Students' Perception on the Digital Storytelling Implementation in Developing the Narrative Writing Skills

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ABSTRACT

This research tried to explore Civil Engineering students' perception on the impact of Digital Storytelling strategy to develop the students' writing skills. The study involved 48 participants from two classes in Civil Engineering Department in Politeknik Negeri Samarinda, and they filled out the adapted questionnaires which was divided into two sections: student's perception and how they are motivated to learn to write. The sections were the students' perception regarding the digital storytelling and the students' writing. The results showed that 85% of the students agreed that Digital Storytelling helped them in the process of learning in the class. They found out that this strategy made them enjoy writing the narrative composition in the class. And, whilst 88% of the participants agreed that the digital storytelling helped them to write well since they know the elements of writing.

Keywords: Perception, digital storytelling, writing skills

INTRODUCTION

In education, to face IR 4.0, the teacher must be creative in combining some technologies usage with the material taught in classroom. The used of technologies is able to help the students to explore their skills that are useful for them to face the world situation and condition, the technology and complex knowledge-based world, particularly during the pandemic. Technologies also make the students think logically and criticize in communicating, interacting, creating, and collaborating with their surroundings.

One of the important materials used by the teacher is a story. Stories are told to the students in order to explore the students experience as well as ideas. The students are able to communicate with their friends and teachers by sharing stories. In communicating, we must deal with telling, listening and responding to the stories. We have already known that the ancient way to spread out the stories by painting them on the wall of the caves. Then, stories were told from one to others, from one generation to the next generation. Since, the innovation of letters, the stories were written on the

paper so that everyone can read them. Nowadays, in the 21st century, stories are told by using some digital technologies.

Digital storytelling is one of a lot of digital medias used a learning method both in and outside the class. Digital storytelling is developed by Joe lambert, Dana Atchley and Nina Mullen in the early nineties in order to provide learners with media that allows them to tell the stories and also to preserve their storied for reflection at a later date (Lambert, 2013). Digital storytelling is still uncommon used in the class by the lecturer as a method to deliver the learning material in the class. This situation happens because of the lack of information of applying this digital storytelling by teachers so that it is important to introduce this digital storytelling to the student immediately.

This research attempted to find out the perceptions of 48 Civil engineering students about digital storytelling strategy. The students were in the second semester of Diploma IV of Road and Bridge Study Program. English is taught in Civil Engineering Department of Politeknik Negeri Samarinda as general basic subject. It is taught once a week in semester one and two in 16 meetings. This situation makes the researcher want to know more about students perception' on writing English composition that they had in the class since the researchers are also their lecturers. Before doing this research, the researcher had made a mini research to the students by asking them one by one about their difficulty in writing English narrative composition. Some of the students were still taught that writing in English was difficult for them. It was because the lack of the vocabulary they had that made them difficult to write a composition. Although they were not fond of writing, they liked watching English movie, listening English song, and playing English instruction games. The researcher also found out that all the students used laptop in the class so that the research was easy to be conducted. In this research, the researchers would introduce the digital storytelling to students before asking them to write freely about one theme that have relation with their main subject, that is Civil Engineering.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Armstrong in Garrety & Schmidt (2008) defines digitals storytelling as sharing a story through the use of multimedia such as digital images, music, video clips and voice narration. Digital Storytelling helps the teachers as well as the students in retelling a story by using the technology media such as laptop, hand phone, and computer. Frazel (2011) also describes that Digital storytelling is a process that blends media to enrich and enhance the written or spoken word. Digital storytelling can encompass many topics beyond the classic story, take many forms, and employ an ever-expanding array of software applications. A digital story may have a narration overlay and sometimes a music background; it may combine, in any number of ways, images, audio, and video to tell a story or to make a factual presentation. In many cases, sound, music, and images surround the written or narrated content. Moreover, Banaszewski (2005) adds that digital storytelling is defined as the practice of combining personal narrative with multimedia (images, audio and text) to produce a short autobiographical movie. From the expert's definitions about storytelling, it can be concluded that Digital Storytelling is the process of retelling stories with the latest technology in order to create an entertaining atmosphere in the learning process in the class. By using a digital storytelling, the students can communicate each other by sharing the stories. The teachers are able to apply digital storytelling as a means of teaching to support the students in developing their language skills.

Digital storytelling can be many things to many different teachers and many different students. Here are some of the things digital storytelling can accomplish in the classroom (Frazel, 2011):

a. Digital storytelling engages students and can help motivate them to learn core curriculum content.

b. Digital storytelling addresses the need for relevancy in learning for today's K–12 students.

c. Digital storytelling provides a hands-on, active instructional format, helping educators meet the needs of diverse student groups.

d. Digital storytelling promotes group activities in the classroom.

e. Digital storytelling can be individualized within the context of a class assignment.

f. Digital storytelling provides students with opportunities to apply emerging technologies as part of their learning.

g. Digital storytelling can support team teaching and learning across the curriculum

Some benefits in implementing Digital Storytelling in the class from some experts were also summarized by Robin (2017)

a. As a potent learning experience that encompasses much of what society hopes that students will know and be able to perform in the 21st century

b. The push for students to gain 21st century literacy skills by using the latest technology to communicate effectively is facilitated by students actively participating in the creation process of digital storytelling

c. Students develop enhanced communication skills as they learn to conduct research on a topic, ask questions, organize their ideas, express opinions, and construct meaningful narratives.

d. Students learn to critique their own work, as well as the work of others, facilitating social learning and emotional intelligence

Garrety & Schmidt (2008) introduced five emergent genres of digital storytelling. The five genres are: traditional digital stories; digital stories of learning; digital stories of project-based learning; digital stories of social justice and cultures; and digital stories of personal reflections. Beside that there are seven elements of storytelling introduce by Lambert in Robin (2017) to emphasize the process of storytelling in the classroom.

Table 1. Seven Elements of Digital Storytelling (Lambert in Robin, 2017)

Center for Digital Storytelling's Seven Elements of Digital Storytelling		
1.	Point of View	What is the main point of the story and what is perspective of the author
2.	A dramatic Question	A key question that keeps the viewer's attention and will be answered by the end of the story
3.	Emotional Content	Serious issues that come alive in a personal and powerful way and connects the story to the audience
4.	The gift of your voice	A way to personalize the story to help the audience understand the context
5.	The power of the soundtrack	Music or other sounds that support and embellish the storyline
6.	Economy	Using just enough content to tell the story without overloading the viewer
7.	Pacing	They rhythm of the story and how slowly or quickly it progresses

In Politeknik Negeri Samarinda, especially in Civil Engineering Department, English was taught as a general subject. It was taught only once a week in two semesters. There were two classes of 24 students who would be the participants of the research. In the class, the students learnt English that had relationship with the civil engineering subject. The students learnt the four skills of learning English that could help them to face the world. The researchers were also the lecturers for both classes so that the researcher had no difficulties to conduct the research. Before conducting the research, the researchers found that the students had problem the neat and good paragraph of narrative writing. Even though the majority of the students said that they preferred to write than to speak, but their writing was not satisfied the researchers as their lecturers.

METHOD

In collecting the data, the researchers used questionnaire adapted from Alkaaf (2017) in her research. This questionnaire was aimed to find out the civil engineering students' perception on the experience that they had after having digital storytelling their class. It consisted of 24 items. The items were classified into three sections: (1) Learners' opinions regarding the storytelling strategy. There were 13 items and aim to capture the students' perceptions in the experimental group about any potential learning benefits from the digital storytelling strategy. (2) Their writing in stories. There were five items and targets perceptions related to the effect of the digital storytelling on their composition of stories. (3) Their preparation before story writing in classroom and at home. There were five items exploring how learners prepare when they write a story in the class and the last question identifies how many times they write a story as homework.

There were three stages of digital storytelling strategy that the researcher had conducted. First, it was pre-digital storytelling stage. In this step, the researcher introduced the digital storytelling to the students. The researcher only showed some pictures, videos and text separately by using the LCD. It was as a warming up for the students before going into the main course. Next step was during the digital storytelling stage. In this stage, the researcher gave some short digital storytelling that had relationship the activities in the class. The students watched them together in the class.

After watching the digital storytelling, the researcher tried to elicit some vocabularies that the students could catch from the digital storytelling by giving some simple and easy questions. The last step was the post-digital storytelling. In this stage, the researcher asked the students to write a narrative writing about their activities in the workshop and laboratory. The time given to them to finish the narrative writing was 60 minutes.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After the students had finished writing their free narrative compositions, the questionnaire administrated to 48 civil engineering students in order to investigate the learners' views about their experience of the storytelling strategy. The students were asked to rate 24 items on a five-point Likert scale (i.e. 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree). There were 22 female students (46%) and 26 male students (56%) who gave the response to the questionnaire.
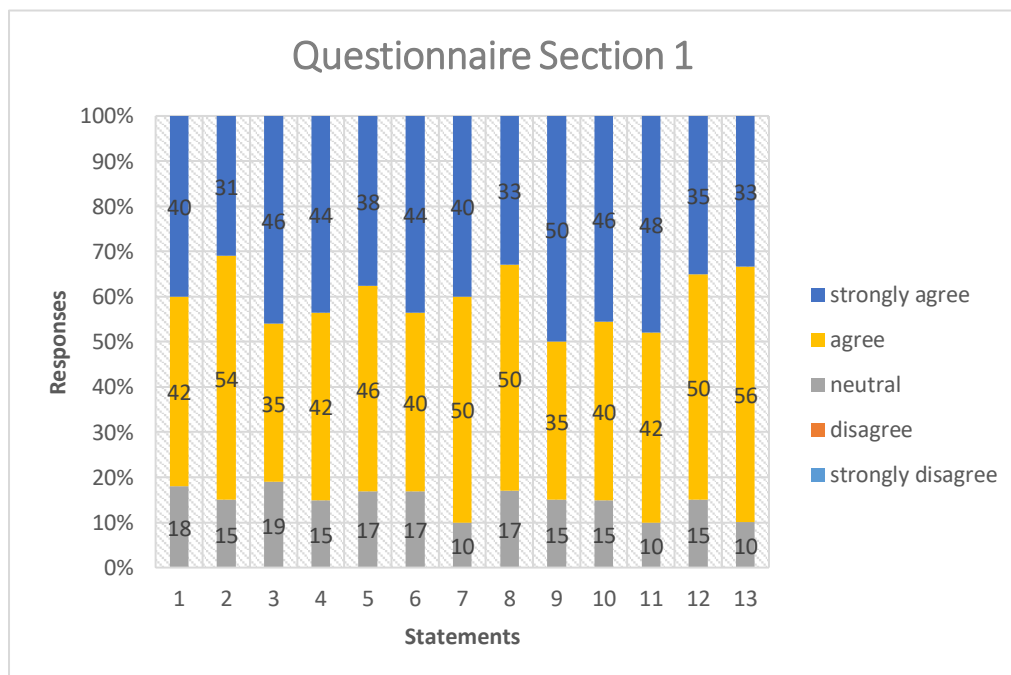

Figure 1. Questionnaire responses, Section 1: students' opinion regarding the storytelling strategy

From figure 1 above, we could see that no students disagree as well as strongly disagree to the questionnaire. The neutral choice of all statements of the questionnaire was also selected about 15% in average. It meant that 85% of the students gave the positive to the implementation of digital storytelling in the class. It means that digital storytelling benefited to them in learning especially in improving their writing skill. While watching the video as digital storytelling that explain the same materials with the book that they use in the class, the students found out that with technology we could add some pictures as well as record the voice. We could also learn that text can be formed not only in writing but also in blending some audios, pictures, and videos.

Dealing with writing process, Vasudevan et. al. in Yamac (2017) explained that texts become stronger and more complicated through digital storytelling, and the digital story makers become able to write for a wide range of audiences with the help of their communication competences and the ability to share their stories. The fact that digital storytelling gave some benefits in improving writing skills is a result of some researches that tried to find out the effect of digital storytelling in improving writing skill.
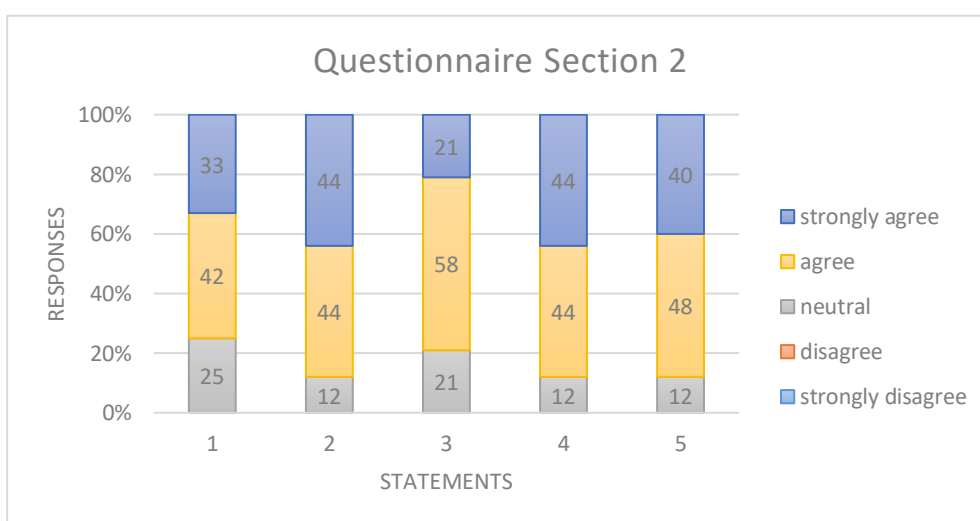

Figure 2: Questionnaire responses, Section 2: The students' writing in stories

From Figure 2, it can be seen that 79% of the civil engineering students likes this digital storytelling strategy and could write stories at school and at home based on its elements. The positive findings were almost dominant from all the participants for liking writing stories, becoming good writers as well as enjoying the story writing process because of the information of the elements of writing they have got. These

findings were also supported by the number of vocabularies that they could produce in writing free narrative paragraphs as their assignment after having digital storytelling in the class. In addition, the students like to have an outside assignment of story writing so that they can also explore their writing skills.
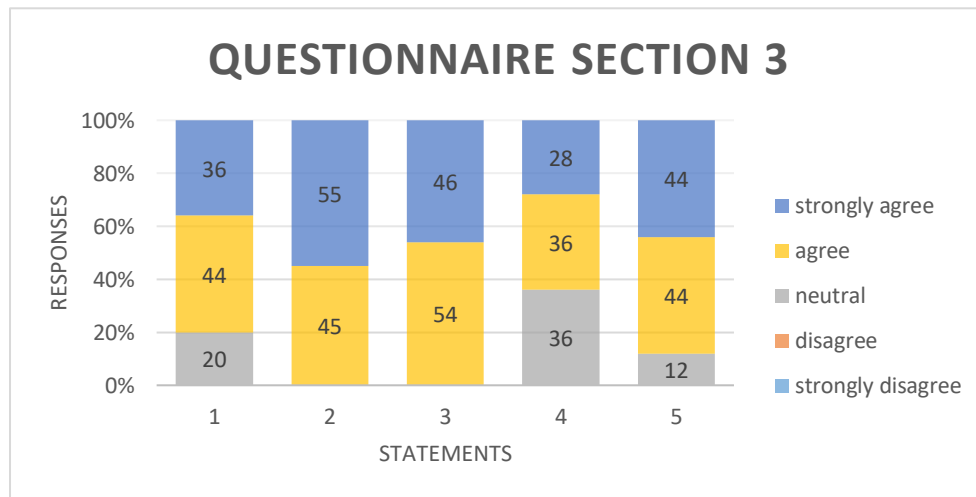

Figure 3: Questionnaire Responses, section 3: The students' preparation before story writing in classroom and at home

In preparing theirs story writing, all the students agreed that they liked to write more than one draft to practice their writing skills and also like to ask their teacher to revise their writing and have some suggestions in order to have prefect story writings. Furthermore, 80% of the students like to use conceptual maps while writing their story writing in order to organize their thoughts.   As a wrapping of this discussion, it could be said that 84% of the students agreed that they would like to have a final punctuation and grammar   check in class during story writing.

CONCLUSION

Since the students' perception on Digital Storytelling had given some positive perspective to the students in developing their narrative writing skills, other strategies in improving the students' narrative writing skill in the class are still need being conducted. It will give better results for both teachers and students if the teachers are able to combine some strategies with digital storytelling in the class. They will improve not only writing skills but also other skills. In composing lessons, the teacher must be the creative person in the class so that the atmosphere in the class will be conducive for

students in following some instructions. Some activities that focus on the writing steps should be well initiated by the teachers.

The teachers must be able consider the time for the students to finish their writing task. The teachers must aware to explain the writing process parts, such as planning, drafting, revising and editing. The researcher would like to give recommendation for the written composition that the teacher must give some topics that make the students feel free to deliver their ideas and thought. They are able to be asked to write letters, article as well as stories. The researchers also recommend the teachers to have trainings in managing with digital storytelling as well as making digital storytelling. It is because some teachers and lecturers are lacked with technology. They are not ready to use it in the class. This situation must have attention from the school managements so that the teachers can help the students to explore their skills, especially in English writing.

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