The Effectiveness of Using Digital Storytelling in the English Language Classroom

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Abstract: With the development of information technology, digital stories, as a new teaching tool, have been brought into foreign language learning classrooms. Digital stories can effectively help learners improve their English language proficiency to meet the requirements of the 21st century. Making the digital story is a farreaching process of language acquisition, which integrating traditional storytelling into the media and technological storytelling. However, while digital story is beneficial to learners' improvement, its problems have also attracted people's attention. This article will evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using digital stories in foreign language learning classrooms.

Keywords: Digital Storytelling; EFL Classroom; New Literacy

1. The evaluation of digital stories in the English language classroom

The rapid development of science and technology provides conditions for the emergence of new literacy practices (Hafner & Miller, 2011). In the technological age, modern technology has also begun to integrate into the English language classroom. Digital storytelling as one of the innovative and practical teaching instruments of new literacy practices has been used in the English language classroom (Tsou et al, 2006).

Digital storytelling can be an advantageous training for learners to meet the requirements in the English language of the 21st century.

In addition, making the digital story is a far-reaching process of language acquisition, which integrating traditional storytelling into the media and technological storytelling (Hafner & Miller, 2011). For example, in the process of generating a story, learners need to write a complete narrative and reorganize the information into short scripts. This is the traditional storytelling that allows the acquiring of new vocabularies and language structures to happen (Rance-Roney, 2008). Moreover, students can use the knowledge and skill so academic writing to help them construct the multimodal texts that contain the combinations of texts, visual images, and sound effects when they are planning their story outlines (Oskoz & Elola, 2016 & Ohler, 2016). Therefore, during the producing of the digital story, not only EFL learners' traditional literacy skills have been developed, but also the new literacy practices skills are obtained through a combination with using new media. Furthermore, digital storytelling as one of the teaching strategies for student-centered project-based method whether it is an individual task or the small group assignment, it can benefit every student's literacy skill (Robin, 2008).

1.1 The positive aspects of digital storytelling

In the process of doing digital story, the digital storytelling can be seen as an advantageous tool of instructions in the English language classroom. It means that digital stories are not only helpful for new literacy practices but also assist

for training learners' competences in traditional literacy since the writing process is accompanied by the entire production process (Kulik, 1991 as cited in Castaneda, 2013). To be more specific, producing a written script is a very crucial part and necessary step for a digital story, which highly engage students in the authentic writing task (Ohler,2017). Furthermore, in order to create the reasonable and sequence script, students had to add specific content for each plot of the story which also requires that they need to develop the irstory line logically, which it is a useful process that makes learners enhance their writing ability in a coherent way (Yamac, 2016). Besides, as Gregori-Signes (2014) points out that the writing process in making the digital story is recurrent since learners need to revise and edit their storylines over and over again. This means that learners had to modify the story board in the several times since they should guarantee that their lines are using accurate language forms. Therefore, under this cyclical writing process that students writing skills are developed by being retrained. Students reading ability also be targeted during completing the digital story. Since in making digital storytelling, students need to read the Web pages to collect information (Murray, 2007).The experiment of Hull (2006) also justifies that implementing digital storytelling indeed help teachers to develop students' reading comprehension.

Another positive aspect of digital storytelling is that it makes the multiliteracies take place in the English language classroom (Kim, 2018). Multiliteracies can be regarded as a pedagogical method that mainly considers the ethnic group of learning which occur out-of-class (Hafner & Miller, 2011). In other words, it is not enough to teach literacy just as it used to be. To be specific, multiliteracies are allowed teachers not just to aim at the academic language levels but pay more attention to encourage learners to enhance their competences of literacy in considering real contexts of language which includes cultural, social and historical factors in real language environments (Kim, 2018). For example, in my script, I wrote the sentence that comes from the movie (e.g., I am so hot right now) in order to show the humor and handsome of my character, however, under the traditional literacy teaching without considering the specific context, this expression is more likely to be misunderstood that my character felt so warm due to the weather is too hot. As a result of this, it is obvious that learners are able to acquire more practical language through making the digital story. Moreover, digital storytelling is a multimodal practice that could increase the training of learners' multiliteracies skills in the real-communicative environment, which can be used as the part of learners' everyday literacy practices that students are engaged in learning of outside classroom by the use of multimedia technology (Hafner & Miller, 2011). What is more, Hayes (2011, cited in Castaneda, 2013) notes that an in-depth digital story makes students learn how to present their own opinions better and help students combine audiences' and their own cultural background to create an emotional context in the story. Therefore, the Hayes's (2011, citedin Castaneda, 2013) study also prove that digital story promotes the learners' capability of the multiliteracies.

1.2 The negative aspects of digital story telling

It is true that bringing the digital story to the English language classroom could help teachers build the highly engaged teaching environment, however, there are still some teachers hesitate to use the digital storytelling as an instrument of instruction in their class (Tsou et al., 2006). Time-consuming is one of the main reasons why teachers are reluctant to use digital stories as teaching methods (Tsou et al., 2006). For example, when we were in the tutorial class, the instructor needs to guide us step by step from the beginning to the end of the production, especially when it comes to using the technical software. Indeed, it requires both teachers and students spend more time on editing digital story.

Other than this, Ohler (2017) also emphasizes that technology can also be one of the issues that affect teachers' use of digital story projects. That is, although teachers are now tending to be younger, most of the traditional teachers who are employed do not have enough experience and training to use new media (e.g., required technologies of digital story telling) as a means of teaching (Tsou et al., 2006). Hence, forteachers, this increases the need for teachers to spend extra time learning new media skills in English language classes.

Tosumup, even the use of digital teaching programs in the English language classroom will exist negative effects, in general, for teaching, digital story programs play a positive role in improving students' English learning autonomy and motivation (Hafner & Miller, 2011).

2. Conclusion

To conclude, although digital storytelling as a tool using in the EFL language classroom indeed have the positive and negative effects, the production of the digital story allows the students to satisfy the requirements multimodal literacy which consider the literacy of language used in practical social and cultural environments and combine the language with multiple models in literacy (Mills, 2017).

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