

DIGITAL STORYTELLING: TEACHERS' GUIDE TO ATTRACT CHILDREN'S INTEREST AND MOTIVATION IN KINDERGARTEN'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Learning English among early childhood is increasingly being presented in many schools so English learning particularly vocabulary recognition has become a new concern to be accommodated in education especially for children. Preliminary research on two kindergarten-level classes (age of 5 to 6) in a private school showed that there were several problems teachers faced when applying the conventional storytelling method. The alternative solution to this problem is implementing digital storytelling method which is integrating storytelling and digital technology. This research aims to explain digital storytelling as method to attract children's interest and motivation. This research is based on data obtained qualitatively so that it gives the characteristics of descriptive qualitative according to the topic. The data in this study were obtained from the results of field observations total of 33 kindergarten students in two classes of a private school in Salatiga, Central Java, Indonesia. The result showed that digital storytelling method is considered to be able to attract children's attention in following the stories and learning materials brought by the teacher. Student motivation also appears to emerge with the application of the digital storytelling method in learning English. Those might happened because digital storytelling method accumulate students' attention from the audio-visual presented accompanying the story. It is also fun and makes English learning seems like interesting children's activities. There are also some teachers' guide to apply this method in English language learning for kids.

Keyword: Digital Storytelling, English, Learning Method, Children's Interest and Motivation, Vocabulary

INTRODUCTION

Learning English among early childhood is increasingly being presented in many schools. To meet the needs of the times, mastery of English has become a new concern to be accommodated in education especially for children. There are those who think that English needs to be taught to children from an early age because children are in a good period of absorbing information so that it is suitable for introducing English at this time (Cahyati & Madya, 2019; Zein, Sukyadi, Hamied, & Lengkanawati, 2020). In addition, the importance of English today makes many parents and educational institutions consider providing an introduction to the language from the start through the integration of vocabulary with games, habituation of speaking English in daily activities, and even holding special English learning sessions. However, all ideas for introducing English to children need to pay attention to the characteristics of early childhood learning (Kurniawan, 2017; Ana, 2018).

By paying attention to the characteristics of learning for early childhood, teachers need to design a fun English learning, a real context learning and learning that emphasizes the integration of various activities in developmental aspects including strengthening language skills. The presentation of English lessons was also presented in an interesting way considering that this language is not the mother tongue that is already known or used

daily by children (Saputra, 2017). By paying attention to these various things, it is hoped that English language learning among early childhood can be adapted to the needs and context of the environment so that the achievement of language development aspects and mastery of English can be obtained optimally. In general, learning English for early childhood is still at the level of recognizing word meanings, introducing simple English vocabulary, and getting used to using simple spoken language in everyday conversation. The number of English words introduced to children is also adjusted to the child's age level. As in children age of 4 to 6, the introduction of English vocabulary is still limited to the range of 5-10 new vocabulary per day at a certain time period in the learning session (Allen & Marotz, 2010; Toolkit, Concept Development and Vocabulary, 2019).

Beside the various methods used by teachers to facilitate learning English for children, there is one method that is interesting and is considered to be able to accommodate the characteristics of children's learning. The method is storytelling. This method is not new in the world of children's education because almost every day, children listen to stories at home or at school and even stories are used as a means of instilling values or a means of delivering learning materials. The various strengths of storytelling underlie the many uses of this method in the learning process, including learning English. Through storytelling, children are stimulated to be able to associate words with meaning, children can recognize and understand the meaning of a word through the story that is told. Children can also strengthen their mastery of foreign language vocabulary by repeating the words that will be taught in the story that is presented. Storytelling can also attract children's attention when done properly so that storytellers can introduce new vocabulary or the meaning of a word that will be taught to children during the storytelling session (Bhakti & Marwanto, 2018; Satriani, 2019; Toolkit, 2019).

However, these good things do not fully last long under conventional conditions. There are problems that can arise from the application of the storytelling method in learning English if it is not done properly. What is meant by the application of the right storytelling method is to pay attention to the condition of the child, see the achievement of instilling values and learning materials, including observing the child's response when a story is told. Preliminary research on two kindergarten-level classes (age of 5 to 6) in a private school showed that there were several problems teachers faced when applying the storytelling method. When the teacher tells stories and introduces English vocabulary to children, at first the children pay attention but not for long, they start to lose focus and do other activities in the classroom. This shift of the child's focus from the teacher's story to other activities is followed by the child ignoring the interactions built by the teacher, including ignoring the story that the teacher brings. There are also children who choose to walk around in class to their friends or the toys presented in the class by ignoring the story that is being sung by the teacher. Children who are close to the teacher tend to be more resilient than children who are further away.

In consideration of children's characteristics especially their motivation, teacher plays an important role to accommodate an interesting and attractive method to generate students' interest and motivation. Attracting student in learning is the essential ways to do in almost classes facilitating teaching and learning process. It does not mean that students who are present in class are also focus on learning material from the beginning till the end. Teacher should do extra action as a persuasive way to attract and motivate students. One of ways is by using innovative media and methods (Filgona, Sakiyo, Gwany, & Okoronka, 2020).

Based on the teacher's initial reflection, it was found that the children in the front row of the class who were close to the teacher when telling stories could survive because there was a drawing paper that the teacher showed when telling stories but the size of the drawing paper could not accommodate children who were further away from the teacher's storytelling position. This is known from the child's response which states that the pictures used by the teacher are not clear and some of the children approach the teacher to see more clearly. This is the conventional storytelling method used in first meeting of English learning in this study. It was found that the storytelling method that has various benefits can experience problems when it is not delivered by paying attention to the context and needs of children in the existing classroom setting.

In this study, an upgrade was made to the conventional storytelling method by adding elements of technology in the presentation of stories for children. The technology used is digital technology in the form of audio and visual reinforcement including the addition of digital-based activity components for children while listening to stories. This method is known as digital storytelling (Cherry, 2017; Lestariyana & Widodo, 2018).

Digital storytelling not only accommodates digital components that strengthen the message of the story being conveyed but also pays attention to the context of the story so that the story that is delivered can be received well, including the message contained in the story is conveyed optimally. In principle, there are several strengths that this method offers, such as the addition of visual elements that are more real and clear. With the addition of visualization elements, the story presented will be supported by a complete picture that helps understanding the context and content of the story. The addition of audio elements also makes the story alive and becomes an attention-grabbing element when presented to children (Cherry, 2017). The unity of the audio and visual elements has a good influence on children in the process of receiving information and understanding the content of the material. In this case, the introduction of vocabulary, word meaning and English literacy, children have the opportunity to be more involved in the learning process and capture more forms and meanings of words in English. In addition, activities that are integrated in storytelling through digital features also bring their own experiences that support the learning process of material components that are considered difficult or which usually experience obstacles (Thorifah & Umam, 2019; Davies, Bourke, & Harrison, 2020).

However, not all teachers are capable and proficient in designing learning with digital storytelling. There are various obstacles faced by the integration of digital technology. Teachers are still not used to using digital technology in learning. Teachers also experience limitations in how to design the right digital storytelling. The teacher's lack of knowledge of this method is also an obstacle to the application of the digital storytelling method in learning English for early childhood. Based on ideas presented earlier, this research aims to explain the result of implementing digital storytelling in learning English for kindergarten children age of 5 to 6 for attracting children's interest and motivation. Furthermore, based on the results of observational data analysis, a guide is proposed for teachers to design simple digital storytelling that can be applied for children's interest and motivation in classroom as well as at home.

METHOD

This research is based on data obtained qualitatively so that it gives the characteristics of descriptive qualitative research that wants to explain the result of implementing digital storytelling for attracting students' interest and motivation in

English language learning section. The object of this research consists of two kindergarten classes with students age of 5 to 6 at a private school in Salatiga, Central Java, Indonesia. Kindergarten class A contains 17 students as participants and class B contains 16 students as participants. Total of participants involved in this research are 33 kindergarten students. The selection of research participants was carried out thoroughly according to the availability of the number of classes at the kindergarten level in that age range. This school has introduced English in the learning process but has not made English the language of instruction so it is considered relevant as an object of research that wants to find out the problems of teaching English in the classroom.

The data in this study were obtained from the results of field observations in the classroom when the learning process took place. Observations were made four times in a special time span (one observation per week). Observational data is narrative so that information is obtained in the form of symptom notes and participants' responses during the implementation of English learning in class. There are two major objects of observation which are students' interest gained from duration of students' attention to storytelling sections and students' motivation gained from behavioral responses while English language teaching learning process is happened. The data obtained is then analyzed qualitatively by emphasizing the problems that arise in the English learning process and making these problems the basis for providing guidance for teachers in applying digital storytelling as an alternative to handle problems in learning English in kindergarten.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of observational data acquisition during the English learning process, it is known that the learning process observed was four face-to-face sessions where each storytelling session was in the range of 30 minutes followed by other play activities. Each face-to-face session accommodates different learning methods. At the first meeting, learning English with an emphasis on teaching vocabulary for kindergarten students age of 5 to 6 was carried out using the conventional storytelling method. This conventional storytelling method is the teacher tells a one-way story with the help of print media for image visualization. The second learning meeting, the method applied was developed by integrating digital technology in the form of visualization of animated images from Microsoft PowerPoint (PPT). Starting from this second lesson, digital storytelling is used in learning. The third learning meeting, learning activities with the digital storytelling method were developed by changing the visualization of PPT images into audio visuals through videos that were relevant to the learning theme at that time. The fourth meeting still uses the digital storytelling method with audio-visual as in the previous meeting only enriched with student participatory activities (games involving English vocabulary and digital storytelling). The presentation of English language learning sections are presented through Table 1.

Table 1. English Language Learning Sections

English Learning Meeting	Material	Method	Media
Meeting 1	English Vocabulary, Themed Story	Conventional Storytelling	Printed Pictures
Meeting 2	English Vocabulary, Themed Story	Digital Storytelling	PowerPoint Visualization

English Learning Meeting	Material	Method	Media
Meeting 3	English Vocabulary, Themed Story	Digital Storytelling	Video Audio- Visualization
Meeting 4	English Vocabulary, Themed Story	Digital Storytelling	Video Audio- Visualization

Table 1 showed parts of English language learning on one daily study unit in the object of research. A discussion of the problems encountered by kindergarten teachers in learning English along with a guide for teachers in using the digital storytelling method is presented in the following discussion.

Teachers' Guide for the Lack of Students' Attention in English Learning

The first problem that appears from the results of observing English learning at the kindergarten level for students age of 5 to 6 is the change in the duration of students' attention to the stories brought by the teacher. The duration varies based on students' interest to the material presented and story told. The story is a forum for introducing English vocabulary which is a method of strengthening the provision of material. From the results obtained, when the teacher tells stories using the conventional storytelling method which introduces 10 English vocabulary words, students pay attention in the first 3 minutes. At that time, students in the class paid attention to the material presented by the storytelling method. After this duration, 14 students in the front row (5 students in class A and 9 students in class B) continued to pay attention to the story the teacher was telling story. Sixteen students in the back row (7 students in class A and 9 students in class B) had started to lose attention after the initial time duration. The other students in the class group were not paying attention since the early minutes the teacher gave the story. They lost their attention in the fourth minute with the assumption that they could not clearly see the visualization of printed images that the teacher brought when telling stories using conventional storytelling methods. The storytelling session ended in less than 30 minutes because the atmosphere was less conducive and students started to lose their attention in the twentieth minute. Only 3 children seemed to be calm until the end. Meanwhile, the replacement of image visualization with a story brought by the teacher requires a transition time that causes a pause. Especially when the teacher relates the story from the first visualization to the next visualization. Other students who were in the back row also lost their attention and even answered with answers that tended to be unrelated to the questions asked by the teacher regarding English vocabulary or the story being told.

When learning with the digital storytelling method is applied, especially when using PPT image visualization, most students have shown an increased duration of attention and potentially enhanced student's interest to the material presented compared to previous learning. Only about 3 students still did not focus on the early minutes of the teacher telling stories. A total of 22 students followed the teacher's story for a duration of 3 minutes per story session (with an indication of the change in the slide show). So children's attention can be accumulated up to 12 minutes during the story. A number of 8 children are still distracted and talk to their friends. The student was still unable to sustain attention on the initial few slides (range 6 minutes). This attention is also related to student participation in learning activities such as answering questions given by the teacher. The duration of the students' attention seemed to be longer until the 15th minute before there were around 6 children who started to turn their sight and talk to friends. And at the end of the story, there were 10 children who still seemed to pay attention to the teacher. In

this activity, students tended to respond to the teacher's questions well even though they did not all answer the questions correctly. Learning with image visualization through PPT has an influence on the class atmosphere which tends to be calm so that the child's focus on the stories brought by the teacher can last longer.

In its development, the third learning still uses the digital storytelling method but with the integration of digital technology in the form of audio-visual through video. The video used is a story video with a theme that is relevant to the learning at that time. In this video, there are several animated characters that move, make sounds and also some English vocabularies that are introduced because the object is visualized in the video. The atmosphere in the classroom seems more conducive and students' attention to the show and to the teacher is stronger. Students can focus on learning and the teacher's story from the beginning to the end of the story (story duration is around 20 minutes). It can be said that their interest increased over time when the method changed. It appears that only 3 children began to lose their attention at the 10th minute. The children sat in the back row and started talking to their friends. However, the incident did not last long (about 7 minutes) because when there was an interesting part of the video that was shown including the teacher's story which was continued to connect the video footage, the children began to pay attention to the story again. At the end of the story the number of children who are still paying attention increases by 27 children. Almost the same thing happened in the fourth lesson which still uses the same method and audio-visual. However, in this activity, there is an additional short activity, namely the activity of pointing to vocabulary that is presented randomly as a form of activity variation that provides additional experience for children. The same children had lost their attention but with a duration of about 2 minutes after walking 10 minutes of accumulated story time. At the end of the storytelling activity at the fourth meeting, students can continue to pay attention to learning and be involved until the end.

To clarify the description of the duration of children's attention as one of indicators of students' interest toward English language learning when digital storytelling is delivered, the following Figure 1 provides a visualization of the data obtained.

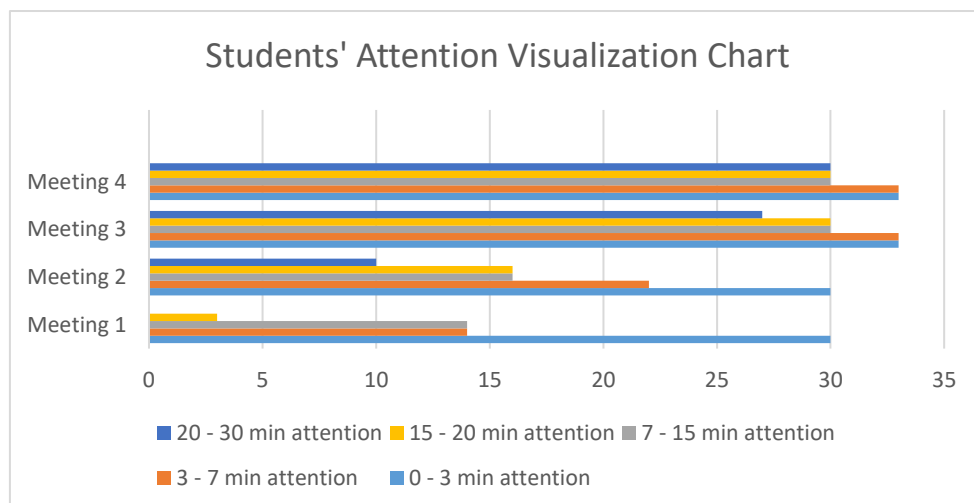


Figure 1. Students' Attention Visualization Chart

Based on the results of the data acquisition showed in Figure 1, it can be said that Students' attention is increasing as they generate interest and motivation from teaching learning method used in classroom activities. The teacher has brought innovative and

interesting storytelling method to students' English learning. So, to get a quite similar result for enhancing students' learning interest, teachers need to develop innovative and interesting methods and media in facilitating learning, especially English. The following steps are adapted from children's attention patterns when using the digital storytelling method which can be a guide for teachers to develop storytelling methods that are integrated with technology. First, determine the theme or topic of learning at that time. After the theme is obtained, prepare learning materials, especially vocabulary to be taught to students. Based on the vocabulary list that has been determined, design the story scenario in the form of a story outline or directly into the story script. Think of suitable audio-visual support for the story including providing vocabulary visualizations that strengthen English learning. After all the preparations have been carried out, the teacher can make a lesson plan that contains the stages of learning as a guide for the implementation of English learning. Teachers also need to make technical preparations including rehearsal before learning with the digital storytelling method is carried out. In principle, technology-integrated learning can help students learn a language because it is interesting and keeps children focused in the process of implementing learning as stated in the research result of Kurniawan (2017) related to language improvement through technology and research idea of Chery (2017) about audio visual effect on grabbing students' attention.

Teachers' Guide for The Lack of Students' Motivation in English Learning

In addition to the duration of students' attention being affected by the use of the digital storytelling learning method, it turns out that students' learning motivation is also affected. In the first lesson where storytelling was delivered conventionally using printed images, some children were still less motivated to listen to stories and learn new vocabulary in English. They tend to look for other activities that make them happy, such as talking to classmates, playing with media games in the classroom, including leaning against the table like someone who wants to sleep. Some of these behaviours appear because they are less interested in the media used by the teacher when telling stories. They complained that the pictures shown when telling stories were small and not clear from a long distance. This makes the children, especially those in the back row, less likely to be interested in the teacher's story so that they do other activities that are more enjoyable. The teacher has tried to play the intonation of the voice to use sound emphasis when telling stories but cannot motivate the children to join the storytelling session again.

Different things appeared when digital PPT technology began to be used in storytelling. Digital storytelling provides a fresh feel for children in storytelling sessions which are judged by their reactions to stories and teacher interactions teaching 10 thematic vocabularies which are responded well. This increase in motivation can be seen from the results of observing children's reactions when asked about vocabulary or the content of stories that are brought by the teacher by visualizing images through PPT. Children seem to think and look at the PPT screen before starting to answer questions from the teacher. This has happened several times and it seems that responses that do not support learning such as playing with friends and taking walks in class are starting to decrease.

In the third and fourth lessons, the digital storytelling method was strengthened by audio-visuals from videos that were relevant to the learning theme at that time. It appears that children begin to show stronger learning motivation. Although, it has not been measured with specific calculations regarding the level of children's motivation,

from the results of observations of children's responses and reactions when digital storytelling is developed and implemented in the English learning process in the classroom, some observational data can provide an overview of students' motivation in their involvement in the storytelling session at that time. Some of them were amazed by saying 'wow' and 'waa' as a form of their interest in the implementation of digital storytelling at that time. They are also actively involved in answering questions and doing simple activities brought by the teacher. It was also seen that the children began to sit quietly with their eyes on the screen when the video was playing and watched the teacher tell the story when the video was paused.

Based on observations regarding children's attention as part of learning interest and motivation in learning after the implementation of digital storytelling, teachers can make various preparations to accommodate this method to increase students' motivation to learn English. As discussed by Rahiem (2021) that digital story telling brings opportunity for children to gain motivation to learn. The key is that teachers need to make this method effective in terms of convenience, comfort and providing a meaningful learning experience. Teachers can use various development methods such as creating a classroom atmosphere that reinforces the stories and lessons that are delivered so that they can motivate students to learn English. The innovative modification of conventional storytelling becomes interesting digital storytelling brings a new way of making such story alive. By integrating digital technologies that, nowadays, is happening, teacher and students can get its benefits by upgrading the existing method to the next level. Apart from the content side, the teacher's invitation and assertive instruction to students can add value to students' motivation in learning. Teachers can teach students to be involved in storytelling and provide a good picture of the stories that are told that will be useful in everyday life.

CONCLUSION

This study is a descriptive study that describes the results of field observation data related to the use of the digital storytelling method in learning English at the kindergarten level (age of 5 to 6). The digital storytelling method is considered to be able to attract children's interest and motivation in following the stories and learning English vocabularies presented by the teacher. Starting from the conventional storytelling method to digital storytelling, children's interest seemed to increase with a good increasing trend where most of the participants showed their attention was maintained until the end of the story delivered by the teacher. Student motivation also appears to emerge with the application of the digital storytelling method in learning English. Although there are still obstacles and limitations in the results of data acquisition and analysis where quantitative measurements can be acquired data that better show the accuracy of the analysis results, teachers can still adapt the results of this study as a guide in designing English learning that is well received by children. Teachers and practitioners of English education and children's education are advised to use the results of this study as a basis for conducting further research that is enriching the findings that can be used by people who want to use the digital storytelling method in early childhood English learning.

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