



SNAP TO READ

DIGITAL STORYTELLING TO SUPPORT YOUNG LEARNERS' ENGLISH VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract:

Due to the explosive growth of technology, teachers are required to integrate technology into the classroom to engage learners who are regarded as digital natives. Digital storytelling can be an alternative medium for vocabulary learning. This case study examined how young learners perceived the implementation of digital storytelling during vocabulary learning. In-depth interviews and closed-ended questionnaires were employed to investigate the use of digital storytelling in the classroom. The sample of the study recruited 23 fifth-grade learners from an elementary school in Tuban, East Java. The qualitative data from the interviews and questionnaires of the young learners revealed that they considered digital storytelling more engaging, fascinating, and motivating for improving their vocabulary development. As a result, EFL teachers are recommended to deliver appropriate digital storytelling to young learners in order to teach vocabulary and support their vocabulary development.

Keywords: Digital storytelling, young learners, vocabulary development

INTRODUCTION

In today's sharply changing technological environment, the use of technology in education is critical. In recent decades, technology has been employed in the classroom, which has resulted in the development of numerous current technological systems. According to several studies, the successful incorporation of technology into classroom education improves learners' involvement in learning, their motivation as well as attractiveness (Ahmad & Yamat, 2020; Ahmed et al., 2020; Blasco-Arcas et al., 2013; Hung et al., 2015; Wong et al., 2020). Likewise, the urge to incorporate character education into the teaching and learning process, particularly in Indonesia, stems from the government's difficulties in creating excellent personalities to be reinforced within in order to build positive habits. As a result, Reform movements of education impose rigorous learning demands on learners.. To begin with, policy suggestions and educational reforms throughout the world demand 21st-century skills to educate learners to deal with the complexities of modern societies (Haug & Mork, 2021). Next, 21st-century skills in general include collaboration, communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, innovation, productivity, digital literacy, and ICT usage abilities. As a result, the goals of education are evolving away from the traditional toward the development of interpersonal, intrapersonal, and cognitive abilities (Ollis et al., 2006).

In light of prior requirements, it is critical to employ educational techniques, resources, and tools that cover language competency and the value of one's interaction with the world, as well as diminish the relationship and interpretation of the world (Ghasemi & Mozaheb, 2021). Digital storytelling is an alternative medium for supporting young learners' vocabulary development. The use of digital storytelling as a medium of vocabulary instruction is highly recommended because it encourages deep and meaningful learning, attracts and motivates

learners, and provides natural resources (Maya & Al Halim, 2021). As a result, the focus of the study is on exploring young learners' viewpoints of the employment of digital storytelling as a medium for teaching vocabulary at a primary school level.

Teaching vocabulary to primary school learners is not the same as teaching vocabulary to adults (Yılmaz & Yavuz, 2015). It is caused by several qualities. Early children have particular needs that must be met, and the teacher must recognize the peculiarities of young learners (Tosun, 2015), "Young children have a tendency to change their moods at the drop of a hat. It is incredibly tough to maintain one's position." It suggests that young learners like physical exercise and find it difficult to sit in their chairs. Children desire to conduct a specific activity focused on, thus the teacher should have an engaging method of delivering the subject.

In a classroom context, digital storytelling has the potential to provide multiple learning benefits. Digital storytelling is an entertaining and interesting learning medium, with many stories embedded inside them (all having gorgeous graphics incorporated in them) (Gestanti, 2017). Because the stories are meaningful, children can easily grasp them. In addition, this strategy is used in digital storytelling to engage several senses. Hands, eyes, and ears are all engaged. It has been stated that advanced narrating provides a fun and intriguing learning medium, has several stories within, and includes some stunning visuals in each scene. Those accounts are considerable, so the understudies are not difficult to sort out (Simsek, 2020). According to Anderson et al. (2018), the digital storytelling challenge had a favorable influence on learners' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement.

Some scholars have undertaken some study on the use of digital storytelling as learning medium in teaching English. To begin, Rositasari (2017) in her study concluded that digital storytelling could enhance learners' speaking skills in retelling a story. Through all of the

research instruments that she used, she drew up a conclusion that there were some positive responses from the learners toward the use of digital storytelling in teaching retelling a story. The learners loved to tell story by using digital tool since it was an effective and attractive way for them to pick up the story well. It was also proved by the enhancement of learners' score in speaking. In line with Rositasari's study, Loniza et al. (2018) also showed a positive result in their study. According to the study, the use of digital storytelling could be an effective tool to enrich the development of learners' listening skill. In addition, the researchers found that digital storytelling can make the learning activity more attractive and fun. Later, in her experiment study, Maya & Al Halim (2021) investigated the effectiveness of employing digital storytelling as a learning medium for young learners' vocabulary development. The study findings' revealed a considerable improvement in the mean score of young learners on the pre-test and post-test. It means that the use of digital storytelling as a media for boosting young learners' vocabulary mastery had a considerable impact. The study also shown that digital storytelling was a learning medium for engaging young learners in vocabulary acquisition.

Owing to the research above, the researcher came to initiate an investigation into the use of digital storytelling in vocabulary development among young learners. The current study would investigate the notion of young learners' perspective on the use of digital storytelling in vocabulary learning and how it contributed to their vocabulary development. As a result, the purpose of this study is to enlighten EFL learners' viewpoints on using digital storytelling in EFL vocabulary classes. Furthermore, this study contributed to the teaching of vocabulary by demonstrating how multimodal exposure through digital storytelling might improve vocabulary development.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative research approach in the form of a case study report. It was observed that the research participant, had been utilizing digital storytelling for a couple of year. Yin (in Aberdeen, 2013) stated that a case study is a one-of-a-kind phenomena of a single individual, a community, or an institution. The case's distinctiveness in this study was based on the study participants' involvement in digital storytelling for a couple of year. This condition was not discovered in any previous research.

Participants

The participants were twenty three fifth graders at an primary school in Tuban, East Java. The researcher employed questionnaires and interviews as the research instruments. The questionnaires revealed more extensive use and experiences with digital storytelling for vocabulary development. Moreover, the researcher conducted interviews with six young learners. They were chosen to represent other learners based on their engagement in class and their scores. Table 1 shows the demographic information of the research participants.

Table 1. Demographic information of the research participants

Research Instrument	Participants	
Questionnaires	Male	7 young learners
	Female	16 young learners
	Grade	5th
Interviews	Male	2 young learners
	Female	4 young learners
	Grade	5th

Data Collection Techniques

The researcher presented closed-ended questionnaire questions to the participants, who were required to choose answers from a list supplied by the researcher. Responses might take the form of

agreement-disagreement degree statements. This type of questionnaires is typically referred to as a Likert-scale questionnaire (Beglar & Nemoto, 2014). According to (Cohen et al., 2018), questionnaires equip participants with the benefits of standardized and open replies to a specific topic. They can be reliable, valid, fast, and simple to complete. As a result, the researcher used questionnaires as one of the instruments to collect responses from young learners on the usage of digital storytelling on their vocabulary development.

Interviews were the other instrument employed by the researcher to elicit young learners' thoughts on the utilization of digital storytelling. An interview is described as a social gathering that is not only for the purpose of exchanging or gathering information (Cohen et al., 2018). The primary goal of the interview was to elicit reactions from young learners regarding the utilization of digital storytelling in the classroom. Six young learners were chosen to be interviewed by the researcher. In addition, during the interview session, the researcher employed a voice recorder to support the trustworthiness of the data.

Data Analysis Techniques

The researcher employed two types of instruments to gather responses from young learners about the application of digital storytelling: questionnaires and interviews. After gathering data from employing the instruments, the first step was for the researcher to count the mean score of each questionnaires. This might help the researcher determine young learners' level of agreement with the use of digital storytelling in the classroom. Second, the interviews were conducted in verbal communication by asking six questions to six selected fifth-grade learners as a representation of the entire number of fifth-grade learners. The researcher analyzed the interview outcomes by writing descriptive reports and appropriately interpreting the results without modifying the data.

To summarize, descriptive statistics in the form of the mean

were used to examine the findings of young learners' questionnaires on their perspectives on the deployment of digital storytelling in vocabulary class. Meanwhile, the findings of the interviews were thematically analyzed using an inductive approach (Kucirkova et al., 2015). The inductive approach portrays analysis, which includes problem identification, discussion, examination, and problem-solving.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the study's findings in response to research questions about the use of digital storytelling for vocabulary development by fifth graders. This section affords learner comments on the deployment of digital storytelling for the vocabulary development. The researcher would to explore young learners' responses toward the implementation of digital storytelling in the classroom. For this reason, the researcher used questionnaires and interviews as instruments to dig up young learners' responses. The questionnaires were employed for all of the participants of the research. While the interview was questioned for six selected young learners as the representatives of total participants. According to the findings of the questionnaires and interviews, the proportion of participants believed digital storytelling to be an engaging tool for learning English vocabulary. Moreover, they expressed an interest in learning through digital storytelling.

The following section offers young learners' answers to the usage of digital storytelling in vocabulary class, as well as a voice in favour of the benefits of digital storytelling for vocabulary development. Young learners expressed an interest in learning concerning digital storytelling. According to the results of the questionnaires, most young learners thought digital storytelling was an interesting medium for vocabulary development. The researcher found findings as presented in the Table 2.

Table 2. Young learners' responses toward the implementation of digital storytelling for vocabulary development

No	Statements	Alternative Answer (%)					Total (%)
		1	2	3	4	5	
1	One of the most crucial skills to achieve while studying English is vocabulary mastery	0	0	0	76	24	100
2	I have difficulty understanding the meaning and memorizing English vocabulary.	14	10	48	29	0	100
3	Digital storytelling makes it easier for me to understand the meaning of English vocabulary correctly	5	0	5	38	52	100
4	Digital storytelling makes it easier for me to remember new vocabulary	0	0	10	57	33	100
5	Digital storytelling makes me excited to learn new vocabulary	0	0	25	55	20	100
6	Digital storytelling helps me memorize vocabulary quickly	0	5	33	43	19	100
7	Digital storytelling should often be used as a medium to learn English vocabulary	0	0	10	19	71	100

Descriptions:

1 = Strongly Disagree

4 = Agree

2 = Disagree

5 = Strongly Agree

3 = Neutral

Based on the questionnaires result which had been administrated for the young learners, the researcher took interpretations as follows:

1) The mean score of the first statement on the questionnaire rubric was in scale 4. It indicates that the young learners mostly assumed that vocabulary mastery is an important skill in learning English as Foreign language.

2) The mean score of the second statement on the questionnaire

rubric was in scale 3. It means that young learners in fifth grade fairly agreed that they felt difficult in memorizing English vocabulary.

3) The mean score of the third statement on the questionnaire rubric was in scale 4. It shows that the young learners thought digital storytelling eased them to understand vocabulary correctly.

4) The mean score of the fourth statement on the questionnaire rubric was in scale 4. It shows that the young learners thought digital storytelling eased them for remembering new vocabulary.

5) The mean score of the fifth statement on the questionnaire rubric was in scale 4. The young learners agreed that digital storytelling made them excited to learn new vocabulary.

6) The mean score of the sixth statement on the questionnaire rubric was in scale 4. This means that digital storytelling helped them in memorizing new vocabulary faster.

7) The mean score of the seventh statement on the questionnaire rubric was in scale 5. The young learners strongly agreed that digital storytelling should be practiced in the classroom as many as possible.

Based on the aforementioned analysis of data findings, that digital storytelling is an educational tool that might interest young learners in the process of vocabulary development. It also could help them in understanding and memorizing vocabulary well. The young learners mostly agreed that digital storytelling made them excited so that they expected to learn English by applying digital storytelling in the classroom as often as possible. In fact, digital storytelling assisted the young learners to understand vocabulary properly. Thus, it contributed a lot to the young learners' vocabulary development.

In other side, the researcher obtained data from interviews and analyzed them. The information likewise reinforced the findings gained from interviewees.

Researcher: Do you think vocabulary mastery is important in learning English?

Interviewee 1-6: Yes, it is important to have vocabulary mastery while learning English

Researcher: Do you think that you already have good English vocabulary mastery?

Interviewee 3: Not yet

Researcher: Do you think mastering English vocabulary is hard?

Interviewee 2: I sometimes find it difficult

Researcher: What are the factors that make you hard to master English vocabulary?

Interviewee 4: I think the English pronunciation and its spelling is difficult

Researcher : After you learned to master English vocabulary using digital storytelling, can it improve your English vocabulary mastery?

Interviewee 6: Yes, digital storytelling helps me a lot in learning new vocabulary

Researcher: Do you think that digital storytelling was an interested teaching medium? Can you explain it?

Interviewee 5: Yes, I feel excited while learning using digital storytelling. It is attractive and fun.

The researcher drew the conclusion from an interview sample of representative participants that all young learners agreed that vocabulary mastering was essential. However, the majority of participants felt incapable of mastering vocabulary. They believed that it was difficult to grasp English language. Some elements that made it difficult to grasp the English vocabulary were the difficulty in pronouncing and writing words.

However, after experiencing mastery of English vocabulary via digital storytelling, they were certain that digital storytelling may improve English vocabulary development. They saw digital storytelling as an intriguing and engaging educational tool. In addition, students

reported enjoying and being interested in the learning process since digital storytelling made it simple to comprehend and quickly retain the vocabulary. This was seen by their increased interest in both studying English as a Foreign Language and English vocabulary.

In conclusion, the fifth-grade learners expressed their approval of the introduction of digital storytelling in the classroom. The majority of participants believed that vocabulary mastery is crucial while studying English. They agreed that digital storytelling was an engaging medium that may aid in their English vocabulary development. They anticipated studying English as often as possible utilizing digital storytelling, which they found enjoyable.

DISCUSSION

In this section, the researcher discussed the findings of an investigation into the implementation practices of digital storytelling. The discussion covers the research problems and questions listed in the introduction. The majority of participants considered digital storytelling as an engaging tool for vocabulary development, according to some intriguing findings. The researcher can conclude, based on the aforementioned questionnaires and interviews, that the majority of students are enthusiastic about using digital storytelling in the classroom. In addition, the findings of other studies support the findings of this study. Gestanti (2017) discovered, for instance, that digital storytelling is an entertainment and stimulating learning medium containing a variety of stories and gorgeous images in each scene. Thus, the learners are straightforward to identify. In addition, the majority of participants reported enjoying the course because it met their current educational requirements (Ahmed et al., 2020). This factor also contributes to the impression that learning English is enjoyable.

The learners also believed that digital storytelling may boost their learning motivation. It was backed by Maya & Al Halim (2021), who implemented it with an experimental study of Indonesian EFL students.

The results indicated that the experimental class was marginally more motivated than the control group. In terms of motivation, it may be said that digital storytelling seems to have a positive tone. In addition, the other researchers underlined that digital storytelling may boost the motivation and engagement of English language learners (Shelton et al., 2017).

This may occur if learners get video and audio with the narration. These videos and audios provide a foundation for learners' comprehension by allowing them to listen to the story, view the story, and comprehend the meaning of new vocabulary. Consequently, digital storytelling allows learners to expand their creativity. This is related to the use of distinct learning sensations. There are several senses engaged in digital storytelling, including the hands, eyes, and ears. According to Simsek (2020), digital storytelling enables learners to envision and recognize parallels between real-world people and stories by hearing and seeing.

Therefore, teachers as instructors should examine how they provide the learning information. When it comes to teaching English as a foreign language, a teacher must consider the demands of digital native learners. Digital storytelling emerged as the answer to the situation. Digital storytelling, as described by Robin & Mcneil (2019), is a combination of a spoken notion, a picture, and a music that uses digital technology to demonstrate a story.

Digital storytelling may allow instructors to facilitate learners in an appealing manner by presenting things in an attractive style, and it can aid learners to take up the subject in a short period. Digital storytelling is considered a helpful learning medium for learners. The following are the educational advantages of digital storytelling (Chan et al., 2017).

1) Learner Engagement

Digital storytelling is viewed as a learning medium which may

increase learners' involvement in the teaching and learning process. Digital storytelling provides instructional content in the form of texts, photos, video clips, and audio in an appealing way. This gets learners interested and involved in the learning process as the learning content is provided in a meaningful way.

From the analysis of the findings of questionnaires and interviews done for the study, the young learners showed their answers to the usage of digital storytelling. They were of the same opinion that using digital storytelling helped them a great deal in expanding their vocabularies. They said that digital storytelling not only promoted their vocabulary advancement but also raised their involvement in studying and helped them recall language. In line with Ohler's statement that digital storytelling is able to enhance learners' engagement in learning (in Rositasari, 2017). This view has been proved by the researcher by implementing digital storytelling in the classroom and the statement of young learners' responses after being implemented by digital storytelling.

The researcher interviewed the young learners' conduct during the use of digital storytelling in the classroom. The young learners had a positive attitude against learning English as a foreign language. Through the use of digital storytelling, young learners tend to be more engaged and completely participate in the teaching and learning process. This fact is confirmed by Ahmad & Yamat (2020), who mentioned that digital storytelling is able to improve the learning commitment of learners.

As demonstrated by Smeda et al. (2014), which was undertaken for young learners at the ages of 7, 9, and 11, which focused on young learners' poor involvement in learning. The conclusion of the study showed that all of the young learners thereafter enhanced their degree of learning engagement (Ahmad & Yamat, 2020). In summary, digital storytelling was shown as a learning medium which may boost the

learning engagement of learners throughout the teaching and learning process.

2) Reflection of Deep Learning

Deep learning occurs when students connect new concepts to their prior knowledge and experiences and then systematically investigate both logic and opinion (Weigel in Chan et al., 2017). This indicates that young learners reflect on deep learning because they comprehend some concepts of knowledge in-depth and connect them to their prior experiences, allowing them to explore their logical reasoning in depth. This is one of the strengths of digital storytelling, which provides the educational benefit of reflection on in-depth learning.

In accordance with the classroom conduct of the young students, they diligently studied specific English vocabulary topics. In the process of learning, they attempted to recall material from previous encounters. In the end, they earned a passing grade on the exam. This could be accomplished by incorporating digital storytelling into the classroom. According to the young learners, digital storytelling enhanced their ability to comprehend and retain English vocabulary.

3) Motivation

Teachers responsible for vocabulary development for young students should discuss a method of instruction that is meaningfully aligned with the learning objectives. Certainly, it was related to Brown's recommendation, which said that a teacher should attempt to remove learners' aims and interests in order to satisfy learners' demands for information as a learner (Rositasari, 2017). The researcher inferred from the statement that a teacher must use an engaging method of instruction to stimulate the attention of students so that they would acquire more information. Digital storytelling is seen as a suitable medium for encouraging young language learners to study English.

Previous study has been undertaken on the application of digital storytelling in the classroom by other scholars. In their study, Sadik

(2008) and Robin (2016) discovered that digital storytelling may increase learners' motivation and inspire them to learn. In accordance with the assertion, the researcher finds that digital storytelling inspired young language learners to study English as a second language. It might be seen by observing the attractiveness of young learners throughout the teaching and learning process. In addition, the findings of questionnaires and interviews highlighted the fact that young learners were very engaged throughout digital storytelling-based instruction.

Lobello (2015) also acknowledged that the use of digital storytelling may increase the motivation of students. Digital storytelling uses technology to show content, which may attract and keep learners' attention. This is because learners are used to using digital tools. Moreover, the number of learners have their own device in the form of a smartphone. Therefore, the employment of digital storytelling in the classroom is well suited to the features of modern learners. Attractive presentation of instructional materials facilitates their absorption by learners.

In a summary, the findings of the study have successfully shown that digital storytelling is an excellent learning medium that can effectively pull the involvement of young learners in the process of gaining vocabulary and boost their vocabulary development.

CONCLUSION

The use of digital storytelling was perceived very engaging for young learners learning English as a foreign language, particularly in terms of vocabulary development. It may be shown by examining the findings of questionnaires and interviews that revealed a good reaction from young learners who had encountered digital storytelling. They concluded that digital storytelling was an effective tool for vocabulary acquisition. In addition, the young learners said in interviews that the introduction of digital storytelling increased their interest in studying

English vocabulary. In conclusion, the young learners agreed that digital storytelling may boost not only their vocabulary development but also their interest in studying. From the standpoint of young learners, digital storytelling might facilitate meaningful vocabulary comprehension. Therefore, it is suggested that EFL instructors include digital storytelling into their English classrooms, especially when teaching vocabulary. Because language development often requires context-based instruction, digital storytelling met this demand.

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