CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The most prominent aspect of recent studies exploring the issue of literacy in English language teaching context (McCloskey, 2018; Merga et al., 2020; Reichenberg, 2020; Reynolds et al., 2020) is the way in which researchers reflect on their results of studies. Literacy is a fundamental aspect in language learning as it is inherent and prerequisite in the process of comprehending learning materials. Researching literacies reveal how teachers as well as students engaged with the process of reading, writing, analyzing, and interpreting information during the classrooms and out of classrooms activities. With the findings related to how teachers and students perform their literacy skills, the most applicable and practical plans to enhance the quality of future language learning can be easily identified.

Recently, many schools especially located in urban area already adopted technological-based tools such as e-books, online resources, audio-visual media, e-mail, and educational websites. Even, some of private urban schools with high financial supports facilitated their students with more advanced digital technology such as interactive whiteboard, learning management system (LMS), e-learning, and language laboratory. Likewise, the majority of students in urban schools utilized more computers and ICT tools than those who studied in rural schools (Kumar et al., 2014; Kumar & Kumara, 2018). This situation is relevant with what other studies reported that rapid advancement of technology in globalization era had impacted the landscape of educational lives, shifting from the traditional learning to the 21st century learning (Barrot, 2019; Borsheim et al., 2008; So & Kang, 2014). In short, it is not deniable that today's teaching processes including the English language teaching is turning to be digitalized.

Digital literacy puts two elements namely literacy skills and digital technology into one single context in which they suit to the goal of 21st century learning. The term

digital literacy is mentioned differently in literature and research studies. Some foremost experts such as Gilster (1997), Bawden (2001), and Eshet (2004) use the term 'digital literacy' in their study while other researchers prefer to call the term as '21st century literacy' (Morrell, 2012; Smith & Dobson, 2011) and 'digital competence' (Janssen et al., 2013; Krumsvik, 2008). Basically, digital literacy can be seen as the extension of literacy concepts in which it focuses on the individual's ability to comprehend and use information presented in digital formats (Gilster, 1997). Also, the concept of digital literacy relates to the safe, wise, and productive ways of managing digital information (Dudeney & Hockly, 2016). In this case, digital literacy contextualizes the practices of understanding, comprehending, analyzing, evaluating, and using information in digital spaces and it corresponds to one of the characteristics of 21st century learning which demands students to be skillful in information, media and technology management. Briefly, the issue of digital literacy under the umbrella of 21st century learning is interesting to be explored deeply and contextually including from the lens of English language teaching.

Regarding to the situations mentioned in the previous paragraphs, this study tried to investigate the issue of digital literacy within the context of English language teaching. To begin this study, the issue of literacy was critically explored by reading a plenty of sources including books, journal articles, theses and dissertations. It was found that digital literacy is one of the competences or skills needed in the 21st century learning among other prominent skills such as critical thinking and creativity. There has been a myriad of studies on the prominent skills, like critical thinking (Chandrasoma & Ananda, 2018; Ma & Luo, 2020; Şeker & Kömür, 2008; S. Wang & Seepho, 2017) and creativity (Chen, 2018; Dai, 2015; H. Wang, 2018) within the context of English language teaching. Similarly, research investigating the issue of English language learners' literacy and digital literacy (Black, 2005, 2009; Dashtestani & Hojatpanah, 2020; Li, 2013; McCloskey, 2018; Reynolds et al., 2020) is easily found. On the other

hand, studies which specifically focus on exploring literacy from the side of teachers are still scarce (Weaver, 2012), particularly teachers' digital literacy.

Therefore, the present study investigated the digital literacy practices of Indonesian secondary English language teachers. The goals of this study were twofold: exploring the teachers' engagement towards digital literacy practices and their perceptions of technology integration and training. Specifically, the first goal described the teachers' understanding of digital literacy, their use of digital tools, their experiences in practicing digital literacy, and their digital literacy competences. Meanwhile, the second goal focused on revealing the teachers' perceptions of technology integration into English curriculum and materials, and kinds of technology trainings they expected.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

Living in the 21st century, people have to realize that globalization in which people, ideas, good, services, capital and information increasingly coming across national borders (Appadurai, 1996; Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004) already affected the landscape of our lives (Barrot, 2019). Globalization which is often tied and linked to the adoption of new technological tools (Black, 2009) promotes new experiences in the field of education. Now, lots of secondary schools in Indonesia are integrating technology to their classrooms learning environments.

Next, Covid-19 pandemic also contributed to massive adoption of digital technology in education. The pandemic caused the quick transition of face-to-face classrooms to online learning (Moorhouse, 2020). As the school closure policy was imposed to keep the physical distancing, online learning became the best solution for maintaining the learning process by connecting teachers and students without close range physical interactions. Pandemic situation quickly changed our lives to be more digitalized, as many events/agendas could be conducted virtually. Likewise, the trends of employing online learning mode was predicted to be lasted till the post pandemic situation (Liguori & Winkler, 2020) and this implied that teachers needed to possess higher digital literacy.

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Moreover, one of the challenges of education in 21st century era is facing generation Z. Generation z which refers to the recent population segment born between 1995 and 2010 in the digital era (Seemiller & Grace, 2016) is technological savvy generation. They were born where information, communication and technology (ICT) was massively developed. Their characteristics, motivations, and learning preferences are different from the previous generation. Generation z cannot be separated from digital world like internet, social media, and YouTube (Cape, 2018).

Technology enrichment in classrooms to embrace 21st century, pandemic situation which forced learning process to be conducted virtually, and our students, generation z which are quite familiar with technology became the logical reason demanding today's English language teachers to have good digital literacy skills. Thus, the present study explored secondary English language teachers' digital literacy. Specifically, two inquiries were administered in this study, namely the description of the teachers' engagement with digital literacy and their perceptions of technology integration and training.

1.3 Research Questions

1. To what extent do secondary English language teachers engage with digital literacy in terms of their understanding of its concept, purposes of using digital tools, experiences in practicing digital literacy, and their digital literacy competence?

2. What are the teachers' perceptions of technology integration (into English curriculum and materials) and technology training?

1.4 Objective of the Research

The purpose of this thesis was to explore Indonesian secondary English language teachers' digital literacy. This exploration contributed to the enrichment of literature on digital literacy, especially from the perspective of teachers. With a better understanding on the real facts of teachers' digital literacy, further studies could easily navigate what things that teachers really needed for keeping up with their students'

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ways of learning through technology. Likewise, the teacher's perceptions of technology integration and training might become the valuable reference for further studies in exploring the connection among digital literacy, technology integration, pedagogy, and teacher professional development. Moreover, this study utilized a

research design serving the individual depiction of each research participant's digital literacy practices and perceptions. Additionally, multiple data collection techniques were applied in this study: observations, questionnaire, interviews, field notes, and also document analysis in order to yield rich and deep data.

1.5 Significance of the Research

Much literature paid attention to the exploration of digital literacy from the side of students like digital literacy studies in the context of ELT (Alavi et al., 2016; Black, 2005, 2009; Dashtestani & Hojatpanah, 2020; Lim, 2013; Meurant, 2008) and in the secondary school level context (He & Wray, 2017; Mabayoje et al., 2016; Olumuyiwa & Segun, 2013). Yet, as digital literacy becomes the integral part of teachers' pedagogy (Colton, 2020), researching how teachers engage and experience digital literacy during their teaching practices is also worthy to be conducted. Thus, having a better understanding about the empirical evidence of teachers' digital literacy helped researchers and teachers to navigate ways of teaching that truly matched with students' needs in learning through technology. The findings of this study were expected to contribute to the enrichment of literature review within the field of digital literacy and English language teaching. Also, the reported results of the teachers' engagement with digital literacy and their perceptions of technology integration and training provided pedagogical implications for several parties including English language teachers, school management, teacher educators, stakeholders, and further researchers.

1.6 Organization of this Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. First, background, the field problems, and the significance of the study are described in chapter 1. Then, the next two chapters, namely literature review and research method cover explanation about theories,

relevant studies, as well as the design of the study. In chapter 4, the findings of this study are presented and will be elaborated into critical discussions. Lastly, in chapter 5, conclusions are drawn along with the pedagogical implication of this study.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

The following terms are frequently used in this study and the definition of each term is presented beneath.

1. Digital Literacy: refers to the activities of managing digital information wisely.
2. Digital Teacher Assessment (DITA): is a web-based system that provides teachers feedback on their performance from three perspectives namely students, teachers, and headmaster voices.
3. Digitally Literate Teachers (DLT): one of the framework used in this study consisting of seven components/strands.
4. English as a Foreign Language (EFL): refers to the learning of English as an additional language in non-English speaking countries.
5. English as a Second Language (ESL): refers to the learning of English by non-native speakers in English speaking countries.
6. English for Specific Purposes (ESP): refers to the teaching of English for particular purposes, especially related to job/occupation.
7. English Language Teaching (ELT): refers to the practice of teaching English.
8. General English (GE): refers to the teaching of English for communicating in everyday situation.
9. Information and Communication Technology (ICT): refers to the activities of exchanging information by involving technology such as emailing, video-conferencing, and word-processing.
10. Information Technology (IT): refers to the tools used for transferring information in digital format such as computer, smartphone, and internet.

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11. Integrated Academic Information System (IGRACIAS): is a web-based system for recording students and teachers' performances. Thus, IGRACIAS consists of DITA and JIWA.

12. Jurnal Aktivitas Siswa (JIWA): is a web-based system for providing information about student achievement records.

13. Learning Management System (LMS): is a software for making administration, documenting, delivering materials, tracking, and reporting learning progress.

14. New Literacy Studies (NLS): is a new concept of literacy offering broader definition in which literacy is not only about the activities of reading and writing but it also associates with the sociocultural practices.

15. *Sekolah Menengah Atas (SMA):* is a senior high school.

16. *Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK):* is a vocational high school.

17. Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK): is one of the frameworks used in this study containing seven components.

18. Traditional Literacy: is the old concept of literacy where literacy is understood restrictedly as the activity of reading and writing.

19. Web 2.0 era: refers to websites that allow users to have interaction with the sites and other users.

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