics.

Several previous studies stated that academic literacy is something that which is needed to be mastered by higher education levels in this digital era because it can compete intellectually and be able to actualize academically (Dumford & Miller, 2018). Another study stated that academic literacy must be possessed by lecturers and students in order to be able to synergize skills, innovation, and academic creativity in the current technological era (Horarik et al., 2018; Hung, 2015; Marzal & Borges, 2019). Meanwhile, this research is addressed to show the issues of students' academic literacy for higher students, especially in implementing online learning, and to investigate the institution's readiness during remote learning to support students' academic literacy. Furthermore, as a foreign language in Indonesia, English is needed to be taught comprehensively to stimulate university students' academic literacy. The teacher should be able to find information related to the obstacles faced by the students to make the process of teaching and learning run properly. Therefore, this research aims to investigate university students' academic literacy in their conversation practice during the pandemic, in line with their obstacles in online learning such as institutional facilities, university students' creativity, engagement, initiative, and lecturer's instruction during online learning. Meanwhile, through this research higher education stakeholders can be aware of their educational outcomes.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative approach with the total subject of the research being 40 students of Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang-Indonesia in Communication visual design. The sample was taken through purposive sampling from 2 classes. There were four steps of qualitative design implemented in this research were: (1) data collection, (2) data reduction, (3) data display, and (4) verifying (Sugiyono, 2017). Those 4 steps of qualitative design have already been implemented during the arranging of this research. The way to filter the data validity and make sure the data was reliable. Data display and verifying data collection were done in March 2021, online. While the data reduction also in October 2021, with the objective was also done on October 2021.

To collect the data, this research used three instruments as Kumar (2011) suggested. They were observation and interviews with open-ended questions, while the use of study documents as the additional research instrument to find out students' academic literacy related to their assignments. The observation was done for 8 months to investigate the issues of academic literacy in students' conversation practice during online learning (Creswell, 2014). The observation checklist was students understanding of academic literacy performance, students' obstacle completes their conversation practice related to their academic literacy, students' obstacles in practicing their conversation as the representation of their academic literacy, and students' understanding of how to present academic literacy during online learning (Arjulayana, 2018; Cohen et al., 2007; Kidd et al., 2008). The observation process also involved the researcher and students interacting properly related to their academic literacy representation through conversation practice, and their understanding of academic literacy issues.

The interview was given 10 questions with open-ended questions and answers to know student's understanding of academic literacy in their online learning during the pandemic, this instrument was adopted from the previous research by (Arjulayana et al., 2021a). During this interview, the researcher gave students questions that required students to answer in written and oral form, as an effort to find their academic literacy in traditional literate and to give them surface knowledge about the importance of academic literacy (Arjulayana et al., 2021).

The last is conversation performance as one of their academic literacy practices. This performance was to measure students' academic literacy skills. This performance advocated students to utilize their critical thinking, writing skill and speaking skills as a form of finding students' academic literacy issues also. Before performing their conversation, students need to represent in composing through written text, then their friend will read and based on their text understanding they needed to retell it in conversation performance (Pourfarhad et al., 2012). In conclusion, to advocate student conversation performance two models of online learning were required to accommodate students with a different obstacle while online learning (Ali, 2020). Those are the synchronous model and the asynchronous model.

In the synchronous model, students are required to practice their conversation virtually through google meet and zoom applications. With this model, the lecturer has given them some feedback related to their academic literacy in utilizing the deadline, conversation performance, readiness to implement collaborative learning, and academic assignments (Ntelioglou et al., 2014). Furthermore, in the Asynchronous model, students are required to record their conversation practice based on the instruction given and time duration (Arjulayana et al., 2021b). This model required students to accomplish their academic skills

through utilizing technology because in video recording they were required to use music background, text explanation, autonomous learning, and personal internet access and material instruction, such as designing the conversation through picture talks also (Delahunty et al., 2014).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

It is known that academic literacy was inseparable from the learning process which is integrated with 3 parts, namely; basic knowledge (to know), knowledge about knowledge (meta-knowledge; to act), and knowledge related to ethics (humanities knowledge; to value). Overall, the three components of learning have separate parts, such as critical thinking, learning for learning, awareness of socializing, and so on (Ferber, 2013). Hence, academic literacy is very important for higher students to support their learning process and successful scholar.

Furthermore, academic literacy issues represent by 3 indicators, first; students' willingness to know about something, their awareness of their capability, and having good encouragement. Second; students have knowledge and understanding of everything that they have done; such as how to socialize, how to use digital information to support the learning process, and have great curiosity, critical thinking, and self-actualization. Third; students should realize the importance of making social interaction as an effort to improve self-ability and awareness (Lea, 2004).

Concerning the survey results Students' academic literacy related to their curiosity in finding information and capability awareness represented 31.3%. meanwhile, the use of their willingness in utilizing internet access for boosting their skills is still low. Students prefer to use online applications according to the lecturer's instruction, as well as the facilities provided by the institution in finding information to support their understanding of a particular material. So, this is fatal when the institution rarely provides and updates information on the campus website. In addition, students said that they often miss information related to academic activities, such as seminars, competitions, and others because the campus website is not up-to-date. It can be said that institutional facilities also play a very important role in fostering students' academic literacy (Dawson & Siemens, 2014).

The effort to find academic articles on some academic journal websites is still low. In chart a, only 6.2% utilized internet access for finding academic articles and improving their skills. students do not care about academic literacy improvement. Meanwhile, Lea & Street (2006) said that academic activity is of being the core of academic literacy performance. In conclusion, students prefer to use references based on what is given by the lecturer only. In addition, the academic literacy practice is require student's initiative and self-awareness, if there is no initiative and motivation to gain any kind of academic work without waiting for instruction academic literacy seems difficult to gain (Scholtz, 2018) Furthermore, 62.5% of students claimed that technology and internet access are really helpful to help their socialize. Furthermore, social interaction is not something bad for these university students. Making social interaction in their environment is important because through this interaction they can improve their conversation practice, especially in online learning (Delahunty et al., 2014).

The second instrument is an interview. The result of students' academic literacy based on interview data can be seen from the data collection below:

Table 1: Interview result of academic literacy

No	Statements	Agree %	Disagree %
1	Do you know what Academic literacy is?	95.8	4.2
2	Do you think academic literacy is an important thing to support your online learning?	71.4	28.6
3	The lecturer and campus gave clear information related to students' academic work.	50	50
4	Internet access and the English learning community are big problems to practice conversation during online learning	85	15
5	Less response and initiative to learn are the problems during online learning	68.3	31.7
6	Finding an online article or any kind of resources to support learning is hard to do without instruction from a lecturer	90.2	9.8
7	I will find online libraries, websites, and other applications to improve my knowledge during the pandemic	40.3	59.7
8	Utilize technology to make social interaction and conduct online learning are very importance	95.8	4.2
9	Interact through social media; WA, IG, and FB are very helpful	85.7	0
10	I prefer to express my ideas by posting my status on social media than writing them in an article to be published	90.7	9.3

Table 1 reveals the interview result about academic literacy during online learning. At the beginning of the interview, the first thing that researcher asks is the students' understanding of literacy, and their response is quite good because 95.8% of them knew about literacy. It means that students have an awareness of their capability to do something. As (Dupuy, 2011) said that self-awareness of students' ability is the most fundamental thing for motivation to learn English. It is in line with their response about the importance of academic literacy in online learning, 71.4% agree that academic literacy is important to support their online learning and it also supported by Lo & Jeong (2018) that academic literacy can be the basic aspect to boost knowledge, while 28.6% students did not agree that academic literacy is important, the most important according to them are reading literacy, and digital literacy.

In line with the lecturer and campus role in giving clear information for their academic work, 50% of students agree, but 50% disagree with those statements. This occurs because the campus website is unable to give factual information related to students' efforts to involve in any kind of higher education activities. To support students' academics, the

institution should be able to provide factual information to enlighten students' creativity and knowledge (Camiciottoli, 2013). The interview about students' problems in online learning especially in performing their conversation practice really enthusiastic, because 85% of students agree that internet access and the English learning community as the biggest problem during online learning, it is also supported by Ali (2020). Hence, students are unable to show their best performance virtually because of internet access due to the networking down or suddenly sinking. Besides that, students argue that online learning is quite hard, because they are unable to interact directly with the teacher, and they also need to prepare devices and internet access, while his siblings also need to practice online learning, and sometimes they have to argue for a while because of the Wi-Fi/ internet access, and some of them also need to share their digital devices with their siblings, such as feasible mobile phone, laptop or computer.

Moreover, 15 % of students disagree, thus because they prefer to say that motivation is the most, without good motivation student, will not follow online learning. The other problem faced during online learning is the lack of response and initiative to be a creative student (Shen & Tian, 2012) and it can be seen that 68.3% of students agree with these kinds of problems. While 31.7% disagree. In line with the previous response, 90.2% argue that finding an online article or any kind of resource to support their academic literacy is hard without the lecturer's instruction. Meanwhile, this response can be supported by Ferber (2013) that students' academic literacy is still low if they are unable to gain the initiative, willing to know about something, having good encouragement and

knowledge to understand everything (Ferber, 2013). Furthermore, 40.3% of students are not really interested to find an online library or any kind of website to improve their knowledge during the pandemic. Moreover, 59.7% of students will not utilize the internet connection for improving their selves, because they prefer to wait for the lecturer's instruction and explanation. Hence, the issues of academic literacy for university students are really emerging (Jefferies et al., 2018).

Furthermore, students understanding of social interaction, and their understanding of utilizing the online application to make social interaction are very good, It shows that 95.8% of students understood how to make social interaction and use digital media to find information, but they are not really understanding to utilize the online application for improving their academic knowledge, such as to find an academic article and etc. it also similar with the previous research, that most students use the online application for their preference hobby, but it still low to use digital technology for academic (Archer, 2006). In conclusion, most students knew that digital applications can support the teaching and learning process, especially for conversation practice (Ali, 2020). Hence, students are feeling good to use online applications, especially for interaction or social lifestyle and to support other academic literacy performance. Otherwise, internet access helps them to socialize even sometimes their internet connection is up and down because of the situation or their quota but it looks normal problem during online learning (Balbay & Kilis, 2017).

In addition, students prefer to express their ideas by posting their status on social media than writing them in an article to be published this occurs because their academic literacy is still low, automatically they don't aware of how important to express an idea in academic writing for improving self-knowledge. Meanwhile, 90.7% of most students did not have initiative and good creativity. Hence, the use of their academic literacy to support their ideas and foster their understanding of the utilization of digital information is need to be

accommodated (Rowse & Walsh, 2011). In conclusion, this research result shows that students' academic literacy practice at this university is not proper, that because of various reasons, both internal reason and external reasons, and the biggest reason is students' awareness, initiative, and humanities practice (Horarik et al., 2018). For internal reasons, students prefer to wait for instruction from their lecturer, without having their own ideas to improve their English skills through online learning. Students also still have trouble using more than 3 platforms for their online conversation because of the application's knowledge (Simpson & Obdalova, 2014), although some students say they prefer to use the different applications in every section to learn.

Utilizing technology for students' academic work still needs to boost, and to be able to advocate this, lecturer competencies are needed. The lecturer should have a good understanding in utilize and integrating the multimedia platform to support their students' academic literacy (Konstantinidis et al., 2009). Although students knew that academic literacy can give them a new understanding of the combination of literacies practice, such as reading, writing, listening, speaking and critical thinking (Kaur et al., 2012).

Students should use their critical literacy when understanding the situation around them, they need to practice their reading literacy when deeply information is needed, and they should be practiced writing literacy and academic literacy (Miller, 2015) to support their disciplines and autonomous learning as higher education students. Here is an example of a student's interaction in implementing the online conversation practice:



Figure 1: Students are performing their conversation online

To see the situation in conversation practice during online learning students are required to perform their conversation performance virtually while utilizing the digital platform as their academic literacy practice it can be seen based on figure 1. There are no obstacles they faced during online learning to practice conversation even though internet networking is up and down. it means they have good academic literacy, understand the instructor given, have good internet access and are able to produce the multimedia platform for their online learning (Liew & Tan, 2016).

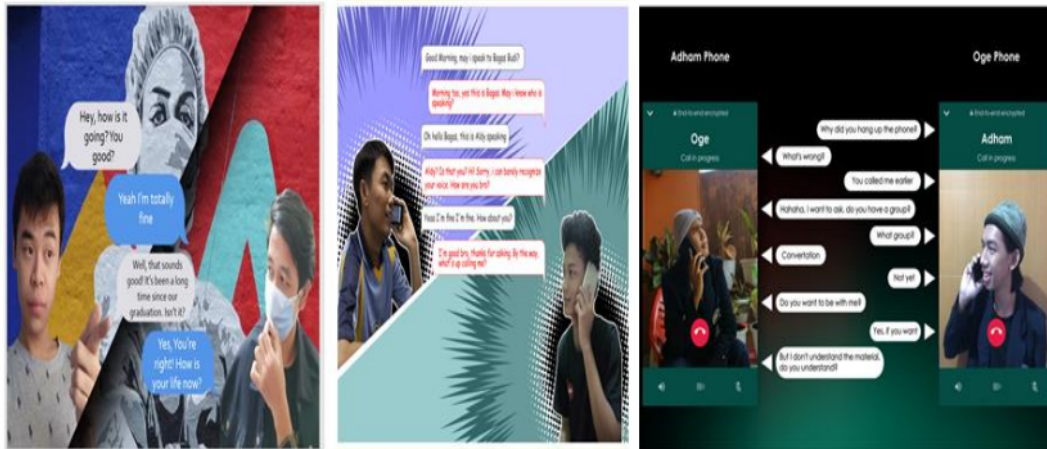


Figure 2: students have written conversations as an academic literacy practice

In figure 2 students are performing their literacy by producing their conversation practice in picture talks, they are able to produce language skills both written and reading. Students understand their teacher's suggestion, create their critical thinking in mastering the material then produce the multimedia and digital platform as their academic literacy practice (Mills, 2009)

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CONCLUSION

The systematic analysis has highlighted the issues of university students' academic literacy in accordance with online learning. Academic literacy is vital for university student practice, as it's high-level interaction and critical practice (Lea & Street, 2006). This research shows that university students are not always having their academic literacy properly, due to their initiative, creativity, and willingness to utilize technology facilities were not implementing properly. as one of the indicators of having academic literacy is the awareness to improve their academic performance practically and pedagogically (Jefferies et al., 2018).

As the representation of academic literacy practice university students is required to be able to understand and utilize digital information well as the effort to improve their selves, gain creativity, arouse their critical thinking, and contribute widely as the digital age generation (Swanson et al., 2016). Other competencies that must be awarded by university students are the awareness of having good encouragement and having social interaction well (Gibbons, 2002). Furthermore, the finding of this study is in line with previous research that academic literacy practice is a new way for higher students awareness to interpret, initiate, and organize knowledge. If they don't have initiative or are unable to use this kind of way to learn they should improve their academic literacy practice (Nadal, 2017). As a member of academic people, higher education students need to complete their assignments critically and perform their skills online to show that they have good academic literacy (Lo & Jeong, 2018). Students should be aware of their duty as university students and need to have writing literacy, reading literacy, critical literacy, and academic literacy in the digital age (Westby, 2010). On the other hand, students can practice their academic literacy through multimedia production, doing reading and writing practice, and figuring out how the academic works. Academic treats reading and writing as a conversation, so sharing and discussion as a way to produce higher education students' literacy (Shi, 2021).

The critical basis of the learning process proposed by Ferber (2013b) is that academic literacy is a vital skill to be able to contribute actively in the 4.0 era because academic literacy will arouse university students' awareness of the importance of collaboration, communication, and self-actualization. Besides that, the involvement of some elements in encouraging students' academic literacy, such as lecturers, institutions, and digital technology was expected. In this research, students were able to practice their conversation and learning well during online learning because the lecturer give clear instructions to engage students' conversation practice and collaboration. Students involve critically to enhance their competence in the digital era and lecturer encourage rigorously supporting students' academic literacy through utilizing digital technology. Furthermore, this study offers some strategies to measure students' academic literacy such as; students' curiosity and encouragement, students' knowledge of utilizing digital information to support learning, critical thinking, and self-actualization, and students' realization of making social interaction and self-awareness (Lea, 2004). Meanwhile, this study strongly proposed to be used in empowering, investigating, and improving ELT practice, especially in the academic level of literacy.

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The Issues of Academic Literacy in Conversation Practice During Online Learning

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