

Reflections on Digital Learning: Learning Strategies, Environments, and Opportunities

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Abstract

The study aimed to explore the Indonesian English Major students' reflections towards English language learning in the digital era on their preferred learning strategies, supportive learning environments, and choices of learning opportunities. The study comprised 180 students of English Major at an Islamic State College in East Java, Indonesia. The data were collected via the questionnaire and the focus group interview in which 8 students volunteered to participate. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to reveal the frequencies and mean scores of the students' preferred learning strategy use and to identify the supportive learning environments and choices of opportunities that would facilitate their learning. The interviewed qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis to derive a set of themes and examined students' perceptions of learning strategies, learning environments, and learning opportunities. The results from the questionnaire analysis revealed that the students often used the ICTs and Internet in learning English. They frequently employed learning strategies ($\bar{x}=3.86$), used learning environments ($\bar{x}=3.86$), and learning opportunities ($\bar{x}=3.67$). The focus group interview revealed that for learning strategies, the majority of the students in the study preferred to employ the socio-virtual strategies, while the rest employed Internet-based resource strategies, interpersonal online strategies, and digital tool strategies. For the supportive learning environments, many of them selected innovative teachers' skills, while the rest favored using high speed Internet connection and digital multimedia. For the choices of opportunities, more than one-half of the students preferred to have accessible digital learning opportunities, followed by online interactions, teachers' encouragements, and learning understanding. The students' reflections showed the roles of teachers and students have remarkably changed in that the teachers no longer have direct control of the teaching process and they acted more as the learning process facilitators.

Keywords: *The ICTs and Internet, Learning Strategies, Learning Environments, Learning Opportunities*

1.Introduction

Information and communication technology (ICT) and the Internet currently offer plentiful resources for language learners and have a great potential for language learning development and immersion opportunities outside of scheduled class time. The ICTs and the Internet have transformed the way students learn, obtain the learning materials, access

information, and communicate (Garrison, 2011). In other words, they have been used to provide effective new ways of teaching and learning English. Davidson et al. (2009) emphasized that the most important characteristic of the Internet is its capacity to allow the worldwide community to instantly exchange ideas and learn from one another in a way not previously available. The ICTs and the Internet immersion in education have become new exploratory ways for developing language teaching and learning abilities.

The students well-versed with the Internet technology learn, think, and process the information differently from previous generations and become “native speakers” of the digital language learning in which the digital activity is like a mother tongue for them. They are commonly called in various terms such as the digital natives (Prensky, 2001), Millennials (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005), and Net Generation (Tapscott, 2008). They represent the first generation that have grown up with the technology and use all kinds of digital tools as the integral part of their life, particularly for their learning (Prensky, 2001; Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005; Rosen, 2010; Cornu, 2011; Palfrey & Gasser, 2013). This remarkable ability shows that their brains have physically changed since they have been absorbed into a culture of technology, virtual connectivity, and online sharing on the Internet.

In learning English, the digital language learners bring their own individual experiences to the classroom. The way English is learnt varies from one student to another and the successful language learners in learning the target language are commonly supported by the strategies they employ, the environments they use, and the opportunities they have (Oxford et al., 2014; Lowyck, Lehtinen & Elen, 2004; Crabbe, 2003). The use of language learning strategies both inside and outside the classroom plays an important role in the learning process since the good language learners consistently use certain types of learning strategies, know more strategies and are able to choose and apply suitable strategies in a conscious and systematic way (Oxford et al. 2014). Learners’ strategies can be seen as an integrating concept for the supportive learning environments. In other words, students’ learning results are determined by the more or less consciously executed strategies in the learning environment (Lowyck et al., 2004). Importantly, an opportunity for L2 learning, then, can be defined as an access to any activity that is likely to lead to an increase in language knowledge or skills (Chafee, 2012). Thus, understanding students’ learning strategies and providing students’ learning environments and students’ choices of learning opportunities are helpful in enabling language learners to identify how they can learn best since these elements become a means to achieve the learning goals.

The use of learning strategies with available opportunities in appropriate language learning environments is significant since English is the first international language which is taught in every educational institution. However, the role of English as an International language has some effects on the way English is taught. As mentioned by McKay (2002), the teaching and learning of an international language must be based on an entirely different set of assumptions. In this essence, what is needed for language learning in Indonesia is a paradigm shift, whereby traditional language learning approaches and methods, which might be acceptable for teaching the old generations, have to be transformed into digital learning since the students nowadays have changed their ways in learning English.

The language learning strategies, the learning environments, and the learning opportunities are major factors in language learning for Indonesian students. The Indonesian college under study is in East Java Province. It is fully equipped with online language resources. The English Teaching Major students are familiar with the ICTs and the Internet use. In realizing the three goals, the college provides equipment to support the teaching and learning process. Most of the teachers can utilize English laboratories, and online teaching materials. Communicative teaching methods and small class sizes are encouraged. Thus, it is expected to produce students with good skills and competences since they have been exposed to technology use. Therefore, conducting a study on how students learn English in the digital era is worth exploring. The research questions for this study are:- 1) What are the students' reflections on their preferred learning strategies in learning English in the digital era? 2) What are the students' reflections on their supportive learning environments in learning English in the digital era? And 3) What were the students' reflections on their choices of learning opportunities in learning English in the digital era?

2.Literature Review

2.1 Language Learning Strategies, Environments, and Opportunities

Language learning strategies are defined as a detailed plan which has a goal for achieving success in any language learning situations. They are the learner's consciously chosen tools for active, self-regulated improvement of language learning (Griffiths, 2008, 2013; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990). The strategies employed by learners may vary from one situation to another situation and the studies on the strategies in a language learning benefit to understand individual learner differences.

The learning environments are the surrounding situations that support learning such as information technology and the availability of learning materials. Entwistle and Tait (1995) stated that learning environment is a whole learning situation related to a course, including lectures, assignments, tests and a variety of learning resources. The learning environments are significant most in the education field and commonly used as a classroom setting experienced by the students to encompass a variety of learning principles. The goal of learning environments is to provide a person all the resources he or she needs in a suitable climate for learning.

Learning opportunities can be defined as an amount of time or a situation in which learners can use and do. Crabbe (2003) stated that learning opportunities refer to access to favorable learning conditions, whether access to learning in general (as in educational opportunity) or access to specific conditions such as those required for language learning. In language learning, the concept of learning opportunity enables course designers to think and talk more generically about the ways and means of reaching the targeted outcomes. Thus, developing learning opportunities in language learning process has a function to create engagement and motivation for students since the opportunities for them can make the students to become good learners.

Several recent studies have proved that the three elements have made English language learning more efficient and produced a positive effect on the learners' language use. Ni'mah (2013), Rachmawati et al. (2013) and Mistar and Umamah (2014) found that the students with a high use of language learning strategies are able to contribute and improve their English skills. While Aunurrahman, Kurniawati, &

Ramadhiyanti (2013), Rahdeni (2013), Syahputra (2014) revealed that when the students are more aware of their preferred learning strategies, it is the teachers' job to adapt their teaching and help students to become more responsible for their learning. Moreover, Debski (1997) revealed that integration of contemporary computer technology and foreign language education is most likely to take place in learning environments in which students can easily combine learning a language with reflection about language learning strategies. Gass (1997) believed that learning opportunity to process extensive language skills input is well established and accepted as an important component of language learning. Additionally, Crabbe (2003) pointed out that learning a language requires the effective take-up of connected chains of learning opportunities such as, feedback, rehearsal, language understanding, and learning understanding. That is why, the right choice of learning strategies, supportive environments, and choices of learning opportunities could lead the language learners to improve proficiency in specific language skill areas and contributed to the changes in the way the teachers teach in order to achieve the language learning goals.

2.2 Language Learning in the Digital Era

The whole world is going mobile nowadays. The ICTs and the Internet have great impact on the lives of individuals and are a major factor that helps to reform their language learning. The growth of technology has completely reshaped the area of education, although the traditional form of education still exists (Vinu, Sherimon, & Krishnan, 2011). There is a fast expansion of web based learning to support language learners nowadays and the presence of ICTs have facilitated the learners to learn from anyone, anywhere, and any time.

Technologies are now used simply to reinforce traditional or out-of-date approaches to learning. The new technologies have the potential to fundamentally transform how and what people learn throughout their lives. The way one learns has changed dramatically over the past two decades, especially on the sources of information, the ways information is exchanged and interacted (Yang & Chen, 2007; Jones et. al. 2010; Kolikant, 2010; Thinyane, 2010; Cornu, 2011; Keser, 2012; Ng, 2012; Perbawaningsih, 2013; Pheeraphan, 2013; Thompson, 2013; Golshan & Tafazoli, 2014; Martins, 2015; Mohammadyari & Singh, 2015). The learners now have been familiar with and adopted new tools within their own contexts, mixing different applications for finding and managing information and for communicating with others. The learners have grown up in a world where learning is quickly accessible through technologies both at home and in the classroom.

2.3 How the Digital Learners Learn

The digital language learners have become native speakers of technology, fluent in the digital language of mobiles, computers, e-learning, gadgets, other technology tools since they are surrounded by the ICTs and Internet circumstances. The digital natives change the way the previous learners learned. They tend to learn using ICTs and the Internet without difficulties with the use of complex technological products (Rainie, 2006). Another factor that distinguishes digital natives from the previous generation is they are comfortable with multi-tasking, nonlinear processing, and online social learning (Prensky, 2001; Calderwood et al., 2016; Teo, et al., 2014). What the digital learners do in their learning has rapidly changed. They tremendously use of the ICTs to assist their learning. As stated by Khan (2005), the Internet technology provides opportunities for them to be interactive learners practicing the target language in a real setting. The ICTs benefit these new types of learners (Keser,

2012; Vinu et al., 2011) because mobile devices can facilitate their access the English sources from anywhere, at any time (Vinu et al., 2011). The abilities to use the ICTs in language learning support the students by making their learning much easier than in previous periods.

In the networked learning, the digital learners can download some materials from the Internet (Borgman, 2008) and many of them prefer to use soft files rather than hard copies (Rahmah, 2015). For collaborative learning, the students like to discuss their learning activities in the social media to expand their learning opportunities (Sharpe, Beetham, & Freitas, 2010). The ICT and Internet tools have greatly expanded the sources of learning and the learners nowadays are typically able to find information on the Internet and answer their questions in only a few seconds. The significance of the ICT and the Internet are seen and enjoyed in these days because learning, teaching, communicating, and exchanging ideas are so easy and the physical distance of people in different parts of the world is no longer a significant factor in communication.

2.4 Indonesian Language Learners

Learning English has been a global issue all over the world because more and more students in Indonesia are learning English although they are not English Majors. Indonesian students used to learn English inside and outside the class since it has been a routine subject for Indonesian citizens almost in every educational institution. The Indonesian students are nowadays experiencing with a rapid changing of lifestyle in which the technological improvements and innovations make their life easier than before. The presence of the ICTs and Internet have changed how Indonesian tertiary students work, from hardcopy to paperless, from book to tablet, and from physical interaction to virtual collaboration (Rahmah, 2015). They are now having good understanding of the ways to use the Internet technology, gadgets, and mobile devices than the prior generations.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study was designed with the mixed methods approach since it aimed to clearly identify both quantitative and qualitative data.

3.2 Research Participants

The participants were 180 students, while the number of participants for the focus group interview was 8 student volunteers from the whole group of 180 English Major students of Islamic State College in East Java, at Indonesia. This group of 180 students was considered the participants for this study since they could provide the best information related to this study via the questionnaires they were asked to fill out. From within this group, 8 students volunteered to participate in the study by being in the focus group interview conducted by the researcher.

3.3 Data Collection

There were two research instruments in this study:-

The Questionnaires

The two questionnaires from the study were designed from the related literature review on language learning in the digital era from theories of many scholars and experts dealing with language learning in the digital era. The first questionnaire was adopted and adapted from those used by some well-known scholars and researchers on

the same topic (Oxford, 1990; Nunanand Lamb, 2006; Chapelle, 2003; Yang and Chen, 2007; Sarica and Cavus, 2009; Sharpe, Beetham and Freitas, 2010; Vinu, Sherimon and Krishnan, 2011; Perbawaningsih, 2013; Cho, 2014; Akyuz and Yavuz, 2015; Mohammadyari and Singh, 2015; and Rahmah, 2015). The second questionnaire was adopted and adapted from Oxford (1990); Schmidt and Watanabe (2001) and Griffiths (2008). Using the relevant statements from the experts were acceptable (Dörnyei, 2003). When the contents of the questionnaire are not theory-driven, the chances for discovering something new are obviously much greater. Importantly, using these statements in a questionnaire was acceptable since these could answer the research questions of the study. As stated by Dörnyei (2003, p. 31), the initial stage of questionnaire design should focus on clarifying the research problem and identifying what critical concepts need to be addressed by the questionnaire.

The Focus Group Interview

The Focus Group Interview was conducted to get information on how the groups of the selected participants thought and experienced about their reflections on the digital about their experiences on preferred learning strategies, supportive environments, and choices of learning opportunities.

3.4 Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected from the questionnaires were keyed into Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23.0 to generate descriptive statistics and reveal the percentage, average, and standard deviation value from the questionnaires results. The data obtained from the focus group interviews were analyzed by content analysis to gain students' in-depth understanding and orientation of their reflections in learning English towards digital learning on their preferred learning strategies, supportive learning environments, and choice of learning opportunities. Table 3.4 shows the criteria for the interpretation of the mean value of the questionnaire items and level of frequency.

Table 3.4 The Criteria for the Interpretation of the Mean Value (Tavakoli, 2012)

Mean Value	Level of Frequency	Level of Agreement
4.21 – 5.00	Always	Strongly Agree
3.41 – 4.20	Often	Agree
2.61 – 3.40	Sometimes	Neutral
1.81 – 2.60	Seldom	Disagree
0.00 – 1.80	Never	Strongly Disagree

4. Findings

4.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

4.1.1 Preferred Learning Strategies

From the responses of 10-item statements about learning strategies, the results of the overall mean value showed that most of the students stated that they “agreed” ($\bar{x}=3.86$) to employ the strategies as referred to in the table.

Table 4.1.1 Frequency Level of Students' Use of Learning Strategies

Items	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of Frequency
1	I like to ask and be taught directly by my teachers	4.38	0.71	Always
8	I download English materials in the Internet to support my learning.	4.12	0.71	Often
3	I access various websites to support my English language learning.	3.95	0.81	Often
7	I communicate with my teachers and peers via the Internet applications.	3.75	0.86	Often
10	I do my homework using the Internet.	3.64	0.77	Often
9	I memorize some important websites.	3.32	0.83	Sometimes
6	I like to do online English exercises to practice my English.	3.31	0.82	Sometimes
5	I prefer to speak with native speakers on the Internet rather than people around me.	2.98	0.74	Sometimes
4	I prefer to take notes using computer gadgets rather than paper notebooks.	2.77	0.84	Sometimes
2	I like to ask to my friends in learning English.	2.74	0.81	Sometimes
Overall mean results		3.86	-	-

4.1.2 Supportive Learning Environments

From the 10-item statements on the learning environments, it was found that, from the results of the overall mean value, all of the students stated that they “agree” ($\bar{x}=3.86$) with the supportive environments as showed in the table.

Table 4.1.2 Frequency Level of Students' Use of Learning Environment

Items	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of Frequency
5	I like it when my teachers teach by using technology.	4.02	0.76	Often
7	I like it when my teachers allow me to use ICTs to do assignments.	4.02	0.83	Often
6	I am familiar with using search engines to find the information I need.	3.99	0.80	Often
8	I like it when my teachers make us work in small groups.	3.96	0.83	Often
4	Materials in the digital screen are more attractive than white board writing.	3.90	0.92	Often
2	I feel comfortable to learn with a high-speed Internet at my college.	3.84	0.89	Often
3	I like learning with many activities that require ICTs use.	3.79	0.77	Often
10	Learning using ICTs makes me become independent learners	3.74	0.76	Often
1	I learn English from EFL/ESL websites on the Internet.	3.70	0.79	Often
9	I read articles or books on the Internet	3.64	0.76	Often
Overall mean results		3.86	-	-

4.1.3 Choices of Learning Opportunities

The results of 10-items from the learning opportunities section showed that, from the results of the overall mean value, the students stated that they “agree” ($\bar{x}=3.67$) with the choice opportunities as displayed in the table.

Table 4.1.3 Frequency Level of Students’ Use of Learning Opportunities

Items	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of Frequency
8	The Internet is the most valuable sources of information for me.	3.98	0.89	Often
2	I learn and search anything on the Internet.	3.89	0.72	Often
3	I have an opportunity to make choices about how I learn.	3.89	0.82	Often
10	I have an opportunity to assess my own progress.	3.89	0.78	Often
4	My teachers encourage me to access online materials inside and outside the class.	3.80	0.81	Often
9	I discuss and share my English problems in the social network.	3.53	0.86	Often
6	I practice my English speaking from online video clips (YouTube, Metacafe, Vimeo, etc).	3.30	0.88	Sometimes
7	I like to have a direct contact with a native speaker using the Internet.	3.29	0.94	Sometimes
1	I have the Internet facilities at my home.	3.24	1.06	Sometimes
5	I do not have an opportunity to use English in my daily life.	2.88	0.92	Sometimes
Overall mean results		3.67	-	-

4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Data from the focus group interviews were analyzed and presented using content analysis to emerge some themes and categorize participants’ statements.

4.1.1 Learning Strategies

What strategies do you usually use in learning English?

Data Extract	Themes
When I study, I prefer to have teachers as facilitators because it is difficult to understand materials without teachers and they know more about the theory. Rather than friends, I prefer to ask teachers	Socio-virtual Strategies
The advantages when we follow the teachers’ instruction, we know what to do based on their example	
I access some websites using Google because google know everything to make learning easier for the assignments, having fun, such as chatting, listening to songs, and discussing in a forum.	Internet Based Resources Strategies
I do online exercise to evaluate my abilities and get current information. Also, watch videos to train speaking and pronunciation.	
I bookmark for some important websites to make me easy visit the	Digital Tool

websites	Strategies
I use smartphone to write and capture information because it was more efficient and effective. The data can be saved in the online drive, and they did not have a good writing.	
For communication, I like to chat with my teachers and friends using social media to practice English and share new ideas with their friends. Sometimes I do an online video with native speakers.	Interpersonal Online Strategies

4.1.2 Learning Environments

What environments do you like the most when you learn English?

Data Extract	Themes
We like when teachers allow us using the Internet because it make us active and creative in accessing many sources from the Internet, such as books, articles, and supporting research.	Innovative Teachers' Skills
We also like if can study in a small group because we could get many ideas and help one another, especially for those who have more experience and high proficiency skills	
We like when we can study using digital screen because everyone can see and it was more interesting. If the materials were in the blackboard, it was boring and monotone	
So, if there are all those environments. all of us can be independent learners because the Internet help us them in providing and understanding the information and learning materials when our teacher was absent	
When my college provides high speed internet connection. It is good to watch video, do virtual learning, and learn effectively to browse the information and download some materials	High Speed Internet Connection
I like if I can access English websites to support my learning because it is efficient and they can access anywhere, anytime, and anyplace	Digital Multimedia
I like if we can use search engines such as Google because I could find and download anything for my study and I can read some articles in my smartphone or laptop	

4.1.3 Learning Opportunities

What learning opportunities do you have and expect?

Data Extract	Themes
I can learn if I have Internet connection in my college and home because having the Internet connection can help to study and download some related books for learning efficiently and productively	Accessible Digital Learning
The online open sources also give us opportunities get many references and confirm what I have learnt in the classroom	
It is good if we have some opportunities to make online group in social network because this application could get closer with friends and teachers to share and solve problem	Online Interaction
I also have a chance to interact with native speakers and it is very helpful to improve my English, get any feedbacks from my speaking abilities, such as effectiveness and pronunciation. I usually have contact with them in online video and also chatting	

I expect to have teachers that let us decide our learning choice, especially to do the assignment and not only focus on one sources.	Teachers' Encouragements
For me I do face to face problem solving because teachers could solve the problem straight to the point and inquire to explore and access the learning materials in the Internet	
In learning English, I also have a chance to evaluate my skills abilities toward friends, final examination, and personal diary	
We have some opportunities to practice and speak English around the campus with our classmates, friends, and some people who were willing to speak English with them. But not in our home because people there prefer to use our mother language.	Understanding he Students' Learning

5 Discussions

5.1 *What are the students' reflections on their preferred learning strategies in learning English in the digital era?*

5.1.1 Socio-virtual strategies

These strategies have a close relationship with social-mediating activity and interacting with others in virtual circumstances, which include cooperation and questions for clarification to the teachers. The quantitative data showed that most of the students used these strategies strategy ($\bar{x} = 4.38$). It was also underpinned by their comments regarding these strategies that they preferred to ask to their teachers than their friends for their learning. They liked to be encouraged by their teachers since they believed that the teachers knew more than them, especially about a theory in a particular subject. This finding indicated that the students wanted digital and traditional learning to be implemented in the classrooms. This response was also in line with Trucano (2005), Means et. al, (2010), Means et al. (2013); Smith & Chipley (2015) who suggested that instructors should encourage online learning and increase students' interest in blended learning by embedding supported digital and blended learning opportunities within traditional courses in order to empower teachers and learners to move away from teacher-dominated to student-center approaches to achieve the learning outcomes. Integrated learning is suitable for the students nowadays since it can incorporate multiple learning models. Blended learning means blending online tasks and activities with classroom teaching. Learners in this era do not want to be filled with knowledge for the rest of their lifetime by finding, analyzing, and acquiring new information when they need it (Graham, 2006; Evseeva and Solozhenko, 2015; Giarla, 2016). The findings show that with such integrated learning, the roles of instructors and students had changed the ways teachers should teach and the ways students should learn. Therefore, the teachers no longer have direct control of the teaching process and they act more as facilitators.

5.1.2 Internet based resources strategies

The students liked to access some various websites to download English resources. The data from the questionnaires showed that the students were frequent and sometimes to use the strategies ($\bar{x} = 4.12$, $\bar{x} = 3.95$, $\bar{x} = 3.64$). They had positive attitude where they often and occasionally studied using the ICTs and Internet. It indicates that the students preferred to get the learning materials to support their learning from the Internet. The comments from focus group interviews also imply that they accessed particular websites for their learning, downloaded learning materials, and believed that the open resources from the Internet could support their learning in some tasks. As

stated by Borgman, (2008) and Mohammadyari and Singh (2015), in the networked learning, the digital learners like to download some materials from the Internet and whenever they want to study, they can access the Internet as their means to learn and most of them use podcasts, blogs, wikis, e-learning to improve their English performance. The current learners have grown up in a world where learning is as accessible through technologies at home as it is in the classroom and the technology can provide unique opportunities for authentic, rich learning experiences and develop new digital literacy skills that will enable them to work effectively (Borgman et al, 2008; Sharpe et al, 2010). The findings show that there has been a fast expansion of web based learning to support language learners in this era and the students have been familiar with the use of web 2.0 technologies for individual and learning purposes. Thus, the teachers should be able to facilitate their students in using the Internet as their learning resources as well as to support their learning skills.

5.1.3 Interpersonal Online strategies

The strategies were used in students' communication with their friends, teachers and native speakers to cooperate with them. The numeric data showed that the students frequently and occasionally employed the strategies ($\bar{x} = 3.75$, $\bar{x} = 2.98$). These strategies allowed the learners to get familiar with the use and culture of the target language by chatting, sharing, and practicing with native speakers using online videos. The students used the Internet to chat, share, and practice their English. The students liked to communicate in virtual environment where they liked instant message to talk with their teachers, peers, and native speakers. They were convinced that these strategies could be used to communicate effectively rather than face to face communication. The findings point out that since the learners nowadays communicate differently, using visual images and different written languages, interacting and socializing differently, such as on Facebook, Blackberry, Line and WhatsApp messengers, and learning collaboratively with their friends using social network (Gibbons, 2007; Berk, 2009; White et al, 2011; Keser, 2012; Zamani and Mohammadzadeh, 2013). Additionally, many learners used to ask their Internet friends in social media when they have problems in English, as well as discuss their project in social media forum rather than face to face meeting because the Internet technology has helped the learners in everything, such as to exchange and share any ideas related to the learning process and also to communicate more efficiently and effectively (Chapelle, 2003; Yang and Chen, 2007; Sharpe et al, 2010; Vinu et al., 2011; Rahmah, 2015). Thus, the findings showed that the use of online chatting and sharing were able to stimulate the students in practicing their language skills without fear of the ridicule or embarrassment they often experienced in the physical classroom. The students also expressed that by using the Internet, they were also able to absorb how the speakers initiated and sustained a conversational exchange, negotiate meaning, and non-verbal communication.

5.1.4 Digital Tool strategies

The quantitative data display that the students used digital tools occasionally ($\bar{x} = 3.32$ and $\bar{x} = 2.77$). The focus group interviews show that they preferred taking note using gadgets to make their learning easier. This result implied that using digital tools could be effective because the students could save their writing on the online storage drive. The use of digital tools in language learning was acceptable since the learners nowadays are keen to learn English using digital technology rather than traditional learning (Prensky, 2001; Sarica & Cavus, 2009; Akyuz and Yavuz, 2015; Rahmah,

2015). A study from Liu (2014) also showed that although books are very convenient to carry, computers connected to the internet are incomparable in terms of language learning. On the whole, computers are much more advantageous than books as far as language learning is concerned.

Another strategy was using bookmarking after browsing the information in the Internet. This strategy was acceptable because the students could utilize the tools provided in the laptop and smartphone. In addition, websites were seen as the basic function of the browser providing students with the experience of negotiating the network environment. Recording the Web browser's bookmarks or favorites files is easy to accumulate an extensive collection of reliable educational Web sites that can be shared with colleagues (Kingsley, 2007; Churches et. al, 2010). Thus, the use of the Internet is no longer complementary tool but primary need for language learning in this era. The strategies could also customize the students' learning, allowing them to choose what to learn, demonstrate students' language learning as well as trigger them to assemble and compose the information they have found from the Web.

5.2 What are the students' reflections on their supportive learning environments in learning English in the digital era?

5.2.1 Innovative Teachers' Skills

The supportive learning environments that the students most liked were when their teachers used the ICTs and Internet in teaching English, as well as allowed them to use digital tools in learning. The mean values of the statements were ($\bar{x} = 4.02$) and ($\bar{x} = 4.02$) which indicated that the students favored to have environments equipped by technology. Their comments emphasized that teachers' guide in learning was not only implemented by the students in their preferred learning strategies but also in their supportive environments. It showed that they preferred to have teachers as their facilitators. In addition, they liked it when their teachers taught using technology and allowed them to use the ICTs and Internet in doing their assignments. As stated by Margaryan et al. (2011) and Jones (2015), the educators ought to promote the use of the technologies and techniques that systematically produce improved learning and instruction because the use of technology in formal learning increases when more tools are used and when instructors integrate technology into the course. Thus, the technologies have the potential to fundamentally transform how and what people learn in the future.

The students also liked to have teachers who have ability to conduct group learning in the classroom in order to be independent learners ($\bar{x} = 3.96$) and ($\bar{x} = 3.74$). Their comments showed that working in small groups was effective because they could collaborate and got many ideas from their friends and could stimulate them to be independent learners. These findings have been proved by some researchers, such as Johnson et al. (2007) who emphasized that small group work is able to maximize the learner's own and others' learning. In addition, collaboration and group work can support deep learning and enhance learners' engagement (Johnson et al., 2007; Baeten et al., 2010; Herrmann, 2013). Smith & Chipley (2015) added that the digital tools are constantly evolving, online and individualized support for students are needed to encourage them to incorporate innovative digital learning. The students reflected that the teachers should encourage the students to learn how to gather and compose information from around the globe, develop research skills, strengthen creative abilities, and increase their engagement in both cooperative and independent learning. From the findings above, a small group could provide the authentic communication within the

groups since every student is allowed to share and build on ideas of other participants. Additionally, the instructors should know how to design learning process that encouraged participation by guiding how to operate the technology tools effectively. Finally, the effective use of technology in the classroom will enable students to become lifelong learners.

5.2.2 High Speed Internet Connection

The students also wanted to have learning supportive learning environments where they needed the Internet connections to support their learning as shown by the mean ($\bar{x} = 3.84$, $\bar{x} = 3.79$, $\bar{x} = 3.70$). Their comments also confirmed that by having high speed Internet and advanced technology, they could browse the information and find the learning material quickly. Their reasons are understandable since the Internet with high speed connection is needed for learning nowadays. Prensky, (2001); Best and Dunlap (2012) showed that high-speed Internet allows students and teachers to download, manipulate, and create multimedia projects, communicate with others around the world, participate in online courses and assessments, and access abundant open education resources because they have special characteristics as craving for speed, preference for pictures rather than texts, online group chatting learning, and learning through activity rather than reading. Thus, it indicates that the rapid tools to access the Internet is required since the Internet affords up-to-date and easily accessible open resources for everyone.

5.2.3 Digital Multimedia

The students liked to study using advanced digital tool, as confirmed by the mean value scores ($\bar{x} = 3.90$, $\bar{x} = 3.64$, $\bar{x} = 3.79$, $\bar{x} = 3.74$). The students showed positive attitude toward studying in English using some digital tools for learning. They commented that advanced technology benefits flexible learning. Additionally, they liked using technology tools to find the information easily and quickly and they often used Google as the search engine to find anything in the Internet. The ICTs and Internet could facilitate learners in accessing the English sources from anywhere, at any time and the could access the Internet as their means to learn and most of them use podcasts, blogs, wikis, e-learning to improve their English performance (Vinu et al., 2011; Mohammadyari and Singh, 2015). Importantly, Rattanawongsa & Koraneekij (2015) illustrated that information literacy nowadays has facilitated the students in this century to easily access information and the search engines, such as Google, Yahoo, and Bing that have become a part of their life. Learners used everyday tools such as Google and Wikipedia to find information and used social networking sites and instant messaging systems to communicate with their peers (Sharpe, et. al, 2010). Thus, the result indicated that the educational applications of modern information and communication technologies could be made more effective when they were embedded in multimedia learning environments created to enable productive learning.

5.3 What were the students' reflections on their choices of learning opportunities in learning English in the digital era?

5.3.1 Accessible Digital Learning

The most used learning opportunities chosen by the students were searching and finding English resources on the Internet ($\bar{x} = 3.98$, $\bar{x} = 3.89$, $\bar{x} = 3.24$). The students indicated that they had positive attitude whom they selected their own learning opportunities. Their comments indicated that they had many opportunities when there

was the Internet connection around them because by having the Internet, they could search for anything in the Internet, especially to obtain English learning materials. Prensky (2001), Chappelle (2003), Sarica and Cavus (2009) stated that most learners nowadays employ well-developed productive learning habits, attitudes and behaviors in their leisure activities with digital technology because the presence of the Internet gives many benefits for them to subscribe some websites for their information in learning English. In addition, as the digital natives, they are active experiential learners who are multi-taskers and parallel processors. Using the technology for learning can also strengthen students' learning experiences and help the learners to understand the information for their language learning with real worlds situations (Yang and Chen, 2007; Akyuz and Yavuz, 2015). Thus, the new technologies had contributed to the language learning in which the learners were placed in control of what and how they learnt English. The ICTs and Internet had become an integral tool in real situations.

5.3.2 Online Interaction Opportunity

The students also had opportunities to discuss and share English problems in the social network ($\bar{x} = 3.53$, $\bar{x} = 3.30$, $\bar{x} = 3.29$). They often studied by the social network to discuss and shared their English ideas or problems. They implied that the use of social media was beneficial for them because by having a group or an account at social media, they could share anything about their learning using social media, such as English learning problems, new issues, or any ideas related to their study. Furthermore, it allows them to have opportunities to practice English speaking from online video clips as well as online video chatting with native speakers. They indicated that students had been able to improvise their skills in sharing and building on ideas of other participants every time. As stated by Peterson et al. (2002), Vinu et al. (2011) the presence of ICT and other digital media have facilitated the learners to learn from anyone, anywhere, and any time. The learners in the digital era like to learn collaboratively with their friends using social network and prefer to interact using technology with teachers and friends rather than talking face to face (Vinu et al., 2011; Keser, 2012; Zamani and Mohammadzadeh, 2013). As a result, the students nowadays may feel more comfortable disclosing feelings or personal information via social media rather than in person (Subrahmanyam and Greenfield, 2008). The results revealed that the social media enhance students' English skills. In other words, the use of ICT tools could be used directly or indirectly in facilitating, enhancing, and improving the opportunities on the effectiveness and efficiency of the learning process. They could utilize the web 2.0 to share and discuss virtually with their online friends although they only recognized them through the virtual world.

5.3.3 Teachers' Encouragement Opportunity

The next learning opportunities chosen by the students were freedom to choose and assess what they want to learn, as well as to be encouraged by their teachers ($\bar{x} = 3.89$, $\bar{x} = 3.89$, $\bar{x} = 3.80$). The students admitted that these opportunities could enable them to choose how they learn English and help them to assess and evaluate their learning progress. They also liked when their teachers supported them not only to choose and evaluate their learning but also to support them in accessing leaning resources from the Internet. Online instruction has emerged as a popular mode and a substantial supplement to traditional teaching where every teacher needs to understand how the students learn (Panoutsopoulos and Sampson, 2012; Hung & Chou, 2015). The teachers do not need to worry anymore since the students had been familiar with the

ICTs and Internet. As shown by Oblinger, (2003), Rainie et al., (2006) White, et. al., (2011), the students do not experience difficulties with the use of complex technological products since the technology provides new and exciting opportunities for teaching and learning and the teachers can be the facilitators and progress monitors for them. The results were acceptable since the significance of the ICTs and Internet are enjoyed in these days for learning, teaching, communicating, and exchanging ideas. The physical distance of people in different parts of the world is no longer a significant factor in communication.

5.3.4 Understanding the Students' Learning

The last opportunity used by the students was the students had an opportunity to use English in their daily life ($\bar{x} = 2.88$). The students commented that they had occasionally opportunities to speak around the campus. They admitted that it was very difficult to use and speak English around their home and area since they did not want to speak English. The teachers should be able to provide the opportunities of practicing English since practicing the target language functioned for social interaction which is useful at all language proficiency levels as well as to make them become good language learners (Rubin, 2014; Griffiths, 2008). The findings revealed that to create learning opportunities to speak English with people around the campus, the teachers should be able to encourage their students in practicing their English in their daily life rather than using their mother language. Thus, the teachers should provide the students with the opportunities in using English in a real situation since it is not enough for them to use virtual learning because they did not fully use the opportunities in practicing the target language using online video and having direct contact with native speakers.

6. Implications

The results of the present study show that digital learning is a powerful pedagogy that could help to develop students' language skills. The ICTs and Internet are thoroughly enjoyed these days for learning, teaching, communicating, and exchanging ideas since they also helped the students to find and download learning materials, open sources, and information easily based on their needs. Importantly, the use of integrated learning or blended learning is essential for students since they require a classroom where their teachers can create new learning approaches through traditional learning and digital learning. The teachers no longer have direct control over the teaching process and they should act more like facilitators in which teachers and students work in supporting of one another. When the teachers adopt appropriate roles, they can easily direct the students in activating their strategies, use the supportive environments and opportunities provided by the teachers in order to enhance their skills, understanding, and motivation.

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