

## **STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON A MULTIMODAL DIGITAL STORYTELLING BOOK USE IN A WRITING CLASS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed to describe the students' perceptions toward the use of a multimodal digital storytelling book in the writing class during COVID-19 pandemic. This research used a descriptive qualitative design. Meanwhile, the participants of this study were twenty students in the second semester of an English language education department in a private university located in East Java. The data were collected through the closed-ended questionnaires which were shared through Google Form. These questionnaires consisted of seven statements related to the use of a multimodal digital storytelling book in their writing class. After all the data were collected, then, the data were tabulated and calculated its frequency for each questionnaire item. The results of questionnaire analysis revealed that more than 85% of the students gave positive perceptions toward the use of a multimodal digital storytelling book in their writing class. Hopefully, the results of this study can become a reference for English teachers especially and language teachers generally when they teach writing online.

**Keywords:** *multimodal digital storytelling book, students' perceptions, writing class*

### **INTRODUCTION**

COVID-19 pandemic has changed the education system from face-to-face meeting in the offline class into the full online learning. Dealing with this, United Nations (2020) has stimulated many innovation proposals to overcome the education problems because of the COVID-19 pandemic in the world. In the field of language education, many educators from different countries have had to quickly respond to this condition so that the teaching and learning of languages, especially a foreign language learning, could still be delivered with the good quality (Brzoska, 2020; Reimers et al., 2020). Then, teachers and the students had to adapt this situation (Urbieta & Peñalver, 2021). Both the teachers and the students had to carry out the teaching and learning process from home.

In Indonesia, this condition had happened since March, 2020. All of the teachers used the online tools for video conferences such as Google Meet, Zoom, Webex, etc (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). Then, Nugroho &

Mutiaraningrum (2020) explain that the teachers also used the online platforms such as WhatsApp, Google Classroom, Edmodo, Moodle, Telegram, Youtube, etc. Because almost all the teachers had implemented the same ways and online learning tools, gradually the students got bored with this online learning (Mindaningsih et al., 2022; Zuhriyah & Fajarina, 2022). The teachers had to be as creative as possible to handle their online classes (Zuhriyah & Fajarina, 2021). The teachers should be able to create an interesting learning atmosphere in their online classes. This was a duty for all teachers in order that their students had the good mastery for what they had learned. Dealing with this, to make the students easy their learning materials, the teachers also should be able to provide the interesting learning media in their online EFL classes.

Media is a learning tool that helps the students understand the learning materials easily. Watrianthos et al. (2022) state that media is a tool of learning that can be used to enhance the learning quality. One of the media that can be used in this online learning is multimodal digital storytelling. Multimodal digital storytelling is basically narratives combined with voices, images, musics and videos that the people create based on their experiences and they upload them on the internet. According to Ladino (2017), multimodal digital storytelling is a way of presenting a story by integrating modes, such as: gestures, audio, videos, images, labels, and words and involving five senses to decode the message of the story and foster multisensory perception. Multimodal digital storytelling gives the students the chance to improve and showcase their multimodal meaning-making skills, play with languages and genres, become creative, and make others inspired (Buendgens-Kosten, 2021).

Some studies have investigated the use of digital storytelling in the language teaching and learning. The results of these previous studies show that digital storytelling is able to develop the students' language knowledge and literacy (Jones & Chapman, 2017; Widodo, 2016). Meanwhile, Lestariyana & Widodo (2018) found that digital storytelling could engage the students' active participation in the language class and utilize different linguistic resources in their multimodal texts created. In addition, Urbietta & Peñalver (2021) had developed the rubric for assessing the digital storytelling created by the students in which assessed several aspects, such as vocabulary, adequacy, grammatical accuracy, phonological control, cohesion and coherence, audio-visual design, editing and camera techniques, kinesics, proxemics and collaboration.

Related to the implementation of multimodal digital storytelling in the English writing class, there are also some previous researchers having investigated these issues. Balaman (2018) carried out an experimental study in which the results showed that the students in the experimental group taught writing using digital storytelling-integrated writing instruction had higher writing ability than the students in the control group taught writing using traditional paper-based writing practices. Additionally, Puspitasari (2018) conducted the study about the use of digital storytelling in her writing class.

She explained her experience when using digital storytelling in her writing class. She concluded that the use of digital storytelling helped the students very much when they composed narrative writing.

The gap for this study was that all those previous studies mentioned above were carried out before the pandemic of COVID-19. Then, the previous studies did not always investigate the perceptions of the students when the implementation of digital storytelling in their EFL classrooms, especially writing classes.

So that, there were still scarce studies exploring the students' perceptions toward the use of digital storytelling, especially multimodal digital storytelling book, in teaching and learning of writing. Therefore, the researcher in this present study conducted this research with the purpose to describe the perceptions of the students toward the use of multimodal digital storytelling book in their online writing class during COVID-19 pandemic.

## **METHODS**

This study was conducted to find out the students' perceptions toward the use of a multimodal digital storytelling book in the writing class. That is why this study used a descriptive qualitative research method. According to Moleong (2012), a qualitative study is a study that has the purpose to comprehend anything that the research subjects experience, such as behaviours, perceptions, motivations, etc. Sani et al. (2018) explain that a qualitative study is carried out to understand the social phenomenon from the views of the research participants. Then, this research also used a descriptive research method to describe the students' perceptions toward the use of multimodal digital storytelling book in the writing class. A descriptive study has the purpose to describe the facts and the research participants' characteristics in a certain area systematically (Sani et al., 2018).

This study was conducted at the second semester students of an English language education department in a private university in East Java. Twenty students in this second semester became the participants of this study. To collect the data for this study, the researcher used questionnaires. Before collecting the data, the researcher gave the explanation about anything related to multimodal digital storytelling book to the students through Google Meet meeting. Meanwhile, the multimodal digital storytelling book itself used website of *app.bookcreator.com*. After giving the explanation, the researcher used the multimodal digital storytelling book in the online writing class for six meetings. After these six meetings, the students were given questionnaires consisting of seven closed questions using four Likert scales, namely strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. These questionnaires were administered through Google Form.

To analyze the data, the researcher first tabulated the results of the questionnaires and continued processing them. Afterwards, the researcher calculated the frequency of the answer of each questionnaire item stating

strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. After knowing the frequency, the researcher determined the categories on the questionnaire results. The answers selecting strongly agree and agree were categorized as a positive perception toward the use of multimodal digital storytelling book in the students' online writing class. On the contrary, the answers selecting disagree and strongly disagree were categorized as a negative perception toward the use of the multimodal digital storytelling book in the students' online writing class.

## FINDINGS

The results of questionnaire analysis **showed** that most of the students gave positive perception to the implementation of multimodal digital storytelling in writing class. Most of them **stated** that the application of multimodal digital storytelling in their writing class could make them get the new knowledge and motivate them more in learning writing. The detail questionnaire results can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Results of Questionnaire Analysis

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Perception
Multimodal digital storytelling book can give the new knowledge	45%	50%	5%	0	Positive
Learning writing using multimodal digital storytelling book is enjoyable	45%	55%	0	0	Positive
Multimodal digital storytelling book is interesting to be applied in the writing class	55%	40%	5%	0	Positive
Multimodal digital storytelling book stimulates the enthusiasm and challenge to enhance the writing ability	50%	40%	10%	0	Positive
Multimodal digital storytelling book can motivate to	45%	45%	5%	5%	Positive

learn writing					
Multimodal digital storytelling book boosts self-confidence in writing	40%	55%	5%	0	Positive
Multimodal digital storytelling book is effective for learning to write	55%	35%	5%	5%	Positive

Table 1 above shows that the majority of the students gave positive perceptions toward the use of multimodal digital storytelling book in the class of writing. The following is the detail description of the analysis results.

#### **The students got the new knowledge from the use of multimodal digital storytelling book**

45 % of twenty participants or 9 students stated that they strongly agreed if the use of multimodal digital storytelling book in the class of writing could give them the new knowledge. Meanwhile, 10 students (50% of the respondents) agreed and 5% or 1 student only disagreed. Based on those data, it can be known that 95% of the students had positive response to the statement that multimodal digital storytelling book in the class of writing gave the new knowledge. This was because they had not known what multimodal digital storytelling book in the class of writing was. After that, they got the knowledge how to use the multimodal digital storytelling book for learning writing.

#### **The students felt that learning writing using the ebook of multimodal digital storytelling book was enjoyable**

45% of 20 respondents or 9 students strongly agreed that learning writing using multimodal digital storytelling book was enjoyable. Then, 55% of 20 respondents or 11 students agreed to this statement. No student disagreed or strongly disagreed that learning writing using multimodal digital storytelling book was enjoyable. These data **showed** that 100% of the students gave a positive perception that learning writing using multimodal digital storytelling book was enjoyable. It **could** be said that learning writing using multimodal digital storytelling book can stimulate the students' enjoyment in learning writing.

#### **Multimodal digital storytelling book is interesting to be applied in writing class**

Eleven students (55% of the participants) strongly agreed that the implementation of multimodal digital storytelling book in their writing class

was interesting. Eight students agreed with it and one student disagreed with it. So the students' perception toward this statement was positive.

#### **Multimodal digital storytelling book could stimulate the students' enthusiasm and challenge to enhance their writing ability**

50% of the respondents (10 students) stated their strong agreement with the statement that multimodal digital storytelling book could stimulate the students' enthusiasm and challenge to enhance their writing ability. Next, 40% of the students agreed and 10% disagreed. Thus, it **could** be said that the students had a positive perspective toward the statement that multimodal digital storytelling book could stimulate the students' enthusiasm and challenge to enhance their writing ability.

#### **Multimodal digital storytelling could motivate to learn writing**

45% of the respondents strongly agreed that multimodal digital storytelling book could motivate the students to learn writing. 45% of the participants also agreed with it. One student (5%) gave their disagreement **response** to this statement and one students strongly disagreed with it. The conclusion **was** that the students had a positive perspective toward the statement that multimodal digital storytelling book could motivate the students to learn writing.

#### **Multimodal digital storytelling book could boost the students' self-confidence in writing**

40% of the respondents strongly agreed that multimodal digital storytelling book could boost the students' self-confidence in writing. Meanwhile, 55% of the participants stated their agreement with the statement that the students' self-confidence in writing class increased because of the use of multimodal digital storytelling book. 5% of the respondents or one student only disagreed with it. All in all, the students gave their positive perspective toward the statement that multimodal digital storytelling book could boost the students' self-confidence in writing.

#### **Multimodal digital storytelling book was effective for learning to write**

55% of the students stated their strong agreement with the statement that multimodal digital storytelling book was effective for learning to write. Afterwards, 35% students agreed with it. One student (5%) disagreed and one student (5%) strongly disagreed with it. In conclusion, there was students' positive perspective that multimodal digital storytelling book was effective for learning to write .

### **DISCUSSION**

Based on the findings above, it can be known that more than 85% of the students had positive perceptions toward the use of multimodal digital

storytelling book as the media in learning writing. The students stated that multimodal digital storytelling was a new thing that they learned. By having the new knowledge about multimodal digital storytelling, the students were expected to be able to **implement** it in learning writing both individually and collaboratively. The students also gave the perception that multimodal digital storytelling could create enjoyment for the students in learning writing. This feeling of enjoyment could increase the students' motivation to practice writing more and more so that their writing ability got improvement. Besides, it has been known that the teaching and learning process should be conducted in the joyful environment so the students became more creative and could explore their ability more. It is a fact that the students' feeling interested in learning writing could raise their spirit to learn more and more. So the students do not feel to be forced when learning writing. Therefore, the students create their own passion to learn writing and they become more active in the class of writing. Dealing with this, Robin (2016) stated that multimodal digital storytelling could make the students become more active to participate in their teaching and learning process.

Most of the students also gave their perception that the use of multimodal digital storytelling book in writing class was an interesting thing. According to Wahyuni & Yulianti (2016), one of the interesting things in learning a foreign language is when the students can express their ideas freely in their writing. Besides that, multimodal digital storytelling book that provided the learning materials in the forms of combination of written texts, recorded voices, videos, and interesting pictures could make the students more interested in learning writing.

Next, most of the students also gave a positive perception that multimodal digital storytelling book could stimulate the students' enthusiasm and challenge to enhance their writing ability. The students' enthusiasm raised because they were provided with various forms of materials in the multimodal digital storytelling book, such as written texts completed with interesting pictures, recorded voices, and embedded videos. Akbarjono et al. (2022) explained that students' enthusiasm could make the students active in the learning process.

In the case of motivation, the students gave their opinions that multimodal digital storytelling book could motivate them to learn writing. Multimodal digital storytelling book could attract the students' attention because of the explanations of writing materials were presented in the form of voice recorded and then, embedded in the book which was completed with many interesting pictures and topics. Ratnaningsih (2019) assumed that interesting pictures could raise the students' motivation. Afterwards, the students became more active to participate in the class of writing because of their high motivation. This could make their writing ability improved.

In addition, the students agreed that their self-confidence to write better became higher because of the use of multimodal digital storytelling book. The students were not afraid anymore to have mistakes because they could read

and learn the writing materials more and more in the multimodal digital storytelling book. They could only listen to the recorded voice when they were lazy to read the explanation. They also could open the videos when they felt that they had not understood yet. To sum up, they could choose the forms of the materials that they wanted. They had many sources for their writing materials so their self-confidence became higher. Mardiansyah (2018) argued that the higher the students' self-confidence had, the higher the students' writing ability could get. After they had higher self-confidence in writing, automatically they became more brave to express their ideas in their writing without feeling of anxiety.

Finally, most of the students agreed that the use of the multimodal digital storytelling was effective for writing class. They felt that their writing ability got higher because of the multimodal digital storytelling book.

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

Based on the results and discussion, it can be known that the use of multimodal digital storytelling book in the online writing class during the COVID-19 pandemic got positive perceptions from the students. More than 85% students gave their positive perceptions on each questionnaire item related to the use of multimodal digital storytelling book in their writing class. To sum up, the use of multimodal digital storytelling book in writing class could give the new knowledge to the students, make the students enjoy and feel interested in learning writing, challenge the students' writing ability, stimulate and motivate them to learn writing, and improve their confidence in learning writing. Thus, it can be said that multimodal digital storytelling book is appropriate to be used in the online writing class. Therefore, hopefully this study results can become the consideration for the English teachers to use multimodal digital storytelling book when they teach online writing. Because this present study was limited to investigate the students' perceptions of the use multimodal digital storytelling book in the writing class, it is suggested for the future researchers to conduct the research in the same areas but in the different parts, such as the implementation of the multimodal digital storytelling book in speaking, listening, and reading classes as well as the investigation of the students' and the teachers' perceptions on the use of that multimodal digital storytelling book.

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