

Engaging young learners of English in a
genre-based digital storytelling project

Final report

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1. Practical context

The status of English as a global lingua franca has led to policy on primary English education in many non-English speaking countries. Teaching English in formal educational settings (e.g., primary schools) is a relatively new global phenomenon, and it started in the 1990s (Hayes, 2007). This is evidenced by the fact that many countries introduce English as a compulsory or elective subject in primary schooling (Butler, 2015). For example, in Asia, Taiwan started elementary school English education in 2001 (Chien, 2014). Such Asian countries as Korea, Vietnam, and China also enact policy on primary English language education (Hu, 2007; Nguyen, 2011; Yim, 2016). In these countries, English is a compulsory school subject, but in Indonesia and Japan, it is elective based on a school choice. Thus, teaching English to young learners (TEYL) is now a global issue all over the world because more and more children are learning English in preschools, primary schools, and private language institutes (Pinter & Zandian, 2015). This growing need for primary English language education is driven by pressure from parents and the widespread belief that it is better to start learning a second/foreign language as early as possible because children best learn a new language at early age (Bekleyen, 2011). Nguyen (2011) adds that the introduction of English language education into primary schools attempts to respond to a competitive global position in the international economic and political arena and caters to parents' expectation that their children wish to study abroad in the future. For instance, in Korea, primary English language education aims to "create more equal opportunities for children to learn English; improve teaching methods, which tend to be based on grammar-translation in secondary schools; and to ensure the competitiveness of South Korea in the global economy" (Garton, 2014, p. 202).

To continue the scholarship of research into TEYL, this study was conducted in two Indonesia primary schools located in East Java, Indonesia. English for young learner (EYL) courses are one of the school programs. These courses were initiated in 2000s though the introduction of EYL in primary schools began in 1994. The inclusion of English in primary school resulted from the societal pressure demanding a stronger foundation of English instruction at a primary level in response to the demands of globalization. The schools under study introduce English to pupils from the first grade. They employ one English teacher with the qualification of TEFL. In this study, to engage pupils in meaning making-oriented English learning, digital storytelling was introduced in which stories were selected because this genre is commonly taught in Indonesian primary schools, and this genre is included in Indonesian and English curricula. In the context of primary schooling, storytelling has been used to share knowledge, wisdom, and moral and cultural values. It also allows for nurturing pupils' narrative literacies. With this in mind, teachers include stories in their language classrooms. Based on a preliminary study, primary school teachers in two schools in the project asked their pupils of 10-11 years old to tell an oral story without engaging them in the creation of a story. They lamented that their pupils were not fluent when telling oral stories; most of them felt shy and were not confident in telling such stories. In addition, the pupils had no experience in the creation of stories in another language such as English. They just learned to memorize words and mimic story dialogs. This implies that storytelling is seen as a mechanic way to express a story. In fact, storytelling is a socio-cognitive process, which involves not just telling a story but also creating a story through a series of processes, such as finding a story theme relevant to pupil personal experience, creating a story, and presenting the story.

This storytelling also entails multimodal language skills, such as writing, reading, talking, and listening. To facilitate these processes, the incorporation of technology into storytelling is needed. Particularly in the context of primary schools, the Indonesian Government encourages teachers to use technological tools as long as pupils can access technological tools such as computers and the Internet. Incorporating digital tools into storytelling can help pupils create and tell stories. Digital storytelling provides children of 10-11 years old with more opportunities to create and communicate

different story texts (e.g., personal stories, historical stories, and myth stories) in English through different modes of communication, such as visualizing and writing ideas, using technology to document and present their stories as a historical diary, and using more meaning making (semiotic) resources such as photographs, video clips, art, music, script text, audio narration, and sound effects. In this way, the children will learn integrated language skills, such as writing, speaking, listening, and reading through the creation of digital stories.

2. Overall aims of research

Because English is an elective subject in the Indonesian primary school curriculum, there is no official English language curriculum. In this respect, appointed English teachers develop or prepare their own English curriculum documents, such as syllabi, textbooks/workbooks, and test papers. In practice, many teachers rely upon and use available published textbooks or workbooks. Hawanti (2014) reported that these textbooks inform teachers about what is to be taught to students and provide test-oriented exercises as well as guide the teacher to teach the material to the students. In the textbooks, the exercises are designed and structured in an orderly way. In urban areas, many primary schools offer English programs at the start of the first grade.

As TEYL continues to burgeon, research into this area has begun to grow (Yim, 2016). Despite this, there remains a lack of classroom-based studies in the English as a foreign language (EFL) context. Pinter and Zandian (2015) suggest using one of the participatory activities such as storytelling for data collection. In addition, we know little about how young learners interact with technology such as digital stories to learn English or how they work multimodal texts such as digital stories. So far, little is known about how children perceive their learning activities and how they conceptualize the process of learning English through digital storytelling. Many of the published studies are experimental in design and emphasize isolated aspects of learning. The aim of this final research report is to argue that in order to complement the current body of research, it is beneficial to explore an alternative perspective that prioritizes the agendas and concerns of children. Additionally, very little research has been undertaken to investigate the potential benefits of digital storytelling to language learning. To fill these gaps, the following questions guide the present study:

1. In what ways does digital storytelling engage pupils in the creation and presentation of digital stories?
2. What are pupils' responses to this digital storytelling as they engaged in this project-based learning?
3. What do English teachers learn from this digital storytelling-oriented teaching practice?

These research questions aim to capture the experiences of both pupils and teachers with the use of digital storytelling spanning five months. This documentation can contribute to a better understanding of how digital storytelling as instructional mediation helps children learn English.

3. Background reading

3.1 Digital stories as a tool for learning English

Humans are “storytelling organisms who, individually and collectively, lead storied lives... and tell stories of those lives” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). Stories contain accumulated experiences; for this reason, they are one of the platforms for humans to make sense of the world around them. A story is a way of constructing and representing knowledge and experience socio-historically situated in a particular social context (Lee, 2015). In the context of child language learning, children learn language through reading or listening to stories (Loukia, 2006). From a social semiotic perspective (Halliday, 1978), children are active meaning makers who engage with the

construction of knowledge with their playmates, siblings, and adults. As active meaning makers, children grow as they receive language affordances and interact with others in order to (re)construct stories, which represent their knowledge and experience. Naturally, children live with a myriad of stories as they participate in different social practices in varied social settings (e.g., at play, at school, on the farm).

The emergence of Web 2.0 technology has revolutionized the ways one learns a foreign language and afforded myriad opportunities to explore functional use of a target language (TL) and use this language within classrooms and beyond. With this technology, both language learners and language practitioners can optimize use of TL beyond the classroom walls (Lee, 2014). From a social constructivist perspective (Vygotsky, 1978), technology-enhanced language learning (TELL) allows both teachers and learners to construct, share, and build language knowledge and content knowledge together. Lee (2011) argues that TELL can be a catalyst for learner autonomy because students are involved in decision making and problem solving within a virtual language learning community. Affectively, learners feel less anxious and more confident in expressing themselves than with face-to-face interaction. Many young learners may be reluctant to speak in front of their classmates, particularly in a foreign language because this can be extremely face-threatening. For this reason, one form of TELL, digital storytelling, can minimize this threat.

Digital stories are one type of multimodal narrative genre, which is created with a blend of different elements: visual, text, audio, and video (Vinogradova, Linville, & Bickel, 2011). Digital storytelling has gained popularity as instructional methodology in the educational landscape, including second and foreign language learning because socially it can allow learners to share and exchange personal narratives and accounts of historical events and discussions of a wide range of topics. In the creation of digital stories, learners have the opportunity to use multiple skills, such as searching (navigating and viewing) and organizing information (knowledge building); writing a script (text construction); weaving together voice, images, and music; and publishing a finished version online. Digital storytelling is a multidimensional skill, which requires learners to be literate in technology, interact with a variety of texts, and to make meaning digitally (Burnett, 2010). With this in mind, students can build and enhance critical thinking (e.g., collecting, evaluating, and synthesizing information), collaborative creativity (e.g., the blend of audio, video, and animation), problem solving (e.g., identifying and solving problems), and multiliteracies (e.g., technological literacy, genre literacy, and information literacy). Some empirical studies show that digital storytelling enhances learner-centered learning and build a learner community of practice. Equally important, when working on digital storytelling, learners engage in “the story making and sharing process” (Lee, 2014, p. 339). This social engagement creates a supportive learner-centered learning environment.

3.2 A genre approach to digital storytelling in language education

Digital storytelling is a genre that combines the use of technology and telling a story in which a particular technological tool mediates the telling of a story. A genre-based approach emphasizes social and cultural contexts in which language is used. This suggests that any text including a story is always linked to a social context where the story is situated. Genre-based instruction puts emphasis on different types of scaffolding or support that enable learners to complete or work on a particular learning task. A series of pedagogical stages/tasks serve to scaffold students’ learning through their interactions with more knowledgeable peers or teachers and their engagement with instructional tools (Bruner, 1978; Vygotsky, 1978). These stages or tasks include building knowledge of the field (e.g., a story, technology, topicality, language resources), joint construction of knowledge (e.g., teacher-student engagement with text creation), and independent student construction of knowledge (e.g., individual text production or collaborative text production) (Pryde, 2015). One area of genre-based instruction, text circles, remains rarely implemented. In this study, story circles are also included in genre-based pedagogical stages. In this story circle, learners share their stories with each other once

they feel confident. Thus, a genre approach to digital storytelling can make digital storytelling-oriented learning visible, allow learners to recognize language use in context, enable the learners to view teaching as more knowledgeable assistance or support, empower them from assisted learning to independent learning, and allow the learners the opportunity to analyse how stories as socio-historically situated texts are organized and represent different social meanings. Thus, creating and sharing digital stories are a purposeful, socially embedded activity in which children engage.

As digital storytelling, an emerging genre, offers many educational benefits as discussed earlier, digital stories have received increasing attention from language practitioners. The use of digital storytelling has been well documented in the educational domain, particularly in the context of ESL and EFL programs. Many of these studies were undertaken with adult learners and in the ESL context (Lee, 2014, Ohler, 2008; Reinders, 2011) although several studies reported the effectiveness of multimedia stories on the development of young learners' listening comprehension (see Lee, 2014). The use of digital storytelling has also been widely used in content-based instruction in which students created digital stories about their specialized topics (see Vinogradova, Linville, & Bickel, 2011). In the context of early age education, Swan & Hofer (2013) investigated how eighth graders in a history class created documentaries. The pupils showed enthusiasm for the film making task and felt motivated and showed creativity in making the films. Another study by Verdugo and Belmonte (2007) examined the impact of digital stories on the understanding of spoken English by Spanish 6-year-olds. They showed that digital stories provided EFL students with authentic input and a longer time of exposure to English. The pupils in the experimental group outperformed the control group in terms of listening comprehension. These results indicate the relationship between a technology-enhanced environment and improved language learning. Similarly, Tsou, Wang, and Tzeng (2006) reported that after engaging in a digital storytelling project, students could improve their story comprehension, and they had better understanding of sentence complexity in their story recalls. Despite this growing body of research, there is still little research on the use of digital storytelling in the EYL context in Indonesia and in Asia as a whole.

4. Methodology

This 5-month fieldwork was implemented in two primary schools in Banyuwangi, East Java, Indonesia because of two considerations: (1) these schools offered EYL programs and (2) the author got entry access to these schools. The nature of the present study was participatory action research (PAR) because digital storytelling is a participatory instructional tool for empowering both the teachers and the pupils to become creators of their stories. Two English teachers and I negotiated this methodological consideration. The thrust of the project was to engage and empower both the teachers and the pupils to use digital storytelling as a tool for learning English through creation and presentation of digital stories. In this fieldwork, I played a role as a research collaborator with two English teachers. I also took on a role as a co-teacher. This role engaged me in decision making processes. The classes the English teachers and I created comprised pupils who volunteered to participate in out-of-school English classes. These pupils were motivated to learn English with technology. During the fieldwork, I positioned myself as both outsider and insider to the field in order to bridge the gap between participants as the researched and me as a researcher (Bruce, Flynn, & Stagg-Peterson, 2011).

The participants in the study were 60 children between the ages of 10 and 12 years old from two government-managed primary schools located in two different areas: urban and rural. Both the schools were located in East Java, Indonesia. The children had been learning English for six or seven years prior to the study since pre-schooling. Prior to the start of the empirical fieldwork, the author convened a meeting with two English teachers and 60 students detailing an informed consent form written in Bahasa Indonesia and distributed informed consent form sheets to them. I asked their parents to read through and sign off the form to ensure that all of the data were kept confidential and

might be used for publication purposes. They agreed to sign the consent forms for confidentiality and use of data for research purpose. The students were in 5th and 6th grades when the present research study commenced. All the pupils were competent in two languages: Bahasa Indonesia and Javanese. They came from families with different socio-economic backgrounds (e.g., farmers, teachers, entrepreneurs, government employees, casual workers).

Before I worked with the pupils, I provided two English teachers with continuous professional tutorials for the use of digital storytelling during Ramadan break and holidays when they did not teach so that they could make most of this teacher professional training. The two English teachers were literate in technology. In the first five class periods, the pupils were trained to take photographs and write a story or a narrative. In this project, Microsoft Photo Story 3 was used as the software application for creating digital stories. Photo Story 3 was chosen because it required a low threshold level of ICT skills and allowed offline access. Both two English teachers were trained to use this software because these two teachers and I co-taught the participating pupils to use the software as they engaged in the process of learning digital storytelling. Pedagogically speaking, different cycles of instructional activities informed by a systemic functional linguistics-inspired genre approach include:

1. building knowledge of a digital story: guiding pupils to understand a digital story along with the process of creating this genre;
2. joint story deconstruction: helping pupils understand the language or lexico-grammar of a story;
3. joint story construction: scaffolding pupils to write a story and create a digital story;
4. independent story construction: allowing pupils to explore a story theme, write a story script, design a story map and storyboard, prepare multimodal elements, record their own voices, and edit the digital story; and
5. story circles: providing the pupil the opportunity to share and celebrate their digital stories with others.

As a whole, the participating pupils, the teachers, and I went through the following stages:

Stages	Details		
Stage 1: Introduction	Introduce teachers and pupils to the digital storytelling project	Help pupils recognize 3 types of stories: personal, historical, and myth	Assist the pupils to use Microsoft Photo Story 3
Stage 2: Scaffolded Creation of Digital Stories	Guide pupils to create digital stories	Scaffold the pupils to draft personal, historical, and myth stories	Guide the pupils to import the story drafts to Microsoft Photo Story 3
Stage 3: Creation of Digital Stories	Pupils work together to create digital stories based on three story genres: personal, historical, and myth.	The pupils rework and edit the story drafts.	The pupils import the revised drafts into Microsoft Photo Story 3
Stage 4: Presentation of Digital Stories	Afford the pupils the opportunities to present their digital stories	Facilitate a conference on digital stories (peer feedback)	The teacher gives feedback on pupils' digital stories
Stage 5: Reflection	Help the pupils reflect on the process of creating digital stories	Assist the pupils to reflect on the presentation of the digital stories	Guide the pupils to reflect on the entire learning of the digital storytelling

Table 1: Stages of a digital storytelling project

Empirical data were collected through participant observations, informal interviews, and students' works—photographs and story drafts. All the data were analysed through an interpretative and narrative lens. The data were categorized into moment-by-moment interactions (teacher-student and student-student interactions), characterizations of such interactions (how much both the teachers and the students valued such interactions), and interactional patterns (how students interacted with their peers). These three layers of the analysis allowed for capturing some emerging findings relevant to the three research questions. The thematic analysis aimed primarily to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). This analysis embraced familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes among codes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report (see Braun & Clarke, 2006 for a fuller discussion of each step). Thus, the data were categorized and coded based on recurring themes, which represented data sets relevant to specific research questions. The classroom discourse analysis was used to make sense of the categorized data.

5. Findings and discussion

5.1 Knowledge building and joint story construction

In this study, students learned to understand a story in terms of functions and meanings, use technology to create stories, deploy both Bahasa Indonesia and English as semiotic tools for story production, and to engage in multimodal tasks. This knowledge building and joint story construction prepared the pupils for the creation of digital stories. In particular, building knowledge of a story and Microsoft Photo Story 3 as a technological tool assisted the pupils to become ready for collaborative story construction with their peers. Additionally, the teachers built pupils' knowledge digital stories, which are an artful combination of personal voice, image, music, sound, and/or text, usually presented as a short video (Lee, 2014, Lee, 2015). Building knowledge of digital stories was intended to demonstrate the pupils that the creation of digital stories has potential to open new opportunities for pupils to author a rich variety of multimodal texts. The pupils were also scaffolded to create a digital story using Photo Story 3. In other words, in this knowledge building phase, the pupils engaged with how digital stories were created. Equipping the pupils with different types of knowledge, such as a story, Microsoft Photo Story 3, language resources, other supporting technological tools (e.g., a camera), and semiotic resources helped them to collaborate on the creation of digital stories.

On a particular note, semiotic resources such as images, photographs, music, and sound give impact and meaning to the whole digital story. For language resources, the teachers showed some online resources, such as e-dictionaries and e-translators that the pupils could use when creating digital stories. The pupils could also use copyrighted materials such as images and photographs as long as they cited or acknowledged the materials properly. (They learned this information literacy in order to avoid plagiarism and respect copyrighted material.) They were also guided to use a camera-equipped mobile phone in order to capture observed objects. Following this knowledge building, the pupils and the teachers co-wrote a story about a corn crop. This joint story construction was implemented through a field trip by visiting and observing a corn farm nearby school as in Photo 1 below.



Photo 1: Visit to a Corn Farm

The teachers let the pupils jot down what they observed and guided them to think of what a story they would write. Before the pupils took some photographs for their stories, the teachers demonstrated how to take a few pictures. Drawing on these pictures, the teachers created a story. This demonstration provided the pupils how to photograph what they would observe. When the teachers explained how photographs could be a source of stories, the pupils showed enthusiasm. This activity required critical thought. Following a photographing session, the teachers explained a rhetorical or organizational move (genre) of a story, which includes a beginning, middle, and an end. They showed some short stories with this three-step organization. All the students remarked that they never learned how to write a story using this rhetorical move. They just wrote a story without rhetorical awareness of the story. All the pupils reported that they received explicit instruction about digital stories that they never learned before. They also recognized that knowledge building and joint story construction helped them envision how to create digital stories. Through teacher-scaffolded learning tasks at this stage, the pupils felt ready to engage in story text construction and story circles.

5.2 Story text construction and story circles

In the pre-story text construction, the teachers guided the pupils to identify possible topics to be developed into stories. Topics were a source of content knowledge that the pupils could explore. In the urban primary school, the teacher identified topics, which were related to school surroundings, but in the rural primary school, the teacher identified topics, which were related to farms because there were a large number of farms in the village. They also discussed types of stories or narratives the pupils wrote for digital stories. Both the topics and the stories were the first thing that the teachers and the pupils discussed. All the pupils reported that discussing topics and stories were a starting point for the creation of digital stories. They also admitted that they learned how to write a story, but they had no opportunity to discuss topics and stories with the class. Before the pupils collaborated on the writing of a story, they photographed some objects relevant to story construction; they collected and selected some photographs for the story. Searching and collecting photographs as visual artefacts seemed to be the simplest part of the digital story making process, but it was the most difficult because the pupils had to negotiate spots and places/objects that that would help to tell their stories. Visual artefacts such as photographs had to be relevant to the content of a story draft. They had to have a strong connection to the primary text, a narrative. Thus, photographs should add to the overall impact of the story presentation (Tobin, 2012). Photography challenged the pupil to interpret this visual information. Some pupils reported that they never used photographs to write stories. Others remarked that taking a photograph was just for fun.

The photographs were visual scaffolds, which allowed the pupils to write a story. First of all, the pupils wrote captions about the taken photographs. These captions served as an outline of the story they were going to develop. This finding aligns with Labbo, Love, and Ryan's (2007) study that children made gains in their expressive vocabulary while writing captions about photographs in a digital photograph project. In outlining the story, the pupils talked about each photograph they looked at on the tables, mobile phones, or i-pads. This conversation built upon the scaffolded experience of taking the photographs. During this conversation, the pupils transferred the photographs onto the laptop. They edited and adjusted all the photographs for Photo Story 5 Presentation.

For example, one group of four pupils in the urban primary school took some photographs of the flower trees in the school garden (see Photo 2, below). This group attempted to describe parts of the flower trees. The pupils photographed the whole trees first to provide a complete picture of the object. These photographs were materials for the creation of a story.



Photo 2: Observing a School Garden

Another group of five pupils in the rural primary school took photographs of a dragon fruit farm (see Photo 3). The pupils visited this farm and took photographs of the farm. They also interviewed a dragon fruit farmer to probe into some facts about this fruit crop. The pupils were given the opportunity to discuss possible photograph collection spots. Once the pupils had decided a particular spot, they visited the spot by observing this spot. Almost all the pupils selected farms as photo collection spots, they interviewed farmers who grow fruit and vegetable crops.



Photo 3: Visit to a Dragon Fruit (*Pitaya*) Farm

The photographs paired with written texts as an interdependent visual text were useful because they offered a more robust and dynamic way to both interpret and represent the pupil's knowledge and experience. The pupils became aware that photographs served as visual clues, which enabled them to generate ideas. Some pupils remarked the following:

We live with digital photography. Using our camera-equipped mobile phones, we take many pictures as we want. In this project, we just realized that the use of digital photographs helps us generate ideas in our story. (P1, Informal Interview, 5 August 2015, Author's Translation)

Honestly, the use of photography helps us generate information that is useful for the creation of a story. I never wrote any captions about the photographs taken before. Now, I found this photography as a rich source of information for my story. (P2, Informal Interview, 5 August 2015, Author's Translation)

For me, photographs are a platform for interpreting visual information. Now I understand that photographs are visual texts. We can our experience or history from photographs. (P3, Informal Interview, 5 August 2015, Author's Translation)

Photography is a tool for expressive and creative learning. Photographing our experience or life can be a resource for language learning. We can do languaging through this photography. We can use a target language beyond educational settings. (P4, Informal Interview, 5 August 2015, Author's Translation)

Observing an object is not enough, but observing and photographing what we see allow us to create a powerful story. Photographs are visual mediation of story writing. (P5, Informal Interview, 5 August 2015, Author's Translation)

I see photographs as visual documents, which record our past experience. When my teacher showed how photographs could communicate meanings, I was aware of the power of photographs. In addition, we must know the context of the photographs taken so that we can interpret these visuals. (P6, Informal Interview, 5 August 2015, Author's Translation)

These pupils differently perceived photographs as a rich source of information, a tool for idea generation, a platform for interpretative visual information, a vehicle for expressive and creative learning, visual mediation, and visual record of experience. These positive perceptions could build pupils' motivation to engage with photography when they carried out visual documentation of what they observed. Thus, photography was a skill that the pupils had to develop because they had to make an informed decision and critical thought about the objects taken to represent their experience. It is part of situated social sign-making processes in which children deploy photographs as multimodal semiotic resources in order to create and deliver their intended meanings through mediatized stories (Yang, 2012).

Once all the photographs had been arranged, the pupils collaboratively outlined and drafted a story of between 100 and 150 words. Four or five pupils in one group wrote collaboratively during writing time. This collaboration allowed the pupils to contribute and share ideas with each other. This verbalizing and sharing of ideas mediated "the process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language" (Swain, 2006, p. 98). At the stage of drafting a story, the pupils did this drafting at home. They made an appointment to co-draft a story. As agreed in the first class period, the pupils felt more comfortable if they drafted a story in Bahasa Indonesia first (see Appendixes 1 and 2). All the pupils argued that Bahasa Indonesia as their second language was used to pool and organize ideas. They sometimes used their first language, Javanese if they talked about specific words. Even though the pupils drafted a story in Bahasa Indonesia and Javanese, they navigated and discussed appropriate words to be put into the story draft. P14 recounted that "the use of Bahasa Indonesia and Javanese enabled me to develop ideas because I was thinking in both

language. The most important step was outlining and completing a rough draft.” P14’s personal account was also reflected in other pupils’ accounts of using Bahasa Indonesia and Javanese in idea development. These data demonstrate that the use of both L1 and L2 allows pupils to clarify their understanding of the language as well as content issues.

In the writing of the first story draft, the pupils reported that pooling ideas together was not an easy task. They had to negotiate whose ideas were included in the draft. P20 admitted that “our group spent almost five days pooling ideas together and outlining what to be included in the draft. We were committed to contributing some words and then put these words together in one draft.” In collaborative writing, some of the pupils remarked that they never wrote collaboratively before the project started. Over half of the students admitted that they needed to negotiate which words were appropriate in use. They sometimes had difficulty finding appropriate words when describing specific things, such as *pengairan* (irrigation), *penyiangan* (weeding), and *perkawinan* (pollination). They recognized that wording was an important part of story drafting. This suggests that language learning is the accumulation of vocabulary in context; it is important to learn as many unknown words of the language as possible. Therefore, pupils need to develop their vocabulary repertoire. All the pupils made use of bilingual dictionaries and Bahasa Indonesia dictionaries in order to search for the exact meanings of particular words. For children, dictionaries are a useful resource for building their vocabulary. This indicates that pupils are interested in learning words, which are associated with concrete objects they see. Thus, vocabulary building is a catalyst for the creation of digital stories. After the pupils completed their digital stories, in story circles, the pupils shared their stories with each other. They appreciated each other’s stories because they felt that the stories were collective work that they never did before. In these story circles, there was no peer and teacher assessment of digital stories because the pupils needed more time to learn how to provide peer feedback on digital stories. Additionally, extended time was not allowed because the pupils had to prepare themselves for a national school examination. Despite these constraints, the pupils felt proud of their digital stories. This can be further research into this area of digital storytelling.

5.3 Teachers’ reflections on a digital storytelling project with young learners

Based on teachers’ reflections (see Appendix 3), as a whole, two English teachers found a digital storytelling project with young learners of English rewarding. They reported that pupils served as active agents who played different roles, such as photographers or photograph collectors, negotiators, decision makers, observers, interviewers, and writers. These roles are an important process of developing multimodal digital stories. The participating teachers remarked that digital storytelling engaged the pupils in the creation of multimodal narrative texts that the pupils never experienced in their formal English learning journey. In the knowledge building phase, they acknowledged that topics were a starting point for knowledge building. Chosen topics served as a point of departure for pupils’ written scripts for the digital story assignments.

In addition to this topicality, the teachers were excited to guide the pupils to become familiar with the skeleton of a story, language resources, and technological tools. They also argued that digital storytelling encouraged the pupils to use multiple skills from searching and organizing information, writing a script, and weaving together voice, images, and music to sharing a story with others through story circles (Lee, 2014). One of the teachers recounted that digital storytelling built pupils’ digital literacies and information literacies. This created a learning environment that encourages pupils to learn various types of literacies, including multimodal (e.g., audio, video, animation) and multimedia forms of communication (e.g., text, image, voice) to create digital stories. As two English teachers pointed out, because the creation of digital stories solicited multiple resources, the pupils used different forms of thinking, such as critical thinking, reflective thinking, and creative thinking in order to understand, synthesize, assess, and use the information to create a story. The teachers observed that digital storytelling motivated children to carry out a series of tasks, which engaged them in dialogic conversations about photographs as a source of story creation and story drafts. In artefact

(photograph) search and collection, children engaged in such tasks as decision making, negotiation, critical thinking, creative thinking, reflective thinking problem solving, mutual support, and collaboration. The teachers remarked while drafting a story, the pupils understood each other's interpretations of the photographs taken collaboratively. During this composing activity, they pinpointed that teacher scaffolding was needed to help pupils find appropriate wording when specific words are technical or semi-technical. The teachers commented that pupils created and shared meaning as well as build knowledge through their social and cognitive engagement with their peers. This pupil-centered learning allowed for the shaping of meaning and collective construction of knowledge through interactive processes of discussion, negotiation, and sharing.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

In closing, doing a digital storytelling with young learners is a complex and staged process. This process engages pupils in collecting, creating, analysing, and combining visual artefacts with written text (Robin, 2008). This digital story creation requires the pupils to become familiar with computers, image capture devices, digital media software, audio capture devices, and multi-literacy skills (cultural literacy, information literacy, narrative literacy, visual literacy, media literacy). The present digital storytelling project hones pupils' multidimensional skills, which not only develop their language but also enhance their content knowledge and literacies. This digital story creation provides a new avenue for pupils to share and discuss their life experiences. This project empowers children to be creators of multimodal narrative texts. Throughout the process of digital story creation, children were actively engaged as problem solvers as they made decisions about the images, think about the captions they offer for images and co-edit these texts into one digital story draft. Digital stories accommodate the voices of individual children to be captured. This indicates that the creation of digital stories democratizes the ways children create a story using a variety of modalities. Pedagogically speaking, this study provides an example of how a digital story project can be organized and implemented in Indonesian primary schools. The use of digital storytelling can take different forms in terms of genres and technological tools. Despite these research merits, further research needs to investigate in what ways digital storytelling build learners' identities as storytellers. Because the present study did not closely examine how pupils engaged in story circles, this line of research would examine the extent to which pupils engage in these story circles.

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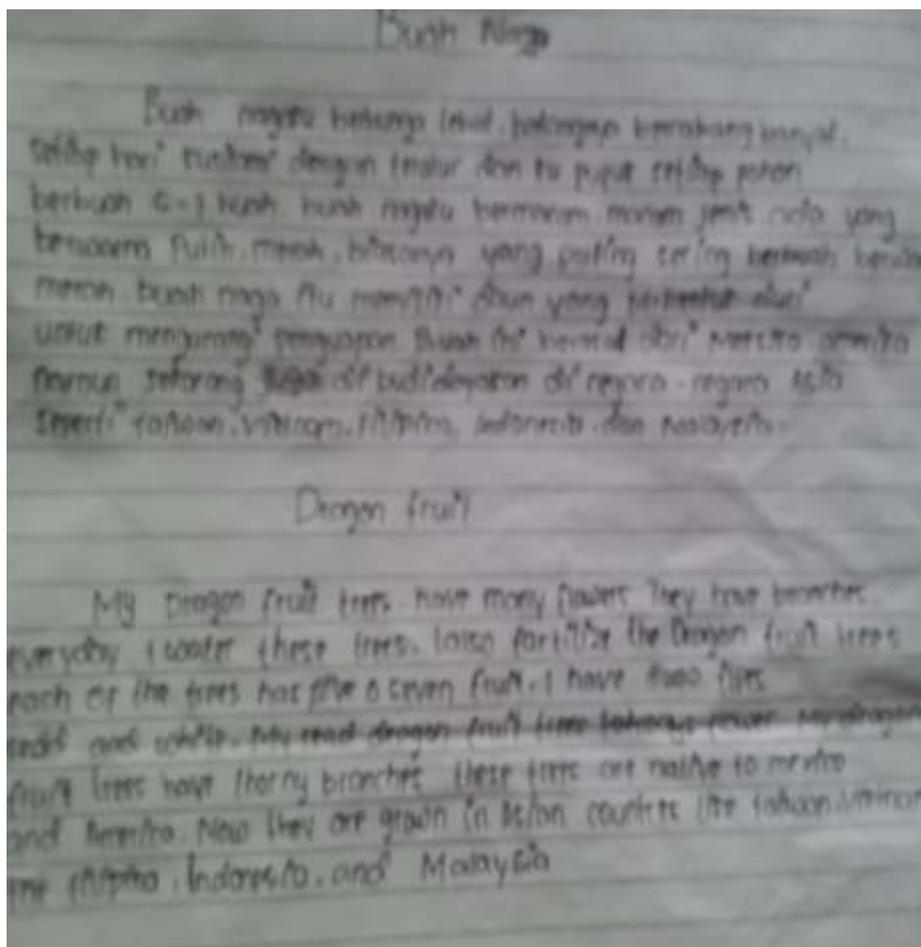
Appendix 1: Sample of pupils' jointly-created story

Our Watermelon Village



We live in an agricultural village where many farmers grow a lot horticultural crops like melons, watermelons, dragon fruits, tomatoes, eggplants, and chillies. Nowadays, a lot of farmers grow watermelon crops. When we visited this watermelon farm, we observed how these watermelon crops grow and interviewed a watermelon farmer. Watermelon is a vine-like flowering crop. The watermelon crops we observed are seedless. These seedless watermelons are grown in a well-drained sandy loam farmland. In order to produce fruits, a farmer should pollinate flowering watermelons. We also observed how a farmer sprayed for potential pests and diseases so that watermelons can grow well and produce flowers and fruits. We also observed that some farmers harvested watermelons. These harvested watermelons would be sent to a traditional market in another town. Watermelons are grown in our village because many farm lands have porous and fertile soils.

Appendix 2: Sample of pupils' writing in two languages



Dragon Fruit: A Revised Version

My dragon fruit trees have many flowers. They have many branches. Everyday, I water these trees, and I also fertilize the dragon fruit trees. Each of the trees has five or seven fruits. I have two types of dragon fruits: red and white. My red dragon fruit trees always produce a lot of fruits. These dragon fruits have thorny branches in order to reduce evaporation. These dragon fruits are native to Mexico and America, but nowadays, these cactus-like trees are grown in many Asian countries such as Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

Appendix 3: Sample teacher reflection

In this sixth meeting, the students were directed to work on a new story project. They were asked to discuss what theme they would choose, what pictures they would take for their story, and how the students would narrate the story based on the pictures they had taken.

To begin this activity, I asked the students to discuss with their group their new project. In the group, the students discussed what story they would compose. They were given two story themes, namely the school and a school environment. They were given 10 minutes to discuss these themes with their group. When they made a decision, they directly went around the school to capture the objects they would consider for their story. These two groups chose two different story themes. While the first group chose the story of description of their school, the other group chose to write the school environment as their story theme. When I asked each of the groups why they chose those themes, the students who described their school argued that they wanted people (audience) understand how their school looked like and what the best things the school had. While the other students said that they wanted to share what their school had done to participate in going green.

After that, the students went hunting the pictures of their project. The students were given 20 minutes to elicit the pictures. The students who were working on my school story collected pictures such as the name of the school on the gate, vision and mission of the schools, pictures of extracurricular activities at school hung on the outside of classroom wall, school health unit, and I think two unique pictures such as picture of students which portrayed students' attitude towards the teacher and canteen "kejujuran" (honesty). Meanwhile, the second group took the pictures of trash cans, school janitors, recycled stuffs, students cleaning the yard, and students planting the plants.

After they collected the picture, they began to rearrange it through their mobile phones. They put one after the others based on their story plot. After that they transferred their pictures to the computer and embarked on the storyboard to narrate the story. They wrote two to three sentences in English. After that, they made sure that the language they used was appropriately used. To help them, I allowed them to use dictionary to find the meaning of the unfamiliar words. After that, I helped them to check the language. Finally, they saved their project.

Based on this experience, I have been aware that scaffolding students in ever instruction phase plays an important role in helping students complete a digital story task. I had played different roles, such as a guide and facilitator so that the students felt comfortable and confident in doing this task. I observed that the students learned different things, and they went through a step-by-step process of creating digital stories. This digital storytelling really engaged my students in multiple tasks, such as navigating and discussing story themes, creating a story, selecting and using photographs or images, and using Photo Story and language resources guides, such as a dictionary. This engagement helped my students grow personally, cognitively, and socially.