



DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (PERSPECTIVE OF JEAN PIAGET-LEARNING THEORY)

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ABSTRACT

Digital Empowerment in English Language Teaching (Perspective of Jean Piaget-Learning Theory) is a library project by Ni Putu Ratni based on curiosity about excessive positive and negative phenomena among students from utilizing digital education. The objectives of the research were the elaboration of (1) how the education world perceives the digital era; (2) how the English language field is empowering digital learning and teaching environments; and (3) how the challenges of utilizing digital in ELT. This research was conducted using a qualitative approach and utilized the library research method. Documentation, data collection method, and data triangulation method of data analysis the result of the research as follows:

(1) The world of education considers the digital era has the possibility to transform education into a modern and more accessible way that attracts global interest in supporting massive educational institution development. It could promote various types and forms of educational media and facilities, such as e-books and video materials, giving the students many chances to explore and experience knowledge in a fun way, as Jean- piaget emphasized about the critical point of learning; (2) The English language field is empowering digital into the learning and teaching environment by utilizing it to make the learning process enjoyable and by providing learning strategies that consider student unique characteristics to provide a better learning atmosphere; and (3) the challenges in utilizing digital facilities into ELT came from the digitalization side effects on students, student, teacher, and environments; therefore, English teachers should do more research and training in empowering it.

Keywords: *Digital Education, Digital Education in ELT, Digital Language Learning.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the world suffered from the attack of COVID-19, the world of education has significantly transformed in every aspect of its field, such as school and class management, curriculum, education facilities, etcetera. Based on the formal notification letter issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia number 4, year 2020 concern on *Pelaksanaan Kebijakan Pendidikan dalam Masa Darurat Penyebaran Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19)*, Indonesian education policy implemented online/virtual strategy of learning as the preventive solution to the massive spreading of the pandemic within Indonesia. One of the emphases of the notification letter was about the variety of learning activities and assignments for the students. It guided teachers to imply a variety of home learning among students based on individual student's interests and considering the differences in their condition and their available home facilities (Mendikbud RI, 2020). Up to now, even though the home learning policy has already been replaced by a joint decree of four Ministers of the Republic of Indonesia, the virtual/online strategies in learning for the students are still implemented by teachers even though they are not employing fully online classes. The joint decree document responded to the government's notice about the necessity of the conventional class learning process for students who had difficulties joining distance learning (Mendikbud-Menag-Menkes-Mendagri, 2020).

The evaluation of the learning-from-home strategy, which is conducted by the government, besides the finding that there were students who have difficulties in joining distance learning, also delivered a result that vocational students necessary to receive practice and train class opportunities for developing their appropriate skill and competence for the world of Industry, business field, and working field (Mendikbud-Menag-Menkes-Mendagri, 2020). Those evaluation results showed that virtual learning, supported by digital facilities and linkage



with modern world technology, still needs to be deeply studied to find the best form and strategy to implement it in Indonesia's learning process. Some researchers elaborate the negative impact of virtual learning to the students, as follows: (1) Muassomah et al., (2022) in their research, entitled *the Academic Demoralization of Students in Online Learning During Covid-19 Pandemic* elaborate that online education as a learning solution during the pandemic has caused students became irresponsible, lazy, dishonest, and lose an sense of discipline and responsibility; (2) Umeogu & Ojiakor (2014) in their research, entitled *the Internet Communication and the Moral Degradation of Nigerian Youth* described that one of their research results showed extension of internet role to students' education and morality has responded by students' negative attitude in the online classroom, such as chatting and internet browsing during the learning class; (3) Karmen & Pribadi (2022) in their research, entitled *Dampak Positif Negatif Pembelajaran Online dalam Sistem Pendidikan Indonesia Pasca Pandemi Covid-19* elaborated the negative impact of online learning one of them as the disability of the students to do pear socialization, disability to recognize their teachers, and they have to experience the learning process that rolled by their parents, instead of their school teacher.

The negative impact of virtual/online learning is not the only thing that happens to the students because there are studies that found a positive impact of this way of learning, some of them as follows: (1) Firda-L et al., (2019) in their research, entitled *Pemanfaatan Portal/Web E-Learning pada Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di SMA Negeri 4 Singaraja* emphasized that e-learning does not only make the students sit and learn but also make them active in observing and demonstrating their knowledge. E-learning also enables the virtualization of learning materials into various type of formats so it becomes more attractive and motivated for the students to take further lessons on it; and (2) Isma et al., (2022) in their research entitled *Urgensi Digitalisasi Pendidikan Sekolah* elaborated that school digital education is essential for science development requirement, it enables to increase students' learning quality, allow students to creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration, it also enables to support government education program of *merdeka belajar* that requires free space and time to be implemented.

Based on the general knowledge about the positive and negative possible impacts of online/virtual learning on students, it became interesting to comprehend English language teaching and learning in this digital education world and how digital technology links with English language education. It is understood that English as an international language has been utilized as the intermediate language to communicate between the virtual world and digital users. From another point of view, to achieve English proficiency skills, students will need to learn and practice intensively utilizing the language, either in reading, writing, listening, or speaking skills. The role of digital technology is required to acquire language learning targets. Therefore, the effort to empower it and use it in designing a teaching and learning environment for the student becomes essential for the teacher.

Previous studies that elaborate on the essential knowledge that supports teacher's consideration in empowering digital education for the excellent purpose of English Language Teaching and have become the primary rationale of this recent research consist of (1) Srinivas (2023) in his journal article, entitled *Digital Technology in English Language Teaching* elaborated that Language teaching practice often assumes as most of the difficulties that learners face in the study, it is the consequence of the degree to which their native language differs from English (a contrastive analysis approach). He implied that technology has become integral to education, making English language learning and teaching more convenient while opening new opportunities.; and (2) Yuan et al. (2019), in their journal article entitled *Empowering English Language Learners Through Digital Literacies: Research, Complexities, and Implications*, describe the characteristics of digital literacies, which include critical thinking, multimodal learning, and participation, create an environment that empowers English Language Learners (ELLs) to take an active role in their education. This approach promotes student autonomy and develops English language competencies both inside and outside of the classroom.

Both of the previous research elaborated deeply on the aspects of digital technology for English language teaching and learning, its potential, and how the most significant part of the technology can provide better support for teaching the English language. Still, neither provided the knowledge about how the solution in managing the



differences among students consists not only of financial differences but also of characteristics and living environment differences along with the implementation strategy of the online/virtual learning process with those differences attached. Therefore, it became interesting to conduct research about digital empowerment in English language teaching (ELT) based on the perspective of Jean Piaget-learning theory.

To describe digital empowerment for ELT and align it with Jean Piaget's learning theory, the research problem statements were compiled as follows: (1) how does the education world perceive the digital era? (2) how does the English language field empower digital in the learning and teaching environment? and (3) how do the challenges become obstacles to utilizing digital in ELT? Based on those research problem statements, this research aims to elaborate on how the education world perceives the digital era, how the English language field empowers the digital learning and teaching environment and the challenges of utilizing digital learning in ELT. The research objectives' data required some theories to be utilized as the analyzer; those theories consisted of (1) Perception Theory, (2) Jean Piaget – Learning Theory, and (3) Challenges Theory.

The second theory utilized in this research was Jean Piaget's learning theory. Piaget is widely recognized for his theory of the stages of cognitive development. He conducted extensive research, starting with his own children. The first theory utilized in this research was the perception theory of Gestalt. The theory of perception was built in 1910 by Max Wertheimer, K. Koffka, and Köhler based on Gestalt Psychology theory, which describes how visual perception works in physiology and psychology. Gestalt Theory is the notion that the summation of parts and how they interact, or the whole of something, is more significant than the individual pieces. This theory emphasizes that the individual parts that make up the whole cannot be individualistically used to describe the entire completely (Kwasniewski, 2023). Max Wertheimer described the principles of the Gestalt theory of perception as follows: 1) the principle of similarity, which explains that humans utilize similar components to group pieces together; 2) the principle of continuation, which is explaining that humans will follow the easiest, or smoothest, path along linear visuals, even if other parts of the visual change; 3) the principle of closure which is explaining that human's brains will complete visuals with missing pieces if enough data is available; 4) the principle of proximity which is explaining that human mind will organize individual components that are relatively closer to one another; 5) the principle of figure/ground which is explaining that human mind can produce many images from one visual by distinguishing between the foreground and background; and 6) the principle of symmetry & order (also called *Prägnanz*) which is explaining that human simplify a complex shapes into simple or more symmetric shapes. These principles, also known as the laws of organization, were explained in the context of perception and problem-solving (Culatta, 2024). And then Leung (2023) explains that perception is a multi-stepped process. The two major processes, receiving stimuli and making meaning of the stimuli, can be divided into smaller steps as follows: 1) stimulation (understanding stimuli exist); 2) organization (comparing existing knowledge with the stimuli); 3) interpretation (making meaning of the stimuli); 4) memory (storage of one's experience about the stimuli); and 5) recall (using the stored knowledge in the future). The process of human perception, as emphasized in Gestalt theory, has been utilized to investigate the education world perception in the digital era and discovered several stages in which a child's mind develops. However, what's more relevant in our current discussion is how Piaget described the gradual process of developmental changes in children's knowledge construction. He proposed two mechanisms for incorporating new information into existing knowledge structures, called schemes: assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation is the process of understanding new information so that it can seamlessly fit into existing schemes. Accommodation, on the other hand, requires people to modify their schemes significantly to accommodate new information. For example, when students learn multiplication for the first time, they may initially try to understand it as an addition, but eventually, they will comprehend it as repeated addition. In contrast, when students encounter imaginary numbers for the first time, they may need to fundamentally change their understanding of a number to accommodate this new concept. Ultimately, the goal is to use assimilation and accommodation to adapt to the world (Doroudi, n.d.). Ornstein & Levine (1985) described human intelligence development stages according to Jean Piaget's explanation, which was divided into four stages, namely: (1) sensorimotor (18 months – 2 years old); (2) preoperational (2 – 7 years old); (3) concrete operations (7



– 11 years old); and (4) formal operations (11 – 15 years old). At the stage of concrete operations (elementary school students' stage of age in Indonesia), children have the ability to isolate the general characteristics of objects, size, duration, length, etc. Then, they use them in more complex mental operations; they become more abstract and able to comprehend the number of signs, processes, and relationships. They might appear to accept the adult authority, but in their mind, they question it. Jean Piaget urged that human growth and development occur in sequential stages, that there are stages of readiness, and that there are activities appropriate to each stage. Therefore, the learning process has to be done sequentially, and cumulative instruction should begin at an early age. The role of the teacher for the students is to assist them in their learning processes, and they have to notice that students cannot be forced to learn before they are ready. Teachers should encourage students to explore and experiment, instruction has to be given individually depending on students' readiness, and teachers should provide them with concrete materials to touch, manipulate, and use (Abdi et al., 2011), based on Jean Piaget's theory, explained that children's learning is based on children's activities when they interact with their social environment and their physical environment.

The third theory utilized in this research was the challenge of Sanford's theory. The role of a challenge claimed by Sanford (1967) in his challenge and support theory emphasizes that people grow best when they continuously experience an appropriate balance of support and challenge (Sanford, 1967). Sanford's significant assumption that supports were pre supposed to be related to academic achievement and satisfaction (Strayhorn, 2013). He posited that students experience challenges when they face situations in which they are not prepared with the appropriate skills or knowledge. Conversely, he defined "supports" as the people and services in the student's environment that help them navigate challenges successfully. Importantly, Sanford suggested that student development is a product of person-environment interaction and surmised that for students to grow, they must be ready to do so. Such "readiness" is determined by the student's maturation and/or environmental conditions that support growth (Virtue et al., 2020).

Based on the description of the theories used in this research, the problem question of the research, and the primary rationale of previous studies of this research, it showed that the novelty of this recent study was a finding in the form of reference, which possible to be used in managing the differences among students that not only consists of financial differ, but also characteristic and living environment differ combined with the implementation strategy of online/virtual learning process with those differences attached

2. METHODS

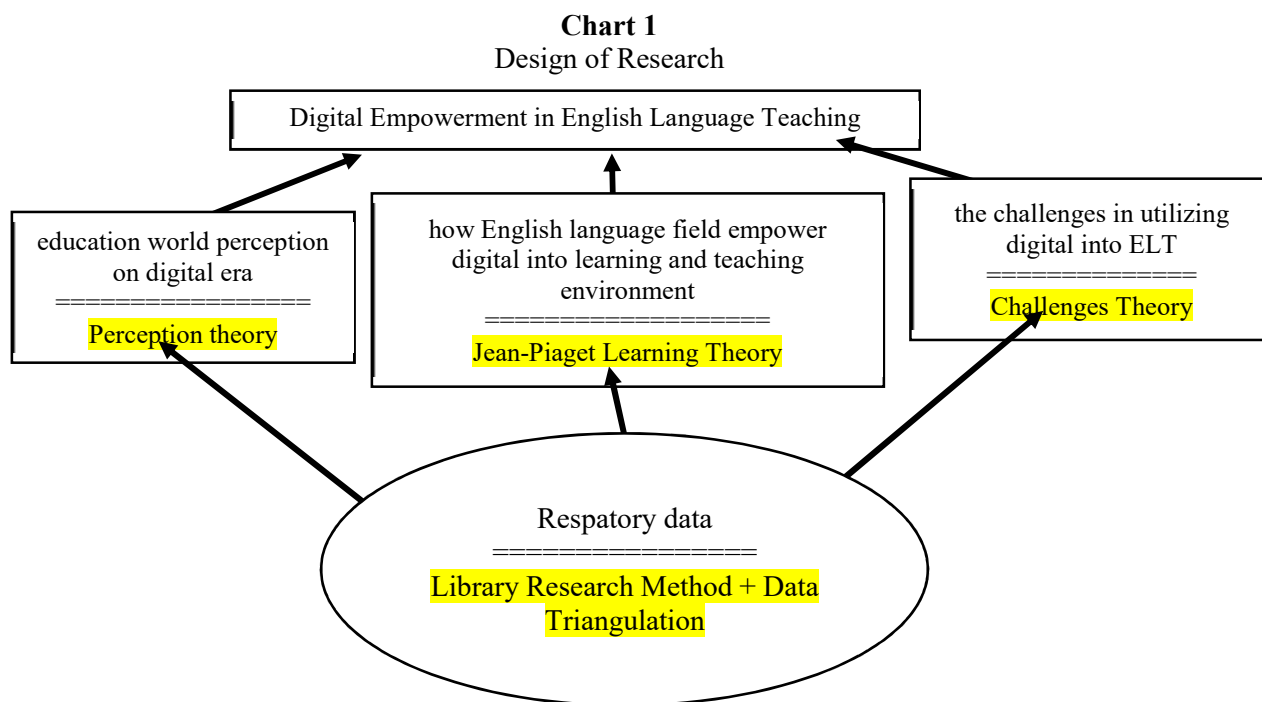
Sugiyono (2022) explained that qualitative research has descriptive characteristics because the collected data is in words without emphasis on numbers. Some other experts explained qualitative research approaches as follows: (1) Qualitative research is research in which one of its utilization is to examine something deeply or to examine the background of something that makes it happen, such as the motivation background, roles background, values background, attitudes background, and perceptions background (Moleong, 2016); and (2) The results of qualitative research more emphasize the significance rather than a generalization, the type of qualitative research data is data that related to the categorization, data characteristics are intangible in words, and it also subjective because it can be interpreted differently from one person to another (Riduwan, 2013). The qualitative approach in this research is focused on library research, where the data was collected from the second source, such as research reports and articles from previous studies that various researchers and other literature and report documents, including other available media, have conducted. Some characteristics of the library method of research consist of (1) the researcher face-to-face with data documentation; (2) the data is ready-made; the researcher does not need to collect it by him/herself from the research field; (3) the type of data is secondary data, it did not come directly from first source; and (4) the literature data condition is not bound by time and space because the data is static, never change, already recorded (in texts, numbers, pictures, voice recorder, or movies) (Zed, 2014).

This research utilized the descriptive method, specifically the library descriptive method. The descriptive method of research is defined by the experts as follows: (1) Nawawi & Hadari (2006) emphasizes that descriptive



study focuses on the discovery of the facts according to the actual situation, and (2) Sanjaya (2014) explains that descriptive research is a type of research that associated with the efforts to find the solution for the problems that exist at present and expose it based on the data that found. Therefore, the data collection method in this research will be documentation from the selected library data, and the data triangulation method will be utilized for data analysis. Triangulation was combining data from different sources to study a particular social phenomenon. In 1978, Norman Denzin identified four basic types of triangulations as follows: (1) data triangulation, which is defined as the use of multiple data sources in a single study; (2) investigator triangulation, which is defined as the use of multiple investigators/researchers to study a particular phenomenon; (3) theory triangulation, which is defined as the use of multiple perspectives to interpret the results of a study; and (4) methodological triangulation, which is defined as the use of multiple methods to conduct a study (Hales et al., 2010).

Those elaborations clarified the design of the research was qualitative research that utilized library descriptive method and documented related data repository as data collection method and technique, which means all data from this research was secondary data, which are collected from static data as the subjects, such as Journal articles, related works of literature, and written and digitally documents. The instrument used to collect data was the list of questions related to the research problem statements, with the documentation tool consisting of a note taker and a laptop. A variety of data from journal articles, books, and other documentation were utilized to analyze data by data to find the description of (1) the education world perception of the digital era; (2) how the English language field empowers digital learning and teaching environment; and (3) the challenges in utilizing digital into ELT. The design of the research was illustrated as follows:



Anotation:

The library method in conducting this research has collected data from various static data repositories and provides various data collections needed for data triangulation analysis. All data was categorized into focus points (objectives) of the research and was combined with related theory, which was used to analyze each problem statement. Selected and related data that combined with perception theory has been utilized to describe education



world perception in the digital era; selected and related data that combined with Jean-Piaget Learning Theory has been utilized to describe how the English language field empower digital in learning and teaching environment; and selected and related data that combined with Challenges Theory has been utilized to describe about the challenges in utilizing digital into ELT; the conclusion about Digital Empowerment in English Language Teaching based on the perspective of Jean-Piaget Learning Theory can be compiled by analyzing the answer of all problem statements of the research.

3. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

In this digital era, almost everything depends on technology and depend on technology-based information. Most things and activities in every field of the human world have become more accessible and faster, including education. Every aspect of education is invaded by digitalization, such as material studies, classroom management, peer interaction, and even student and teacher interaction touched by digitalization. Education transformation into digital education happened rapidly after the COVID-19 pandemic because it was driven by necessary government regulation, which was issued in order to prevent much more massive spreading of the virus within the country. Digital education provides speed-up knowledge, motivation boosters, and adequate learning time. However, many research findings show a negative impact on the digitalization of learning and a positive impact on it. Therefore, this recent research focused on finding the education world's perception in the digital era, how the English language field empowers digital technology learning and teaching environment, and the challenges in utilizing digital technology in ELT.

Focus data for the first problem statement has been elaborated on using Gestalt perception theory. The Gestalt theory of perception consists of 1) the principle of similarity, 2) the principle of continuation, 3) the principle of closure, 4) the principle of proximity, 5) the principle of figure/ground, and 6) the principle of symmetry and order. Those principles elaborated into the aspects of world perception in the digital era, as illustrated in Table 1, as follows:

Table 1. World Perception on the Digital Era

Principle	Similarity	modern technology makes life easier
	Continuation	everyone has to follow the rhythm if does not want to be left behind
	Closure	social media can be dangerous
	Proximity	by following digital development, we can leap in life
	Figure/ground	innovation requires information and technology
	Symmetry & Order	consider the positive benefit first before the consequence

Based on published data from the Ministry of Communication and Information, Puspitasari (2022) elaborated that information technology, digital media, and the internet are the keys to the daily lives of global society, including Indonesian society. Specifically for Internet use, it is used not only as an entertainment medium but also for other activities such as school, work, health services, and even politics. The number of internet users in Indonesia is very high. However, it is interesting to note whether there is a correlation between the high number of internet users in Indonesia and the users' awareness of human rights in the digital world as legal subjects.

There are still several things that need to be done by the Indonesian Government in the efforts to fulfill digital human rights; some of them are: (1) increasing digital literacy and capacity building to ensure internet users understand their rights and obligations in the digital world; (2) fulfilling digital infrastructure needs to



support equal distribution of internet access for all Indonesian people; (3) accelerate the implementation of the laws and regulations needed to protect human rights in the digital sector, such as Personal Data Protection; and (4) determining the appropriate role, in order to balance the protection of individuals and societal values with the provision of the right for expression freedom in the digital world. But besides the government, the public is also expected to be able to activate control functions over internet use so that digital human rights can be fulfilled and protected.

Based on the data analysis, it can be described that the world of education considers the digital era as the possibility to transform education into a modern and more accessible way that attracted global interest for supporting massive educational institution development; it could promote new digital products and services in the education sector such as e-books and video materials, giving the students many chances to explore and experience knowledge in a fun way as Jean-Piaget emphasized about the critical point of learning.

Focus data for the second problem statement has been elaborated on using the Jean-Piaget Learning Theory. The elements of Jean Piaget's Learning theory have been used to analyze the data about the English language field to empower digital learning and teaching environment; the elements described in Table 2:

Table 2. ELT Empowers Digital

Elements of Jean Piaget's learning Theory	Stage of Student	elementary school level of student (stage of concrete operations)
	Characteristics	their cognitive isolates the general characteristics of objects, size, duration, length, etcetera, and then they use them in more complex mental operations
	Cognitive Development	they use their comprehension in more complex mental operations; they become more abstract, able to comprehend the number of signs, processes, and relationship
	Psychology Development	they might appear to accept the adult authority, but in their mind, they grow question about it
	Material Readiness	it depends on student readiness
	Activities Readiness	it depends on student readiness
	Role of Teacher	encouraging students to explore and experiment, giving instructional individually depending on students' readiness, providing them with concrete materials to touch, manipulate, and use, also considering their interaction with their social environment and their physical environment

Piaget urged that learning strategy has to consider students' stage of age because it aligns with their cognitive development. They can isolate the general characteristics of objects, size, duration, length, etcetera, and then they use them in more complex mental operations and transform them into more complex mental operations, they become more abstract, able to comprehend the number of signs, comprehend processes, and comprehend about relationship even though those abilities are still in the primary stage because they possible to have some questions about something that interest them, but they consider to keep it in their mind. In this stage of cognitive development, the teacher must patiently encourage students' motivation to explore and experiment. In order to do that, the teacher must understand that every student is unique and comes from different social and physical environments.

The role of the teacher as facilitator and learning guide is essential in the world of education, especially for students in the elementary stage. There are some researchers have proven this statement, some of them as follows: (1) Simbolon & Hamdan (2020), in their research entitled Appreciation of Poetry from Class V SD Negeri 3 Awirarangan described one of their findings, showed that the students' appreciation on poetry were low. When this finding is compared with the elements of Jean Piaget's Learning Theory, it can be concluded that the



finding possibly arose from the lack of material and activity readiness from the students, mainly because the material did not meet the students' interest (2) Rezeki (2021), in the research, entitled *Children's Language Acquisition due to the Influence of Animation Film* had finding that showed the words that Omar Hana used in the film influenced the children's language acquisition aged three years old and five years old. When this finding is compared with the elements of Jean Piaget's Learning Theory, it can be concluded that the finding possibly arose from the activities readiness of the children; and (3) Novitasari et al., (2023) in their research, entitled *Kemampuan Bahasa Inggris Awal pada Periode Linguistik Anak Usia Dini* find that children able to listen to related songs to the vocabulary that they learn, lower than the first one was able to listen to random vocabulary, lower than the second one was able to listen to short stories, lower than the third one was able to listen to vocabulary in sequence, and lower than the fourth one was able to listen to the pictures pointing instructions according to the vocabulary they hear. When this finding is compared with the elements of Jean Piaget's Learning Theory, it can be concluded that the finding possibly arose from the fulfillment of the element of characteristics, cognitive development, material readiness, and, most importantly, the role of the teacher because the stage of students in their research is under elementary school students.

Based on the data analysis, it can be described that the English language field is empowering digital learning and teaching environment by utilizing it to make the learning process more fun and relatable and by creating opportunities for personalized learning, helping students to learn at their own pace and helping educators with limited resources to be able to provide students with better learning opportunities. This can be possible when the teacher considers the elements of Jean Piaget's learning theory in preparing, conducting, and evaluating the student's learning journey.

Focus data for the third problem statement has been elaborated on using Sanford's challenges theory. The elements of the challenges theory of Sanford have been used to analyze the data about the challenges in utilizing digital into ELT, the elements described as following Table 3:

Table 3. Digital Utilize Challenges in ELT

Elements of Sanford's Challenges Theory	challenging Situation	students experience challenges when they face situations in which they are not prepared
	appropriate skills or knowledge	preparation will eliminate challenges
	social and environmental support	confidence will grow among students
	Facility environmental support	convenience will make learning easier
	Student's readiness	it depends on student readiness
	Teacher's readiness	it depends on student readiness

Sanford urged that challenges will only arise when the situation becomes difficult for the students to deal with, especially when they are unprepared because of a lack of knowledge and skill. Challenges also arise when students do not receive support from their social and facility environment and when they and their teacher are not ready for the potential aspects that can transform into challenges. Prihatmi (2018), in her research entitled *Pengaruh Media Sosial terhadap Prestasi Belajar Bahasa Inggris pada Program Studi Teknik Mesin ITN Malang*, elaborated that the duration of social media use has a negative influence on students' English learning achievement. When this finding is compared with the elements of Sanford's challenges theory, it can be concluded that the finding possibly arose from a lack of students' and teachers' readiness to utilize digital for the positive purpose of ELT. The teacher should train more about design strategies for utilizing digital technology in



classroom management and classroom environments so that the students have no chance to use it for negative purposes during the learning process. Therefore, based on the data analysis, it can be described that the challenges in utilizing digital facilities in ELT came from the following: digitalization side effects, students, teachers, and the environment.

As the complete result of data analysis, it can be concluded that the similarities and the differences between this research and the previous research are as follows: (1) the similarity: the previous and the current research emphasized the potential use of the digital or empowering digital into the world of education; (2) the differences: the previous studies focus on the elaboration of the digital education; meanwhile this current research focuses on the empowering digital into ELT and provides reference about the stages of concern aspects for a better result of teaching, and introduce the challenges in digitization ELT.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis, the findings of this current research consist of the following: the world of education considers the digital era can transform education into a modern and more accessible way that attracts global interest for supporting massive educational institution development, it could promote new digital products and services in the education sector such as e-books and video materials, giving the students many chances to explore and experience knowledge in a fun way as Jean-Piaget emphasized about the critical point of learning; that English language field is empowering digital into learning and teaching environment by utilizing it in making the learning process more fun and relatable, and by creating opportunities for personalized learning, helping students to learn at their own pace and helping educators with limited resources to be able to provide students with better learning opportunities. This can be possible when the teacher considers the elements of Jean Piaget's learning theory in the process of preparation, conducting, and evaluation of the learning journey of the students and the challenges in utilizing digital facilities in ELT came from the digitalization side effect; student and teacher, and environment. Those are the conclusions of this research finding; however, this research only provides an introduction to the challenges in empowering digital education into ELT. Therefore, it could be suggested that further researchers continue the work in related studies more deeply.

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