EFL STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT IN MULTIMODAL LITERACY THROUGH DIGITAL STORYTELLING

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Abstract

Although many previous studies have examined student or multimodal engagement through digital storytelling. there is still a lack of studies on student engagement in multimodal literacy through digital storytelling. To fill this gap, this case study investigates the involvement of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in multimodal literacy through digital storytelling (DST). Taking data from interviews with three junior high school students, it was found that students participated and interacted with other people and the teacher during the activities. In addition, students get motivation in learning English through digital storytelling. Finally, students showed their enjoyment and interest in making digital storytelling activities.

Keywords: Student Engagement; Multimodal literacy; Digital Storytelling

INTRODUCTION

Students grow up in a highly technological society where digital tools and text are widespread (Shinas & Wen, 2022). Indeed, young students in the digital age are continually immersed in cutting-edge digital electronic gadgets (Yoon, 2014), and those allow them to obtain facts and gain access to various sources of knowledge only the touch of a screen (Sari & Fiftinova, 2022). Digital storytelling activities enable students to utilize technology in their storytelling activities and facilitate them to be creative and productive learners (Andayani, 2019). Digital storytelling has grown in popularity as an instructional methodology in the educational landscape, including second and foreign language learning because it allows learners to socially share and exchange personal narratives, accounts of historical events, and discussions on a wide range of topics (Lestariyana & Widodo, 2018). Looking at this phenomenon, digital storytelling has been increasingly adopted as a pedagogical tool to enhance learners' capacities to work collaboratively as well as to enhance language proficiency. Several previous studies have looked at essential information on DST and multimodal learning in a range of educational context. Çetin (2021) examined the effect of digital storytelling process on digital literacy skills of pre-service teachers and examine the creation process in details; Özüdoğru & Çakır (2020) examined the opinions of preservice teachers about the use of digital storytelling in literacy education. Kim & Li (2021) looked how digital storytelling facilitated students' reflection and learning in a project-based year-end middle school capstone program. Another study Kim et al., (2021) illuminates how two middle school ELLs remixed multimodal semiotic resources to articulate their feelings, develop their identities, and reflect on their learning. Multimodality is the study of how diverse media may integrate spatial, linguistic, gestural, visual, and aural modalities to convey complex concepts (Kress, 2009). Literacy in several modes, such as multimodal literacy, is an awareness of how words, images, and sounds work together to convey meaning (Hines, 2014).

Multimodal literacy in English language teaching is one of the learning that can help students combine writing, sound, movement, pictures, actions, and many more in English (Sari & Fiftinova, 2022), as well as interaction and integration in constructing a coherent multimodal text for examples advertisements, posters, news report, websites, films (Lim, 2013). More importantly, Damayanti & Febrianti (2020) believed that learning multimodal texts, such as picture books, involves students' ability to understand the meanings derived from both visual and verbal resources. It has been demonstrated that multimodal presentation systems significantly aid in English language teaching, resulting in increased student learning efficiency (Abidin, 2022).

Digital storytelling is a multimedia tool in language learning to help students improve their English-speaking skills by using technology to tell stories in their own words and voices (Kallinikou & Nicolaidou, 2019). According to Robin (2008), digital storytelling can be used for educational purposes and engaging learning as its narratives can be used to implicitly highlight the intended language elements to be learned. Digital storytelling the majority emphasize the use of multimedia tools including graphics, audio, video, and animation to tell a story (Smeda et al., 2014). Digital storytelling, when used properly in the classroom, may successfully address the problems of teaching digital literacy and can offer a technique for instructors to successfully move beyond print-based texts and include students in engaging with digital multimodal texts (Churchill, 2020;Barratt-Pugh 2020). Students can develop their emotional intelligence and social learning skills by sharing experiences and their contributed work when digital stories are published (Nair & Md Yunus, 2022).

METHOD

This study uses a case study design. According to (Frenkel, 2009), a case study is a qualitative research method that investigates a significant individual, group, or example in order to formulate an interpretation of a specific case or to provide useful generalizations. For data collection, interviews conducted to identify student engagement during the learning process using DST. Participants involved in this study were 3 EFL junior high schools student. Interviews were conducted to ask students about the DST project he has created. The research location is the place where research is carried out to collect data or information that is relevant to a problem or research topic. The research will be conducted in 2022 at one of the Junior High School in Karawang. The interview was conducted via WhatsApp chat.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the observational findings, it was revealed that students had positive behavioral engagement. This is shown by the participation and interaction of students. During the learning meeting, they enthusiastically followed every process that had been directed by the teacher. These following interview data from students.

> *"The first I look for inspiration. After collecting the components of the story, I edit in application easy to operate. The last stage is uploading which of course uses social media"* **Vignette 01; interview, participant 1**

> *"I took the video on youtube for inspiration…I translated it to…I edited the sound and combined the video in capcut and then uploaded it on youtube"* **Vignette 02; interview, participant 2**

> *"The first step is look for inspiration to choose the fable story, then I make a simple story about the theme, then write a screenplay, and develop it into an interesting story"* **Vignette 03; interview, participant 3**

The interview data shows that the three students really understand how to make DST from starting to take ideas from several sources on the internet, how to edit to produce videos to be uploaded on the YouTube platform as the final step.

> *"Discuss with the teacher to ask for corrections then the teacher revises…"* **Vignette 04; interview, participant 1**

> *"I discussed with the teacher about how to find the source of the video…"* **Vignette 05; interview, participant 2**

> *"I discussed with the teacher about the material given, he explained in very detail…"* **Vignette 06; interview, participant 3**

From the data interview of three students reveals, student-teacher interaction during the DST project. Classroom teacher and student interaction by advising, revising, and re-explaining in detail the project material and all the necessary steps for digital story production. The interaction between teacher and students makes it easier for students to work on this project.

> *"…I discussed with friends. Discussing what concepts will be delivered, looking for references, determining the target audience and when the digital storytelling will be uploaded"* **Vignette 07; interview, participant 1**

> *"…I discussed with a friend. usually discuss about how to edit videos"* **Vignette 08; interview, participant 2**

> *"…I discussed with friends about the content of the story that I took, whether it was appropriate or too much "* **Vignette 09; interview, participant 3**

The findings above shows that students learn a lot from each other by asking how to edit videos, looking for references, and whether their content is redundant or not. Furthermore, the results show that digital storytelling supports a rich learning environment with student interaction. In addition, these results are in line with student factors that affect the level of student engagement.

> *"The benefits that I get from digital storytelling, improve language skills, editing skills, communication skills, foster creativity, increase intelligence…"* **Vignette 10; interview, participant 1**

> *"…improving my ability in English, learning media using digital storytelling can also create a memorable experience for me"* **Vignette 11; interview, participant 2**

> *"The benefits can make me excited to learn English and make it because I am interested in the story I choose"* **Vignette 12; interview, participant 3**

The data from the interview shows that the use of digital storytelling helps the students develop their linguistic communication skills, as well as information management, digital skills, and learning skills.

> "*…very motivating! I really like English and editing, I can convey the contents of feelings and thoughts with digital storytelling to make it easier for many people to understand*" **Vignette 13; interview, participant 1**

> "*…motivates me. Because, the presentation of interesting pictures becomes more enthusiastic to learn English*" **Vignette 14; interview, participant 2**

> "*Very motivating, because it is very fun to work on it so learning English feels so easy*" **Vignette 15; interview, participant 3**

Based on the data of the students' interview, it shows that they had more interest in learning English after they made Digital storytelling. Students are interested in digital storytelling because it has multimodality features and it can increase their motivation. Based on the results above, the teacher's choice to use digital stories for assessment motivates the students. As a result of digital storytelling practice, they are highly involved in their learning. In this case DST methods can help students by increasing motivation and interest.

> "*Very happy! practice knowledge about what you want to convey and make the content more interesting for the audience to hear*" **Vignette 16; interview, participant 1**

> "*I'm happy, because the process of making digital storytelling is interesting and I also quite like English*" **Vignette 17; interview, participant 2**

> "*I'm happy, because with digital storytelling I'm gradually improving my English language skills*" **Vignette 18; interview, participant 3**

Based on the data of interview, it was concluded that digital storytelling helps students improve their skills because digital storytelling provides sound or instrumental music that describes the situations in the stories they make and thoughts of students making learning English so easy.

Discussion

The digital storytelling stage stimulates students' physical connection, effort and interest in the subject matter and hence student engagement. Thus, the above experience may have resulted in a deeper understanding of the subject matter. In line with Nair & Md Yunus (2022) students can develop their emotional intelligence and social learning skills by sharing experiences and their contributed work when digital stories are published. Furthermore, the results also showed that students benefited from a high level of interaction with the teacher. In line with Andayani (2019) digital storytelling project is highly expected to increase the active participation of students and English teachers in learning activities, especially in integrating various parts to tell stories digitally. Moreover, the results further showed that digital stories increased their level of communication with others. This agrees with Churchill (2020) mentioned digital storytelling benefits student engagement and learning of course information because of its multimodality and capacity to enable students to use verbal, visual, and audio modalities to conceive, evaluate, and reconstruct meaning. Moreover, students who participate in digital storytelling project have better communication, organization skills, and more confidence in term of asking questions and expressing opinion. Digital stories and other multimodal activities would certainly improve the students were instructed on specific visual cohesive devices that would help them make their story more coherent. Digital storytelling are students' personal responses. Students are

interested in Digital storytelling, because there are multimodality features that can increase motivation and interest in improving language skills. This is supported by Kallinikou & Nicolaidou (2019) stating that Digital storytelling is a multimedia tool in language learning to help students improve their English-speaking skills by using technology to tell stories in their own words and voices. In this case the way digital storytelling helps students increased motivation and interests. Digital storytelling provides sound or instrumental music that describes the situations in the stories they create and also conveys the feelings and thoughts of students. It helps students improve their feelings. This agree with Garcia & Rossiter (2010) Digital storytelling comes to fulfill the storyteller's dreams which is utilizing technical tools to live personal tales using images, music or soundtrack, and graphic. Based on the discussion above, this study has validated the results of research related to the digital storytelling project. In this study, it is proven that the application of digital storytelling in teaching English is effective in engaging students in multimodal literacy.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the results obtained were that students' involvement through DST students knew the process of making digital stories, interacted with classmates, discussed with teachers. Learning English with DST makes students more motivated in learning English and builds language skills. Therefore, researchers can conclude that DST learning is learning that is able to involve students in the learning process and improve language skills.

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