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Applying Digital Storytelling to Improve Students' Writing Narrative Text Learning

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Abstract

Based on a preliminary investigation into the reasons of pupils' failure to write narrative texts. This study seeks to explain the ambiance of enhancing students' story writing skills via the use of Digital Storytelling. Together, the collaborator and I created the lesson plans, implemented the activities, made observations, and reflected on the outcomes. To accomplish these aims, we performed two cycles of action research consisting of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Using classroom observation, interviews, questionnaires, and assessments, the data was obtained. Digital Storytelling was beneficial in enhancing students' story writing skills, according to the data. This is evident from the results of three tests: the pre-test, the test after cycle 1 and the test after cycle 2. Where the typical test score is 3.57 on the first test, 5.36 on the second, and 7.01 on the third. It is also evident from the results of the survey, in which 52 percent of students agree and 36 percent of students strongly agree and provide positive comments, while the remaining students provide negative responses. The interview findings also revealed the teacher's optimism and positive reactions.

Introduction

In teaching and learning English as a foreign language, the inability of students, particularly in Indonesia, to complete compulsory writing activities is one of the most crucial issues. According to [Akinwamide & Adedara \(2012\)](#), teaching writing skills is more challenging than teaching other abilities. According to [Hum \(2015\)](#), of the four language skills, students regarded ESL writing to be the most difficult and complicated to learn. It is crucial because English language competence is advantageous for children to join this complex period, which may affect their future social life, and to prepare them for a more difficult environment.

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Based on our observations at SMP N 1 Kolaka Utara, we determined that the students were unmotivated and disinterested in completing the assignment since the writing tasks were uninteresting. Students were expected to compose phrases and paragraphs without any guidance, making it difficult for them to articulate their thoughts on paper. According to [Yuan et al. \(2020\)](#), writing is a tough assignment for students since it requires complicated actions such as subject analysis, note taking, and data collecting, which all culminate in reflective thoughts. During the pandemic, we discovered that the lack of experience under the new emergency curriculum rendered the pupils inadequate. Due to the paucity of sources, the eighth graders also seem to be inexperienced with English. The lack of experience and understanding in writing skill acquisition will undoubtedly have an influence. According to [Shadiev & Yang \(2020\)](#), writing is the language acquisition ability in which most pupils are least skilled. As recent studies suggest that while learning to write, students may struggle with producing material, constructing organizational structures, setting objectives, performing the technical components of writing, rewriting the text, and redefining their goals (See for example: [Fiorella & Kuhlmann, 2020](#); [van Alten et al., 2020](#); [Rapanta et al., 2020](#); [Bikowski & Casal, 2018](#)).

Teaching eighth-grade writing in junior high school is not simple, particularly if the students are EFL learners; the instructor must exert effort to make it happen. According to [Al Zoubi \(2018\)](#), the pupils' native language impacts their ability to acquire the target language. The use of digital storytelling may aid in the improvement of students' writing skills. In order to support children in becoming autonomous learners throughout the epidemic, digital storytelling is required. It encourages kids to be more reflective and inventive, and their brain processes become more active ([Gallets, 2005](#)). Digital Storytelling puts language learners closer to the target culture, making language learning more pleasant and inspiring. [Beck and Sitzman \(2019\)](#) state that instructors may give students with a shared experience to promote learning via sight, sound, and touch. According to [Hava \(2021\)](#), Digital Storytelling may be used as an effective learning method to enhance students' writing ability. The students' enthusiasm in Digital Storytelling may contribute to their success in learning the target language.

Creating narratives or recounting events via writing is not simple. Regarding Digital Storytelling for enhancing EFL narrative writing, [Hava \(2021\)](#) concur that it helps students improve their narrative writing. Considering the above justification, we were inspired to use Digital Storytelling to enhance the story writing skills of SMP N 1 Kolaka Utara students.

Research Methods

This study involves classroom-based action research. This action study aimed to increase students' writing ability, particularly in narrative texts. This collaborative action study incorporates the English instructor as the collaborator and the researchers. We collaborated with the eighth-grade English instructor of Class B.

During the first semester of the academic year 2021/2022, we performed an action study with the participation of thirty Class VIII B students who worked as a team to undertake this research. Before the intervention was executed, the researchers would undertake a preliminary observation designed to identify a variety of English writing issues. On October 18, 2021, the first observation of the teaching and learning process was done. In addition, the activity was carried out between October and December of 2021. The researchers used the English curriculum of class VIII B at SMPN 1 Kolaka Utara while carrying out their tasks.

The acquired information was both qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative data consisted of a description of the action's process, interview transcripts, classroom observation, a

questionnaire, and a picture, while the quantitative data consisted of the students' writing exam. To get this data, the researchers used the following data gathering techniques:

Classroom Observation

Observation was employed to document the teaching and learning process in relation to the identified weaknesses and impediments. The instrument of observation was an observation guide for the classroom.

Interviews

Before and after the study was carried out, the interview guidelines were followed in order to elicit the collaborator's thoughts and reactions. The instructions for the interview served as the instruments for the interview.

Questionnaire

In order to collect information regarding the students' level of interest in the activity of learning to write narrative prose, questionnaires were distributed and filled out. Before and after the actual study was carried out, the tools were used to elicit replies and views from the students. The information that was gleaned from the surveys was shown using percentages. The following formula, which was taken from Weigle (2002), was used to calculate the students' responses:

Notes:

a = percentage of students' answers.

x = the number of students who answer.

$\sum n$ = the total number of students who finish the questionnaire.

$$a = \frac{x}{\sum n} \times 100\%$$

After the percentage of students' answers was known, the formula is used to find out the average of each student's answers were as follows:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum a}{m}$$

Notes:

\bar{X} : = average of each student's answer.

$\sum a$ = total percentage of students' answers.

m = the number of questions

Test

The assessments were utilized as a monitoring device to indicate how much students had improved their writing abilities in narrative texts, and they were used to illustrate this development. The scores that the students received on the quiz are an example of quantitative data, and they were acquired as part of the information that was obtained from the test.

After the score of students' writing test was known, the formula is used to find out the average of each student's test was as follow:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

Notes:

- X = the mean score
 $\sum x$ = the sum of all score
N = the total number of subjects

Technique of Data Analysis

The classroom observation, the interview, the images, the questionnaires, and the results of the pre-test and post-test all provided assistance for the analysis of the data, which explains the teaching and learning process that occurs in the classroom. The analysis of the data was accomplished via the process of reflecting on the study cycle. The researcher was able to interpret the data more accurately as a result of this contemplation. The outcome of the reflection served as the basis for figuring out how to proceed with the action research's follow-up to the next cycle. This was done so that the study could fulfill its intended goal.

Procedure of the Study

The research process consists of a few steps, the first of which is identifying the topical issue via reconnaissance; the next three are planning, action, and observation; and the last step is reflection.

Determining the Thematic Concern-Reconnaissance

The purpose of the reconnaissance was to gather information on the students' writing abilities, specifically with regards to the production of narrative material. During this stage, a few different activities were carried out. In addition to observing the teaching and learning process, conducting interviews with the instructor, and distributing questionnaires to the students, we also undertook these activities at SMP N 1 Kolaka Utara. We were able to find and identify the existing difficulties by doing the interview in addition to the observation. Because of this, the researchers came to the conclusion that the students need the use of digital storytelling, which was also anticipated to increase the students' writing abilities when it came to composing narrative text.

Planning

After the issues were identified, we established some strategies in order to ascertain the probable courses of action that might be put into effect during the action research. We worked along with the English instructor of Class VIII.B at SMP N 1 Kolaka Utara to organize the activities that we would carry out. At this stage, the English instructor served as a partner with us as we drafted the lesson plans for teaching and learning (method that was considered suitable to solve the problems, the material to teach and the instruments to collect the data).

Action and Observation

Following the completion of the preparation, the activities were carried out as planned in the classroom. In accordance with the agreement reached between the collaborator and our group, the activities were carried out in two cycles. The first cycle included a total of four meetings. During the first cycle, the researcher led the research subject in the class through an activity involving writing that included the researcher seeing objects. The first cycle of the lesson was designed to help students develop their writing skills, particularly in the area of narrative prose. In addition, Cycle II was supposed to go on from where the preceding action left off, which meant that the researchers would carry out the next activity.

We, together with the English instructor, carried out the observation and documented the students' activities throughout the teaching and learning process. Following the conclusion of the English session, we conducted an interview with the instructor and distributed a

questionnaire to the students. In the activities, the researchers and the collaborator discussed the execution of the actions and analyzed the results. The discussion was based on the observations, questionnaires, and interviews that took place in the actions. The conversation served as an assessment that would be utilized to better the next steps, and this evaluation was employed.

Reflection

In this last phase, the collaborator and we discussed the action that was carried out and then we reflected on our findings. We had a conversation on the introspection that was done. This reflection served as a means for reviewing the research that had been carried out. This was done so that we could determine the advantages and disadvantages of the first cycle. If it was determined that the acts that were carried out were successful, the researcher proceeded to put them into practice by having the pupils read various types of narrative texts (fables). On the other hand, if the activities did not enhance the students' writing abilities, the researchers sought to identify other actions that would be more appropriate to use in the subsequent cycle.

Results and Discussion

Improvement through Digital Storytelling

The first study question that was addressed in this section was the subject of whether or not the use of digital storytelling assisted students in the eighth grade enhance their narrative writing ability. CAR was used in order to evaluate the students' progress in their narrative writing skills; however, the scope of this analysis was restricted to just four components of writing.

There were a variety of story writing skills represented among the class of thirty students that made up class VIII B at SMP N 1 Kolaka Utara. They had conducted the pre-test, the test after the first cycle, and the test after the second cycle, all of which were story writing tests. Table 1 has a detailed description of the outcomes that students achieved while composing narrative texts.

Table 1. The Result of Writing Narrative Tests

SN	TEST 1 (Pre-test)						TEST 2 (after Cycle 1)						TEST 3 (after Cycle 2)					
	C	O	V	G	M	S	C	O	V	G	M	S	C	O	V	G	M	S
1	1	1	1	1	1	2.5	2	2	2	1	2	4.62	3	2	2	2	3	6.12
2	1	1	1	1	1	2.5	2	2	2	1	1	4.25	3	2	3	2	2	6.25
3	2	2	2	1	2	4.62	3	2	3	1	2	5.87	3	3	3	2	3	7.12
4	2	2	2	1	1	4.25	3	2	3	1	2	5.37	3	2	4	2	3	7.12
5	2	2	2	1	1	4.25	3	2	3	1	2	5.87	3	3	3	2	3	7.12
6	2	2	2	1	1	4.25	3	2	3	1	1	5.5	3	3	3	2	2	6.75
7	2	2	2	2	2	5	2	3	3	2	2	6	3	3	3	2	3	7.12
8	1	1	1	1	1	2.5	1	2	3	2	1	4.37	2	3	3	2	2	6
9	1	1	1	1	1	2.5	1	2	3	1	1	4	2	3	3	2	2	6
10	1	2	2	1	1	3.5	3	3	3	2	1	6.37	3	3	3	2	2	6.75
11	2	2	2	1	1	4.25	2	3	2	2	2	5.5	3	3	3	3	3	7.5
12	2	2	2	1	2	4.62	3	3	3	2	2	6.75	3	3	3	3	3	7.5
13	2	2	2	1	2	4.62	3	3	2	2	2	6.25	3	3	4	2	2	7.25
14	2	2	2	1	2	4.62	3	2	2	2	2	5.75	3	3	4	4	3	8.37
15	1	1	1	1	1	2.5	2	2	2	1	1	4.25	3	3	3	4	3	7.87
16	1	1	1	1	1	2.5	2	2	2	1	1	4.25	3	2	2	2	2	5.75
17	1	1	1	1	1	2.5	2	2	2	1	1	4.25	3	2	3	2	3	6.62

18	2	1	1	1	1	3.25	2	2	2	2	1	4.25	3	2	3	2	2	6.25	
19	2	2	2	1	2	4.62	3	3	3	2	2	6.75	3	3	4	4	2	8	
20	2	2	1	1	1	3.75	3	2	2	2	2	5.75	3	3	4	4	3	8.37	
21	2	1	1	1	1	3.25	2	2	2	2	2	5	2	3	3	3	2	6.37	
22	2	1	1	1	1	3.25	2	2	2	2	1	4.25	3	2	2	2	2	5.75	
23	1	2	1	1	1	3	2	3	3	2	2	6	3	3	3	3	3	7.5	
24	1	1	1	1	1	2.5	2	2	2	2	1	4.25	3	2	3	2	3	6.62	
25	1	2	2	1	2	3.87	3	3	3	3	2	7.12	3	3	4	4	2	8	
26	2	2	2	1	1	4.25	2	2	3	3	2	5.87	3	3	4	3	3	8	
27	2	1	2	1	1	3.75	2	2	3	3	2	5.87	3	3	3	3	2	7.12	
28	2	1	1	1	1	3.25	2	2	3	2	2	5.5	3	2	3	3	3	7	
29	2	1	1	1	1	3.25	2	2	2	2	1	4.25	3	2	3	3	3	7	
30	1	2	2	1	2	3.87	3	3	3	2	2	6.75	3	3	3	2	3	7.12	
						Mean Score	3.57					Mean Score	5.36					Mean Score	7.01

Notes:

SN : Student Number C : Content O : Organization
V : Vocabulary G : Grammar M : Mechanics S: Scores

After observing 30 students' writing narrative tests, the improvement of the students' scores were seen in the S column. The scores were achieved by the total scores of four writing aspects in terms of content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Based on the data above we found that:

Content

The achievement of content can be seen in *table 1* where 12 of the students in the first test were still categorized in level 1. It meant that the topic was not clear and the details were not relating to the topic and the rest of students were categorized in level 2 which is complete and clear but the details are not relating to the topic. As an improvement, there were only 2 students in the second test and no more students in the third test were categorized in level 1. It was also shown in the data that 12 of the students in the second test and 27 of the students in the third test were categorized in level 3 that the topic was complete and clear but the details are almost related to the topic.

Organization

The achievement of organization can be seen in *table 1* where 14 of the students in the first test were still categorized in level 1. It meant that the organizing paragraph was not clear and transitional words/phrases were arranged with misuse of connectives. The rest of students were categorized in level 2 whose organizing paragraph was not clear and transitional words/phrases were arranged with few misuses of connectives. As an improvement, no more students in the second test and in the third test were categorized in level 1. It was also shown in the data that 9 of the students in the second test and 20 of the students in the third test were categorized in level 3 that the paragraph is very clear but transitional words/phrases are arranged with few misuses of connectives.

Vocabulary

The achievement of vocabulary can be seen in *table 1* where 14 of the students in the first test were still categorized in level 1. It meant that they had very poor knowledge of words, word forms and not understandable. The rest of students were categorized in level 2 where they had a limited range of confusing words and word form. As an improvement, no more students in the second test and in the third test were categorized in level 1. It was also shown in the data that 16 of the students in the second test and 20 of the students in the third test were categorized

in level 3 that they had few misuses of vocabularies, word forms, but did not change the meaning. There also 7 students in the third test were categorized in level 4 that had effective choice of words and word forms.

Grammar

The achievement of grammar can be seen in *table 1* where there only 1 student in the first test was categorized in level 2 that had numerous grammatical inaccuracies, while the rest were still categorized in level 1 that had frequent grammatical inaccuracies. Even though in the second test there still 9 of students were categorized in level 1, however as an improvement, there 17 students each in the second test and the third test were categorized in level 2. It was also shown in the data that 3 of the students in the second test and 6 of the students in the third test were categorized in level 3 that had grammatical inaccuracies but no effect in meaning. The grammar improvement in the third test even showed there 5 students categorized in level 4 that they had very few grammatical inaccuracies.

Mechanics

The achievement of mechanics can be seen in *table 1* where 22 of the students in the first test were still categorized in level 1. It was dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation and capitalization. The rest of 18 students were categorized in level 2 which has frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Even though there were still 12 students in the second test were categorized in level 1, however, as the improvement in the second and third test there both 28 students were categorized in level 2. The rest 12 of the students in the third test were categorized in level 3 that has occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

Students' Perception

Questionnaire data are used in order to answer the second research question. The purpose of the questionnaire is to identify the students' perceptions on the use of Digital Storytelling in teaching-learning activity. Based on the result of the questionnaire given to the students, there were 30 students in class VIII B and all of them finished all the statements in the questionnaire. As the final result can be seen in table 2 and chart 1

Table 2 the Result of Students' Perception in Writing Narrative Text Learning Through Digital Storytelling

Statements	Degree of Agreement			
	SA	A	D	SD
I enjoy learning English through digital storytelling activity.	8 (26.7%)	22 (73.3%)	-	-
I give my full attention during digital storytelling activity.	10 (33.3%)	16 (53.3%)	4 (13.3%)	-
I am more motivated to learn English during digital storytelling activities.	12 (40%)	14 (46.7%)	4 (13.3%)	-
I can engage my interest to learn narrative texts deeper during digital storytelling activity.	6 (20%)	20 (66.7%)	4 (13.3%)	-
I can imagine the characters, time places and/or activities taking place in narrative text after watching digital storytelling.	12 (40%)	12 (40%)	6 (20%)	2 (6.7%)
I can understand the content of the narrative text after watching digital storytelling.	8 (26.7%)	20 (66.7%)	2 (6.7%)	-
I know how to write simple past tense in narrative text after watching digital storytelling.	11 (36.7%)	12 (40%)	6 (20%)	1 (3.3%)
I can improve my vocabulary in writing narrative text after watching digital storytelling.	10 (33.3%)	16 (53.3%)	2 (6.7%)	2 (6.7%)

I can develop my expression in writing narrative text after watching digital storytelling.	9 (30%)	15 (50%)	6 (20%)	-
I would like to participate in future digital storytelling.	22 (73.3%)	8 (26.7%)	-	-
Mean of Percentage	36%	52%	11%	1%

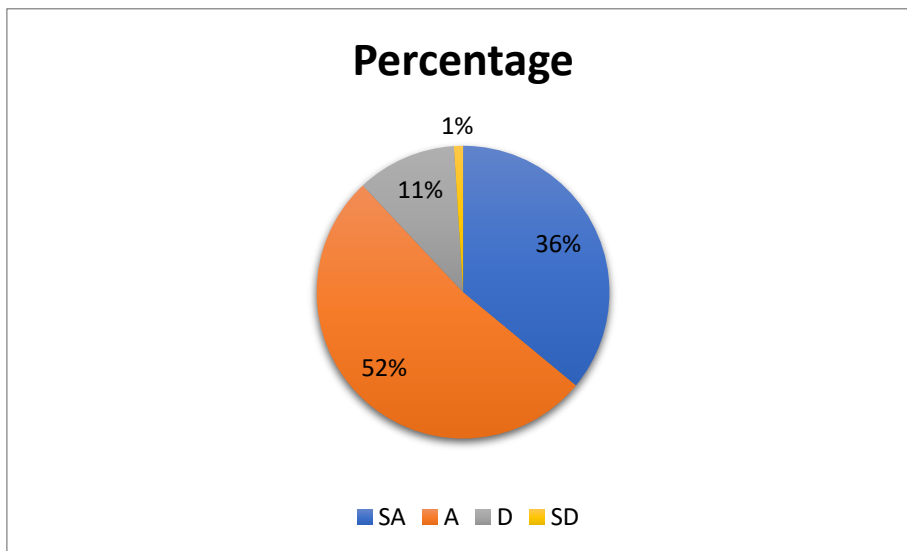


Figure 1. Percentage on Students Opinion

According to the pie chart, the students' overall opinions towards the use of digital storytelling in the classroom as a kind of educational activity were favorable. It was shown by a significant portion of the responses to the questionnaire. The usage of digital storytelling in educational activities in the classroom was seen favorably and positively by 52 percent of the class's student population. The results showed that 36% of the students highly agreed with the use of digital storytelling in learning activities in the classroom and had positive impressions of the practice. On the other hand, eleven percent of the student body was of the opinion that the use of digital storytelling in educational activities in the classroom was not beneficial and did not have positive opinions of the practice. While the remaining 99 percent of students were in agreement, there was one percent who strongly disagreed and did not have positive thoughts on the usage of digital storytelling in learning activities while in the classroom. However, the percentage of students who strongly agreed was higher than the percentage of students who disagreed and did not have positive perceptions on the use of digital storytelling in learning activities in the classroom. The percentage of students who strongly agreed was higher than the percentage of students who disagreed and did not have positive perceptions on the use of digital storytelling in learning activities in the classroom.

Opinions and Responses

The interview was given to collect the data about activities in teaching English in the classroom while the activities were still fresh in the minds of the teacher. This was a face to face (verbal) interview.

Table 3 the Opinions and Responses from the Collaborator

Post Interview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did you feel about the class after applying digital Storytelling? <i>“After applying digital storytelling, I feel that the students more understand how to rewrite and visualize the story”.</i>

- How did you feel about your teaching during the class by applying digital Storytelling?
“My teaching activities become more variable and more interested”.
- What kind of improvement or personal goals did you notice after applying digital storytelling in the classroom?
“I found some improvements of my students after applying digital storytelling; they become active in writing, they found new vocabularies and know how to pronounce it well based on the native, and of course they have fun in learning”.
- How was your student's writing comprehension ability after applying digital storytelling?
“My students writing comprehension ability increased because they start to combine their idea by writing it on the paper, connecting sentence by sentence. Although some of them still lack using the correct grammar I always appreciate their effort to try”.
- How was the participation of students when learning writing with applying digital storytelling?
“Their participation is pretty well, because they like hearing the sound, music and watching. Especially when it comes to animation or cartoon students so excited to notice the learning”.
- What obstacles did you see when applying digital storytelling in class?
“The obstacles I found; because the video used full English, so I need to replay it more and more until they got the point of the story...and it spend more time in learning activity”.
- Do you have any suggestions or strategies for improvement?
“Well, my suggestion is when we applied digital storytelling we need to introduce some vocabularies that might be included in the story. In order the student will directly understand the story by using the vocabularies and understand how to use the vocabularies well. So, they won't feel difficult to rewrite the story”.

On the basis of the interview result that was presented earlier, we are able to draw the conclusion that the collaborator or the teacher of eighth grade students in SMPN 1 Kolaka Utara showed positivity, as well as good responses to the Writing Narrative Text Learning through Digital Storytelling activity. This is the same thing as the findings of the research that [Lestariyana & Widodo \(2018\)](#) that suggest the use of digital storytelling as a teaching tool may help students become more motivated to write, enhance their ability to speak in front of the class or their academic performance, and increase their level of comprehension of their instructors' content. Students have reported having a better time and being less bored in class as a result of using digital stories to teach them how to write narrative texts. After analysing the data, we can conclude that students' understanding of how to write narrative texts is enhanced as a consequence of using digital storytelling.

Conclusion

Following on from the topic that was presented earlier as well as the outcomes of the study, there are certain inferences that can be drawn. Before beginning the implementation of digital storytelling, the researchers and the collaborator carried out many steps of the research process. These steps included defining the thematic concern-reconnaissance, Planning, Action, and

Observation, and the last step was reflection. The second benefit that students gained from participating in the Digital Storytelling activity was an opportunity to improve their academic self-esteem while also gaining some new information or expertise. Individual effort was expected of the students for this assignment, during which they were tasked with documenting their thoughts, emotions, and ideas in written form. The rise in the kids' test scores, which went from 3.57 on the pre-test to 5.36 after cycle 1 and 7.01 after cycle 2, is an indication of the improvement in the activities that the children have been participating in. Thirdly, when Digital Storytelling was used in a classroom setting, the children had a good reaction to the activity that was being done there. According to their perspectives, using digital storytelling might help them have more fun, improve their ability to absorb the material being taught, and increase their motivation to write, particularly narrative prose. As a consequence of this, the percentage of the students' view with regard to the implementation of Digital Storytelling was 36 percent who strongly agree and 52 percent, which corresponds to the criterion of agreement.

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