English Education Students' Storytelling Online Performance

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Language exposure from the environment is needed to enable students to acquire the language and to learn it. Storytelling can be the exposure in learning English. In the English Education Study Program of Universitas Ahmad Dahlan one of the elective courses is storytelling. During pandemic, storytelling class was conducted online. The objective of this study is to describe the performance of the students in storytelling and to describe challenges and strategies of the storytelling online performance. This study applies mixed-method. The students' performance was assessed with a storytelling rubric using scales ranging from 1 to 4 (beginning-exemplary). It was measured by three raters. To deepen and enrich the data, the researchers did an interview. For quantitative data, the researchers calculated the means of each aspect of the rubric (know the story, voice, pacing, duration, pronunciation and language accuracy). The assessment was also converted into scores. The data were then classified into categories of performance in storytelling. The data from the interview were classified based on thematic grouping. The results show that the means of the students' storytelling performance based on the rubric is above 3.52 out of 4. This is classified "accomplished". Among the criteria set in the rubric of storytelling, voice is the lowest achievement (3.46). Converted into the score, the students' performance is 88.18 (good). The challenges in performing storytelling are speaking anxiety, difficulty to control the voice levels and producing sounds of the characters, and in pronouncing unfamiliar words.

How to Cite: Afina, N.K., & Fatimah, N. (2022). English Education Students' Storytelling Online Performance. International Undergraduate Conference on English Education, IUCEE Proceeding 2022. 1(1), p.18-25.

1. Introduction

In English learning there are four basic skills the students must master, not only in the field of education but also in the life of the community. According to Santrock (2007: 369), "language is influenced by biological and environmental factors". Language skills do not just come to every person, but there must be guidance from the environment, therefore language skills can only be obtained with many practice exercises.

The more practice of speaking in English, the more skillful the language learners will be in speaking. In addition, one of the benefits of speaking practice is the presence of confidence. How is the confidence of a student enhanced? In speaking, students must have a lot of practice to perform

better. In speaking, students have the opportunity to speak in front of a crowd in English. Even so, the benefits of speaking are not just that limited. In addition to impacting a person's confidence, speaking alone in the context of English is one of the most important factors in the development of other English skills. Storytelling can also be used as a means in public speaking to convey something in an interesting and fun way.

A storytelling class is a part of English class which focuses on the students' storytelling skill. The storytelling class uses videos as the teaching and learning media and for their assignment. This research focuses on the students' ability on storytelling, through the storytelling video project.

With the existence of a pandemic, the learning process has now shifted to the use of various media, one of which is digital storytelling. The use of instructional media aims to convey information in the teaching and learning process, encourage learning motivation, increase effectiveness and enhance students' attention in the learning process. Learning media can also help improve and maintain student concentration in a learning process. Media becomes an inseparable part in the teaching and learning process. It is not only as a tool, but also as a means of channeling educational messages. The teacher should not view him/herself as the only source, because other learning resources such as books, print media, and electronic media can play their roles in the learning process. The use of media in online learning will make learning even more interesting, because not only communication via chat from a teacher alone but students can get a more real picture such as direct practice, or provide examples so that it is easier to understand and students are motivated to learn more.

Online storytelling classes are certainly different from storytelling directly. In online storytelling there are no audience and it has to deal with the camera. Online storytelling also has its own challenges and obstacles. Based on the researchers' interviews with the English Storytelling Club community group, there are several challenges or problems in storytelling online. Some of them are signal problems, feeling awkward in front of the camera, time limitations, not free expression, lack of space to move such as walking and jumping. Another problem is that the storyteller must maximize expression and sound. He/she is also less able to capture audience's reactions/ feedback, it's harder to adjust the volume when talking, room light problems. In addition, the story is more textual, less fun because it's like talking to him/herself, and it is not easy to find or create stories that can be used to interact with the audience.

Learning storytelling using video storytelling performance will result in different skills for each student because the skills that arise from students come from the observations they make after the learning process. In addition, there have been many researchers before who have researched about this digital storytelling on its effectiveness in enhancing their involvement in learning process and improving their reading, writing and creative skills. (Nassim, 2018), and on improving Indonesian high school students' visual memory and writing skill (Sudarmaji, Mulyana, & Karsiyah, 2020). The recent study focuses on implementing digital storytelling to develop the students' skills in storytelling performance.

Penny Ur (1996: 123) argues, "one technology that can be used as a teaching media is video. The use of the video assignment in English lessons is therefore closely related to project-based learning. It refers to language learning activities that require students to actually execute language skills or abilities. Technology development requires the teacher to integrate the technology into English lesson, and it is also important to apply a project that uses technology for the students. As a result, it can be a challenging activity for learners as they are being asked to activate their language directly."

The use of a video in the English lesson may be a project for the students to create a documentary video in English. They became used to speaking English by practicing their storytelling skills in front of the camera. The students are required to easily comprehend the content through a video project. Through viewing their own documentary videos, they can get input in delivering speeches from their experiences, learn more about the subject being addressed, and do self-reflection on their experiences. In addition, they learn to speak English and understand the content, and will also face some challenges in creating their video project and learning how to solve it. The ability to compose the video content is very important in producing a video that is appropriate with instruction and evaluation by the teacher.

According to Aliyah (2011), storytelling is an effort made by storytellers in conveying the contents of feelings, thoughts or a story to children and verbally. Storytelling also aims to provide a learning

experience so that children gain better mastery of the content of the story conveyed. Through storytelling, children absorb the messages spoken through storytelling activities. Telling stories that are full of information or values is internalized by children and determined in everyday life.

In addition, storytelling is very useful for teachers because storytelling can be a motivation to develop awareness, expand the imagination of children, parents and can promote storytelling activities on various occasions such as when children are playing, children before bed discusses the theme of learning using the storytelling method. The involvement of children through storytelling that is told will provide a fresh and interesting atmosphere and become a unique experience for children.

As said by Nurcahyani (2010) storytelling is an art or art of a narrative skill from stories in the form of poetry or prose, which are performed or led by one person in front of an audience directly where the story can be narrated by telling or singing, with or without music, pictures, or music with other accompaniment which may be learned orally, either through printed sources, or through mechanical recording sources. According to Igrea (2008), the storytelling program is the right activity to fulfill these needs because in the story there are values that can be developed. The experience and abilities of the people are taken into account.

The story is able to develop personal value if the message conveyed can give pleasure and enjoyment develop imagination, delivering a truly liveable experience, develop a view towards human behavior, provides universal experiences, educational/intellectual value. Igrea (2008) also mentioned that stories contain educational values, that is to develop language skills, develop reading skills, develop sensitivity to stories, improve writing skills, helping the development of social aspects, helps the development of the emotional aspect, help the development of aspects of creativity and helps the development of cognitive aspects. This is in line with what was stated by Siswanto (2008).

Everyone loves a good story, whether he is rich or poor, rank or commoner, adults or children, everyone loves stories. Stories are powerful tools for conveying teaching, messages and admonitions. However, the story cannot be separated from the intellectual side because the story also serves to provide information. Through stories one will learn things, situations and places that have never been encountered before.

In online storytelling classes are certainly different from storytelling directly. Where online storytelling there are no audience and have to deal with the camera. Online storytelling also has its own challenges and obstacles. Based on researchers' interviews with the English Storytelling Club community group, there are several challenges or problems in storytelling online. Some of them are signal problems, feeling awkward in front of the camera, time limitations, not free expression, lack of space to move such as walking and jumping, must maximize expression and sound, less able to capture audience reactions/ feedback, it's harder to adjust the volume when talking, room light problems, stories are more textual, less fun because it's like talking to themself, and difficulty finding or creating stories that can be used to interact with the audience.

According to Asfandiyar (2007) story telling is a creative process for children which in its development, always activates not only intellectual aspects but also aspects of sensitivity, subtlety, emotion, art, fantasy power, and imagination of children which not only prioritizes the ability of the left brain but also the right brain.

In delivering a story, Risady (2014) suggested some techniques to convey the message. Opening, appreciation of the character of the story, expressions, gesture and appearance, communicative ability should be covered. Further, the performance in telling a story also is also influenced by language proficiency and length of story text (Satriani, 2019).

2. Method

The type of research used in this study is mixed method (Creswell, 2009; Creswell, 2011; Sugiyono, 2011). This mixed research method is quantitative and qualitative research methods used together in a research activity, so that more comprehensive data is obtained, valid and objective. There are 28 students as the subject of this research. They have attended storytelling in an online class at the English Education Study Program in Universitas Ahmad Dahlan. Rubric was used to assess the performance (Woolfolk, 2009). This study used the form of rubric storytelling assessments and an interview guideline. The rubric is in Likert scales ranging from 1- 4 (beginning – exemplary). It has 5

criteria with certain weight for each (knows the story-35%, voice-20%, pacing-10%, duration-10%, pronunciation and language accuracy-25%). In the first stage, the researchers along with the other raters have scored students' performance in the video, this was based on storytelling rubrics. Some students were interviewed to get richer research data (Sudjana, 2009; Sugiyono, 2007). For quantitative data, the researchers calculated the means of each aspect of the rubric. The assessment was also converted into scores. The data was then classified into categories of performance in storytelling. The data from the interview were classified based on thematic grouping.

3. Findings and Discussion

Referring to the criteria in the story telling rubric, the results show that the means of students' storytelling performance based on the criteria in the rubric is 3.52 out of 4. This is classified "accomplished." In the criteria of knowing the story, the students know the story pretty well; some practice; may use notes; fairly confident. The interview with the students supports this achievement.

"Prepare for the performing from far away. Avoid memorizing stories according to text. Not memorizing the text alone but understanding the content of the story so that when blank in the middle can still anticipate with improvisation." (Student 26).

"Reread the story and try to understand the message of the story." (Student 13).

In relation to the achievement based on the rubric, the lowest means of the performance is on "voice" (3.46). For this result, their performance on "voice" is that the students usually speak loudly, slowly, and clearly. Although it is classified "accomplished", there was a challenge where the student was in such a situation *"Sometimes I don't know for intonation to tell the story. Whether the voice should be high or low because it is sometimes uncontrolled."* The students extended the challenge into how they managed themselves in representing different characters. They stated,

"The challenge for voice criteria is because of there are many characters in the story, so many changes in the voices and so I forget. At the beginning it was correct, but over time it was confused". (Student 5)

"I find difficulty to imitating animal sounds… Difficulty in finding a suitable voice for some animal characters". (Student 7)

In terms of pacing, their story is told well, but some parts may be rushed or dragged in some parts. According to one of the interviewed students, she

"…followed the storyline because the story has been made…I imagined it when creating the story, so that when appearing to tell the story, I already know what the storyline was like." (Student 18)

Related to duration, their storytelling performance lasts less than 5 minutes or more than 7 minutes. In average, the students do not have any difficulty on it. Student 3 said, "*I didn't find any challenges. I've been thinking about the estimated time so that when recording the video, the duration can be ok.*" (Student 3)

On pronunciation and language accuracy, they have correct pronunciation; but they do not explain unfamiliar words. They use sentence structures and language that occasionally interfered with

comprehension. For this criterion, the psychological aspect and familiarity with the words used influenced the students' performance in telling a story.

"The challenge for pronunciation and accuracy in using English is that I often feel blank because I'm nervous. Because even though it is online, I still feel nervous in front of the camera". (Student 5)

"Because I was nervous, sometimes I forget how to pronounce some words." (Student 18)

Further, the details on the data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Means of Criteria of Storytelling Performance

Criteria	Means
knows the story	3.51
voice	3.46
pacing	3.51
duration	3.55
pronunciation and language accuracy	3.57
Means	**3.52**

Converted into the score, the means of the students' performance is 88.18. However, some of the participants still got challenged in telling the story. The challenges in performing storytelling are speaking anxiety, difficulty to control the voice levels and producing sounds of the characters, and in pronouncing unfamiliar words.

"Sometimes I have forgotten the story and confused because nervous and not confident. Because it is too nervous, so when saying is different from what is in my mind." (Student 10)

Her opinion was supported by Student 5:

"I often feel blank because I'm nervous and not confident in front of the camera. Because even though it is online but still feels nervous in front of the camera."

In performing storytelling, the story teller should use appropriate intonation. Occasionally she or he put emphasis on certain words when there is a listener who looks bored, rowdy, or sleepy. Intonation should sound like a pitch and also important in storytelling, so that the story conveyed interesting sounds. One of the interviewees found challenges in voice control that demanded her to speak loudly and sometimes slowly. Loud noise means that everyone can hear the voice, but not with a disturbing voice, such as shouting.

Student 13 said, *"Sometimes I don't know for intonation to tell the story. Whether the voice should be high or low because sometimes uncontrolled".* Student 24 implied the same thing such as challenge in voice control. She said, *"I find it difficult to manage the voice during dialogue and narrative. I often forget to set the sound so that the story is too fast and loud".* In addition, other students also revealed that the challenge to setting this sound is in the type of loud sound. Student 18 said, *"The sound of a jerk is difficult to change to a softer sound."* Learning a diaphragmatic breathing technique can help produce clear sounds.

Further, facing those challenges, they carry out the following strategies to maximize their storytelling performance. Their efforts are understanding the content of the story by rereading, more

preparation and practice before performing, and watching and listening to video storytelling as a reference.

"I usually repeat the story to handle the challenges of know the story criteria. So, I read on and tried to understand exactly what this means. What message does that want to convey." (Student 5)

Repeated reading not only helps to remember better, but it can also serve as a reminder as we look at notes and read them. *"Practice continuously to understand the content of the story. In order to explore the role of each character in the story."* (Student 3) The same opinion with student 13 that said, *"Reread the story and try to understand the message of the story."*

Student 3 said,

"Strategy to overcome this is to listen to the voice through the website English Learning for Kids. There are examples of short stories that are used as storytelling. There I imitated examples of animal sounds. Increase video references through storytelling."

Similarly, Student 3 confirmed,

"Often watch video storytelling first before practice." (Student 24)

In the beginning of the storytelling performance some students are not ready due to nervousness. However, they say the video storytelling task makes them improve their confidence especially before the camera. As believed by Farris (1993), storytelling can help the student to give opinion and idea to improve self-confidence when they are talking, thereby producing positive attitudes towards several influence. Storytelling offers the chance to practice and improve communication.

In line with Mubarok (2008), which needs to be considered in knowing the content of the story, a guide needs to prepare. This can support the students in taking the strategy before telling a story. Finding a story to refer is of help. What needs to be understood in the preparation of this story is paying close attention to the content of a story, testing the memory on the story content, and reading it to increase curiosity, then telling with creativity to others so as not to cause boredom, and creating a story line. Based on that opinion, the result of this research is confirming. To know to understand the content of the story students read the story many times. Thus, students can easily remember the story. They made up the story themselves with their group after that. As claimed by Fikriah (2016) the procedures of storytelling for the class are that the student are grouped, the students create several stories based on the material shared by teacher and then the students retell the story.

Moreover, as believed by Zuana (2018) many students indicated that creating stories provided them with more opportunities to communicate meaningfully with their friends and fellow students. Students in the group also learn to communicate by dividing their tasks to create stories. Some of them share tasks as well as the duration of the story pieces they make. Therefore, they are not constrained on the issue of duration because it has been estimated the possible duration. Johnson and Freedman (2001) assert that students speaking into their life help them to create a relationship with other students to exercise their imagination, effective communication, and critical thinking.

Due to the nervous factor, this is also a challenge for many students because they forget how to pronounce a word, especially a word that is still unfamiliar to them. Nevertheless, many students also say that they are able to improve their pronunciation when they record their videos as part of online storytelling. As Kuforiji and William (2011) stated, students found that online storytelling is a fun activity in class. Students enjoy learning English while designing appropriate lessons and activities.

Although in the implementation of making video storytelling there are still many challenges they found. They always have found their own strategies to overcome the problem. They still love making this storytelling video because it is fun and they learn a lot of new things. Many students also say that

they are able to improve their pronunciation when they record their videos as part of online storytelling.

4. Conclusion

Good performance on storytelling demands a storyteller to well deliver the story considering several aspects. The storyteller needs to know the story, to manage the voice, to consider pacing, time duration, pronunciation and language accuracy. In an online setting if it is recorded, it is important to deal with technical matters including managing the voice, familiarity to perform before the camera. Coping with anxiety, voice levels and sounds of the characters, and pronunciation is also part of the challenges in storytelling. Doing more exercises, rereading the content of the story and understanding it, performing videos and using the google translate application to imitate the pronunciation, listening to storytelling videos can be alternatives to be successful in storytelling.

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