

PROMOTING CULTURE IN EARLY AGE THROUGH COMIC, DIGITAL STORY TELLING AND VIDEO ANIMATION

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Abstract

Promoting Culture in early age through interaction and collaboration are essential in learning English. Collaboration among the students allows them to be more active in communicating. One medium for online interaction is video animation. The purpose of implementing animation in this study is to make interventions to encourage student interaction and cultural awareness. These media also help teachers deliver teaching materials online with technology. We conduct action research to find the proper use of an animation movie for the students. Five teachers were involved in conducting action research in their classes, three of them were in primary school, and two were in Junior High Schools. Video animations about Covid-19 that from an e-book "My Hero is You" introduced by three teachers developed new cultural awareness of the learners about the surrounding virus. A culture of using masks, working online from home, and vaccination are parts of it. Application of comics maker took part in helping students express ideas about the situation. It included indigenous cultural acts and awareness about the differences between cultures they learned from English movies. Digital storytelling (DST) in English created by the students in this study reflected the memories of valuable cultural moments they learned during trips away from school.

Keywords: *cultural awareness, video animation, comics, Digital storytelling, English for young learner*

Introduction

In the digital era, the digital awareness of teachers will be beneficial to access advanced digital tools in classroom practices. As a digital immigrant, sometimes it is difficult for teachers to update with the latest application. Yet, many programs with moderate complexity foster teachers in creating fun learning. In this study, five English teachers challenged themselves in an action research project promoting cultural awareness with video animation, comics, and digital storytelling. Three teachers developed cultural literacy using a series of video animations related to Covid-19. One teacher interested in using online comic maker application to improve his student cultural awareness in writing at primary school. The other one created a fun atmosphere in a writing class by assigning digital story telling project promoting cultural awareness topic as an alternative. The students reacted positively toward the project.

Most students cited the application's fun factor as one of their favourite features. The lessons the children took away from the digital tale movie about Covid-19 in terms of values were encouraging. The students frequently mentioned that the application was entertaining. It was about what the kids learned about Covid-19 principles from the digital narrative video. The students frequently

mentioned that the application was entertaining. It was about what the kids learned about Covid-19 principles from the digital narrative video. However, how the story unfolds depends on the teacher's perspectives on language acquisition and how they are applied when using digital tools to address difficulties in classroom procedures. It can be challenging to teach English to primary school kids.

Literature Review

The online classes used integrated media to improve students' literacy during a pandemic. Both elementary schools and junior high schools took part in this investigation. We focus English instruction on Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), and the classroom action material is video application-based integrative media. Incorporating the short story video media model created by the students and instructor, they used it in class activities and excited the teachers and students. Students and teachers in this study responded more positively to English teaching and learning combined with disease literacy, which indicated the growth of a more resilient character in the face of the epidemic.

In the classroom-based, they enhanced creativity through an updated English learning method using digital multimedia (Wijirahayu and Ayundhari, 2019). Teachers must have attitudes that they can apply in their classes after studying them in lectures (Wijirahayu, Priyatmoko, & Hadianti 2019).

Mann, Parish, Kroh, and Bridges (2021) argued that using video animation could enhance the first-year undergraduates' cultural competency. Advancement in technology by using virtual and augmented reality could support the cultural enrichment (Paulauskas, Paulauskas, Blažauskas, Damaševičius, and Maskeliūnas, 2023)

Young learners are a specific population with distinctive personalities and learning philosophies. Children are referred to as pre-adolescents by Penny Ur (1997). In contrast, by dividing the children into two sizable age groups—those between the ages of five and seven and those between eight and ten—Scott and Ytreberg (1990) present a clear cut of the children. The first group is small children, while the second group is referred to as somewhat mature youngsters with alternating adult and childish sides. Children between the ages of 7 and 12 may take the Cambridge Young Learner Exam (YLE).

Issa (2018) promoted the use of comics in English classrooms. Another innovation was digital comics by using Toondoo in teaching English short stories (Fatimah, Santiana, and Saputra, 2019). DeHart (2022) argued that Comics are one multimedia in situating cultural awareness. In this study, the students built their cultural awareness in learning English by creating comics.

According to Morgan (2014), digital storytelling is a method used for stories by combining images, photos, music, narration, and text to produce a video. "The idea of combining the craft of telling stories with a variety of digital multimedia, such as images, audio, and video," adds Campbell." Ribeiro (2016) found the potential of DST in building intercultural awareness and strengthened by Vrettakis, Kourtis, Katifori, Karvounis, Lougiakis, and Ioannidis (2019)

The Digital Storytelling (DST) initiative is vitally important because it exemplifies digital literacy, one of the skills children should have in the twenty-

first century, and fits with the curriculum this academic year. In a British Council initiative, the definition of digital literacy is using technology to reinforce, extend, and deepen learning through international collaboration in a British Council program. From a global economic point of view, this will also help the students explore, acquire, and transmit knowledge and information.

Research Methodology

The present qualitative investigation used action research to address the research issue. Five teachers from both primary and secondary schools took part in the study. There were 20-25 students in each class. The teachers took it upon themselves to undertake action research in the classroom utilizing video animation, online comic makers and digital storytelling tools. Three of them used a series of digital narrative films to promote critical literacy, whereas the other two employed digital storytelling activities and comic makers in a writing class.

Design action research is a self-reflective cycle of planning, action, observation, reflection, and re-planning that forms the basis for problem-solving. Three phases or stages make up this research. It allowed the students to share their comments on the class activities and how they aided their story-writing. Student input created alternative iterations of the classroom activities during the phases.

The analysis was from pre-and post-tests, achievement tests, interviews, student interactions and work. Every cycle had tests that involved story writing. We compared the outcomes to indicators of the student's creative writing ability. It is to measure whether students have improved their creative writing skills based on a minimum criterion of 75 for a range of 1 to 100. The findings showed that taking successful action when 75% of test-takers (in the passing percentage) got the score. Participants in this study provided information through a semi-structured interview.

Results and Discussion

Materials, teaching methods/techniques, and test design all provide different obstacles. The topic and the repetitive writing pattern required of the students for their paragraphs presented problems in this study. Producing artistic work with a personal touch is insufficient. It is possible that kids aren't the only ones who lack inspiration. It was, however, due to a lack of familiarity with the writing assignment's goal and format.

Teacher 1 (T1)

T1 is a teacher at a Tangerang private elementary school. In Parent's WhatsApp group, she shared a video titled "My Hero is You". She solicited feedback on the film from the parents and the students.

The T1 was concerned that using the instructional materials could annoy the parents. The English-language video's content received a harsh response from the parents. The pupils received new information regarding the video My Hero is You. Regarding the messages in the videos, they responded through the chat.

Teacher 2 (T2)

She provided other videos from the "My Hero Is You" book to the students via WhatsApp. The pupils expressed their comprehension of the circumstance surrounding the home study. The results showed a level of literacy regarding the function of the family in Covid-19 (Wijirahayu, 2022).

The students' comments related to the video animation

A character in the novel named Sara envisioned a superhero who could fly could fight and protect from Covid-19. There were monologs and dialogues in the animated video.



Figure 1: Student's response at WhatsApp (source: Wijirahayu, 2022)

"I think by fighting Covid-19 and becoming a hero. We can only help by remaining at home, avoiding social situations, praying, and supporting the medical community. I wish all children around the world health and safety. A mother who is a scientist may be the Hero of the story, but it turns out that a child can fight Covid-19 by keeping us all safe and becoming a hero to a mother. "

The worldwide pandemic fostered teachers, parents, and students to collaborate to create conducive fun online learning. The video animation was to share new cultural awareness of the term "Hero" in that situation. Writing plays, poems, and other forms of fiction are examples of creative writing (Spiro, 2004). Writing exercises in this style are practical and beneficial. One example of this is swapping ideas when composing a poem. Writing involves editing, revising, and getting feedback from friends.

As one form of creative writing, writing stories requires the use of many languages, including describing locations and characters, creating dialogue using various voices, causing events to occur, illustrating the causes and effects of events like discussing and arguing, and even incorporating passages from letters or diaries (Harmer, 2007).

Teacher 3 (T3)

T3 teaches at a private school's secondary division. Regarding the videos for "My Hero is You," she questioned her students.

Assalamualaikum, saya NR dari 82 ingin menjawab pertanyaan tentang cerita "my hero is you."

1. *Do you like this video? Yes, I do like this video, that is such a good video. What is the moral of the story? You can keep those you love safe by washing your hands, staying home, and social distancing. And just because you can't see the people you loved, it doesn't mean you stop loving them.*

2. *Do you understand the message of the video? Yes, I do understand the message of the video. "We must protect everybody to tell how to protect yourself from danger and your family your friends from coronavirus."*

Researcher and teacher interest in a genre-based approach has increased recently. This method provided chances to learn about the various functions of written communication and how information is in written language (Champel, 1998). It differs from a writing process approach. The responses from the T3 pupils showed the new cultural knowledge of Covid-19 protection for oneself and others.

A succession of planning, information gathering, drafting, revising, and editing tasks accomplishes the steps. By modelling the text, activities allow for low-level self-expression while focusing on the content to control guided activities for language practice and concentration in teaching writing to young learners (Richard & Renandya, 2002). The primary school children, in this case, could understand Covid-19 as a deadly virus and the necessity of establishing new habits and a culture of healthy living after watching the video animation.

Teacher 4 (T4)

T4 did action research in an elementary school in Bekasi, West Java. He thought it was helpful for pupils to create a writing style and enjoy, such as digital comics, while offering advice and support.

His students could express thoughts and use a variety of words in writing. We can impart writing lessons in methods that fascinate students. According to the study, using a computer program to create online comics can help kids write more creatively, especially for telling stories. There were two ratters present. In cycle 3 (the last cycle), the narrative writing test, 76.5% of pupils achieved the predetermined success score (75 or above). The average writing grade for students is 75.2. the lowest score is 35, and the best is 90.

Six students were interviewed using a purposeful random sample strategy. The top three, middle, and worst three scoring are represented by the six chosen pupils. The replies from the students are all in favour of using online reason-maker programs to educate creative writing. The application's enjoyable features are the most frequent justification.

The enjoyment comes from these two components in two additional questions about features and visuals. The students' perspectives about comic makers in English writing sessions also involved this favourable response. The interview

reveals that a student who dislikes English classes enjoys creating comics using an online tool for comic book creation.



Figure 2: Student's comic

We relate findings from this action research to the student's assignments and writing assignments. First, pupils had a variety of topics to choose from for their comics. The student's comic dealt with activities like going to the movies, shopping, meeting friends or playing in an arcade. The following subjects, however, included accounts of going to the doctor, throwing a surprise party, getting into trouble, going camping, and taking a trip.

Although there were articles about visiting the mall in the previous research cycle, their number was lower. They included details in their writing, such as having an accident, running from a vicious dog, staying in a hotel, and mentioning my father and me. Two students created a horror comic that adapted the well-known character "Valak" from the film "Conjuring 2" and gave him new circumstances. They drew the pupils to the Western culture in the movie. They were successful in producing comics. They adapted the movie character into their comic book storylines.

Teacher 5 (T5)

T5 is an instructor at a private high school in Depok, West Java. The teaching-learning process must have a plan, carried out, and evaluated by teachers besides the actual teaching in the classroom. Because of this, teachers must determine the issues and requirements of their students as the cornerstone of the educational process.

The student's writing skills and their knowledge of writing did not yet help them write well. Most students thought writing was difficult, and because it required them to think a lot to transfer and develop their thoughts and ideas onto a paper, it occasionally left them feeling exhausted and impatient. Even though we gave them some ideas, they did not know what or how to write. When asked to deliver a tale in writing, children frequently feel frightened and hesitant to speak their minds.

Second, most students thought the writing exercise was not fun and inspiring. Sometimes, teachers only focus on grammatical rules rather than exposing and helping students practice writing through various tasks.

Once given a topic, the students were required to write texts on paper and submit them for scoring without editing or constructive criticism. The student could repeat this exercise during the writing session, so they discovered a pattern of writing activity as a result, and when requested to write on a piece of paper, they showed resistance.

We must develop a creative writing exercise to aid pupils. Students like writing and speaking in ways that fit with their era—the digital era—by putting their thoughts and understanding of syntax and vocabulary into written and spoken form. To improve their writing skills and boost their participation in writing activities, she conducted the Digital Storytelling (DST) initiative. To construct a digital tale, Sawiji (2016) offered some helpful advice, including choosing a topic, choosing images, music, or video as digital resources, creating a storyboard, importing the file, and sharing publicly. Reading and writing could help students build their values (Wijirahayu & Armiati, 2020).

Develop a storyboard and collect digital resources.

The students wrote a script before creating a storyboard. This storyboard comprises slides, pictures, supporting text, and background music. The students drew a small note in the image columns detailing the images they would discover on the website or in their photo collection. They attempted to rewrite the script so that it would fit the image in the text column next to it. They ultimately decided on the music they would use as the foreground of their digital story. Smeda and Widodo (2016) argued that fun learning fosters a welcoming learning environment. Motivation elevated students' achievement (Wijirahayu & Sutiwan, 2023).

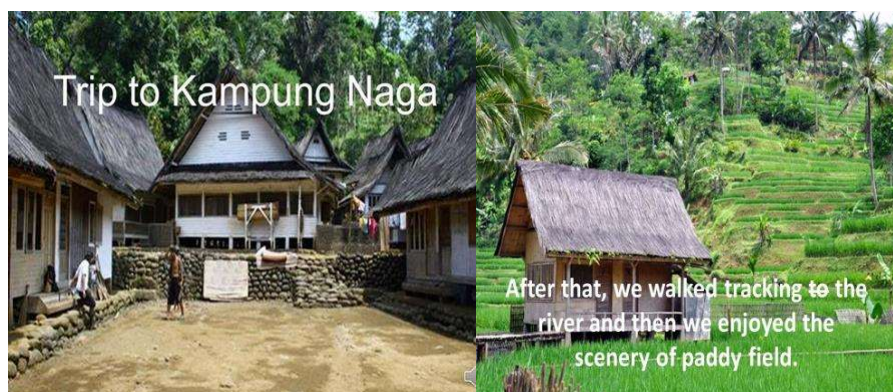


Figure 3: Student's digital story images

We assigned the students to rewrite the concepts on the storyboard. It was after drafting the entire story in the previous meeting. The students created DST about *Kampung Naga* (Figure 3) after they visited that village on a school trip. The

theme and topic chosen by the student contained the cultural impression they acquired expressed in their digital story.

The idea was not in paragraphs anymore and separated each event in detail. After the lesson, the teacher instructed the students to search for the image, just as they had done at home with the storyboard. The images in the story could be from the internet or their private collection. They boost the motivation of learners and lower anxiety. Writing performance improves when anxiety levels are decreased (Wijirahayu & Kamilah, 2021).

Conclusions

This study found that DST and online comic-making tools improved pupils' creative writing abilities and cultural awareness related to the themes and topics promoted in the classes. Video animations of Covid-19 were still relevant and related to the situation post-pandemic. It was beneficial for the students to be more critical of the surrounding. During and after the Lebaran Holidays, interaction among travellers was massive. Therefore, awareness of a healthy atmosphere is a requirement for high achievement. The online comic maker tool appears to help with the narrative writing elements required to write a successful story. Later, when the students created narrative essays and digital stories, they applied these abilities. As the students finish the comic and digital storytelling, we can see their enthusiasm for writing. The cultural awareness about the language they are learning and the Indonesian indigenous culture was there in their writing projects. The majority of pupils claimed to enjoy the application because it is entertaining. The video animations they produced reflected the students' increasing cultural awareness. The remarks on the video animation model and the subject of their essays reflected this.

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