

IMPLEMENTING AN ONLINE APPLICATION FOR CREATING CHILDREN'S BOOKS IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS SUBJECT

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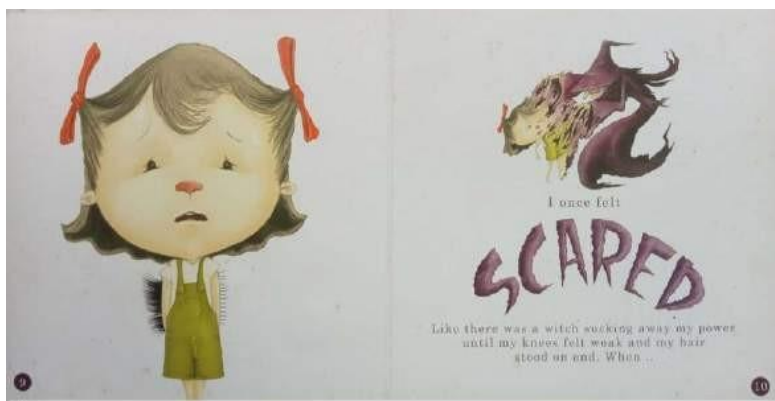
Abstract- *English children's storybooks are real sources for children's language acquisition. A student's preference for reading books is determined by their teachers, who should be able to convey English subjects via a variety of media, including children's storybooks. The majority of English teachers in elementary schools are graduates of the English Education Study Program (EESP) who have completed the Teaching English for Young Learners (TEYL) subject. Thus, this study aims to implement an online learning application known as storyweaver.org.in in Teaching English Young Learners (TEYL) subject for EESP who are teachers want-to-be in the future. The qualitative method is employed here with documentation as data collection that is in form of photos and students' storybooks. All the data are analyzed using the descriptive analysis method. Overall, the findings showed that planning, implementing, and evaluating were employed in using storyweaver.org.in in a classroom. Creating and using storybooks occurred to improve Foreign Language skills and cultural customs for young learners who find that storybooks are simple and pleasing methods to learn their culture*

Keywords: *children's book, online application, teaching english to young learners*

INTRODUCTION

Children's storybooks have a crucial role in the cognitive and affective development of children. In the Indonesian context, children's story books are a medium for learning a second language and a foreign language. Seeing the role of children's story books with positive values and tolerance (McIlhagga, 2016), reading habits need to be developed in their golden age. At present days, Indonesia is experiencing a shortage of children's story books, especially from local authors (The Jakarta Globe, 2020) including books in English. Even if there is, the book does not yet have a standard of eligibility for children. English children's storybooks still have literal translation quality, long sentences, and vocabulary that is not appropriate to the child's developmental level (Hidayati, 2020) so these deficiencies need to be followed up immediately.

Figure 1. An English Storybook for Children



The picture above shows diction errors in children's books. "My hair stood up" is a disclosure of "goosebumps".

English children's storybooks are authentic materials for foreign language learning for children, both at school and outside of school (Omid and Azam, 2015). A student's penchant for reading books is determined by the teachers at their school who ideally can convey English material using various media, one of which is children's story books. Most of the English teachers in elementary schools are students of the English language education study program, who have received the Teaching English for Young Learners (TEYL) or English for Children course.

According to Lynch-Brown (2007), Young Learners, or YL can be abbreviated as children under the age of 10. Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL) is the term for the process of teaching English as a second or foreign language in early childhood. At that age, YL can learn foreign languages quickly because YL's characteristic is learning by imitating and repeating. With these characteristics, the teaching and learning process requires the right method, such as drilling vocabulary and pronunciation from children's books.

In addition, the TEYL challenges experienced by prospective teachers include student discipline, children's English language habits (Widodo and Dewi, 2018), identification of children's English skills, and building relationships with parents (Simanjuntak, 2018). The next challenge is creativity in developing teaching materials that attract children's attention and make children love learning English. Young learners can spontaneously have high learning enthusiasm and make the class livelier, but if they do tasks that are considered difficult, they will quickly lose motivation (Cameron, 2001

in Damayanti and Faozah, 2018). For this reason, creativity from teachers is needed in conveying teaching material. Indirectly, the issue of creativity in TEYL responds directly to current character education. Character education in Indonesia is still dominated by monotonous delivery and has not considered methods that foster artistic value and imagination (Kamarundin, 2012 in Rosa, 2019).

Children's literature or children's literature according to Hunt (1999) are books that are intended and recommended for children so that children are better. Children's literature plays an important role in literacy because it is directly correlated with reading activities. Meanwhile, Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson (1999) children's literature is a literary work that contains themes relevant to the child's interests and age, which includes prose and poetry both fiction and non-fiction. Children's literature needs to provide enjoyment in reading, imagination, inspiration, involvement in stories, empathy, understanding, moral values, art, and culture.

Characteristics of children's books according to McDowell (1973) are having shorter stories, showing more dialogue, giving rise to protagonist roles, being optimistic, and having themes of fantasy, adventure, simplicity, and magic. As a medium for learning and self-exploration for children, children's books teach children to appreciate culture, emotional intelligence, creativity, and support development. also about responsibility, fairness, honesty, cooperation, passion, caring, and so on (Junaid, 2017). This means, what character you want to form will be in line with who made it. Therefore, the creation of literary works is closely related to the issue of domination and power (Rogers, 1999).

Currently, the study of children's literature is still focused on literary criticism and analysis of the representation of an issue in it. The focus of studies on the production of literary works itself is still very little, ideally, literary studies are also able to identify and contribute to surrounding interdisciplinary issues such as diversity, and issues related to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). By providing children's storybooks and matches with the issues created by the teachers themselves, children are able to explore such issues very well.

A web application is an application in the form of a client or server that can create web pages based on user requests. Clients and servers are connected to an internet or intranet network (Destiningrum and Adrian, 2017). Some of the web-based

applications are webcomics and e-story books. This kind of application has a lower production cost compared to the printed version and has a wider reach (Maharishi, 2011). The production flow starts from data collection, concept design (character design, colors, typography, and layout), genre selection, and publication media.

Currently, TEYL learning generally still focuses on learning methods and places less emphasis on the use of various learning media. What's more, at this time, in the Merdeka Learning Campus Merdeka curriculum, learning is directed at project-based learning and team-based learning (Kemndikbud, 2020) or an Outcome-Based Education (OBE)-based curriculum. That is, students can produce a portfolio of a course. Responding to the lack of English-language children's story books in Indonesia and the lack of learning content in TEYL courses, this study proposes to apply an online application to make children's stories as teaching materials in class as a final project and take a look at the benefits.

METHOD

This study employed qualitative methods. Qualitative research is the discovery that is conducted in natural settings. The research was conducted in the English Education Study Program, Faculty of Arts and Education, Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia, on the subject of Teaching English to Young Learners. This occurred during the even semester of the academic year 2021/2022. Documentation—the methods of creating the online application (www.storyweaver.org.in), photos, and students' storybooks—is the data-collecting technique. The documentation is chosen to answer the implementation of an online application, *StoryWeaver*. *StoryWeaver* is an online application in form of website-based where people can create/write/read children's stories. *StoryWeaver* is a collaborative platform for those who love children's books and reading. On *StoryWeaver*, educators, parents, publishers, writers, and artists explore stories. This study merely reported the activities and events that occurred. All the data are analyzed using the descriptive analysis method to explain the events. The subjects in this study were 34 students. One of the researchers in this study was an English lecturer, while the other was a storybook validator.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The location of this research is Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia which is located in Jl. Z.A. Pagar Alam 9-11, Labuhan ratu, Kedaton, Bandarlampung, Lampung. Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) subject is a compulsory subject in semester six for English Education Study Program (EESP) students because teaching English to young children are different from teenagers and adults, so they have to understand their characteristics very well. This study is devoted to the fundamental principles and difficulties involved in teaching English to young learners. The characteristics of young learners, oral and aural skills, educating young learners to become readers and writers, teaching through games, songs, and stories, lesson preparation, textbook review, and assessment are all topics to be discussed. Moreover, before graduating from EESP, they have to take TEYL competency-based test with a minimum score of 90. A TEYL subject has two credits and is held once a week, every Thursday at 3 p.m. in synchronous and asynchronous ways due to covid-19 pandemic. There were 34 students in the even semester of the academic year 2021/2022 because to take a TEYL subject, the students have to pass some pedagogies subjects.

Data collection techniques used in this study are documentation. As the documentation of implementing an online application named *storyweaver.org.in*, there are three stages carried out in the implementation of learning, as follows:

1. Planning

In the planning stage, a synchronous meeting was conducted via zoom meeting to explain how to create storybooks using *storyweaver.org.in*, what kind or theme of the story they have to create, a group they belong to, and a timeline of the project.

Figure 2. A synchronous meeting of implementing *storyweaver.org.in*



In Figure 2, the researchers explained to students how to use *www.storyweaver.org.in* starting from how to create an account, choose the layout of the story, and choose the characters that match the theme they choose. A group consisted of two students and has to create an English storybook that involves *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs).

2. Implementing

Three steps happened in the implementation stage, as stated below:

- a. The groups listed their SDGs theme and write the title in the table as seen in Table 1 below:

Table 1. List of SDGs theme and title of the story

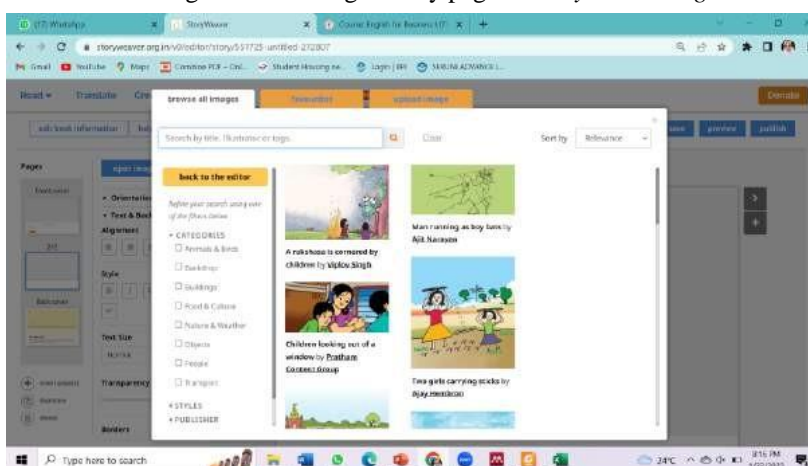
SDGs Themes	Title of Story
Education	Little Adventure Undersea
Gender Equality	Rosa and Muza
Good health and well being	Take Care and Love Our Sea
good life and well being	I Am Kartini
Life Below Water	Go to Circus
Life Below Water	Go to Circus
Life Below Water	My mom turns into Mermaid
Life below water	Little Girl in The Forest
Life below water	Wash hands before eating
Life Below Water	Chili, children of the sea
Life on Land	The Adventure of Fisherman in Underwater
Life on Land	Summer With Sunflower
Life on Land	I am a Superhero
Life on Land	The Important of Water
life on land	Ungrateful Frog

- b. The students in their group created an English story based on the theme of SDGs they chose by following some rules: 1) the story should have a title, 2) a maximum of ten-pages story, 3) a maximum of three sentences on each page, 4) each story should include male and female characters, 5) an Indonesian culture and a message of life should be inserted in the story, and 6) put it in Ms. Word to be consulted to the lecturer before putting them in *storyweaver.org.in*.
- c. The students created an account in *storyweaver.org.in*, put their story, and chose the design.

Figure 3. Register/Login page of *storyweaver.org.in*



Figure 4. Creating a Story page of *storyweaver.org.in*



3. Evaluation

The last stage is an evaluation process where the lecturers check the story in terms of content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics before publishing or using the English storybooks as a source in a class.

Figure 5. Evaluation Rubric (Adapted from Brown (2007))

Aspect	Score	Performance Description	Weighting
Content (C) 30% - Topic - Details	4	The topic is complete and clear and the details are relating to the topic.	3 x
	3	The topic is complete and clear but the details are almost relating to the topic.	
	2	The topic is complete and clear but the details are not relating to the topic.	
	1	The topic is not clear and the details are not relating to the topic.	
Organization (O) 20% - Identification - Description	4	Identification is complete and descriptions are arranged with proper connectives.	2 x
	3	Identification is almost complete and descriptions are arranged with almost proper connectives.	
	2	Identification is not complete and descriptions are arranged with few misuse of connectives.	
	1	Identification is not complete and descriptions are arranged with misuse of connectives.	
Grammar (G) 20% - Use present tense - Agreement	4	Very few grammatical or agreement inaccuracies.	2 x
	3	Few grammatical or agreement inaccuracies but not affect on meaning.	
	2	Numerous grammatical or agreement inaccuracies.	
	1	Frequent grammatical or agreement inaccuracies.	
Vocabulary (V) 15%	4	Effective choice of words and word forms.	1.5 x
	3	Few misuse of vocabularies, word forms, but not change the meaning.	
	2	Limited range confusing words and word form.	
	1	Very poor knowledge of words, word forms, and not understandable.	
Mechanics (M) 15% - Spelling - Punctuation - Capitalization	4	It uses correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.	1.5 x
	3	It has occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.	
	2	It has frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.	
	1	It is dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.	

From the evaluation rubric above, all the English stories created by the students were evaluated with the highest score is 10 and the lowest score is 2.5 using the below:

$$\text{Score} = \frac{3C + 2O + 2G + 1.5V + 1.5M}{40} \times 10$$

The TEYL students had to revise their storybooks until they got the minimum score which is 90 as it is a requirement to get A in this class. So, the process and duration time of evaluation for each group was different, it depended on their score and their revision.

Young learners find that story is motivating and interesting, especially in learning English, it also provides a pleasant environment (Mart, 2012). This condition might be a great chance for teachers to have storybooks as teaching materials particularly if they can create one. According to Ursa (2018), creating English storybooks can have at least two benefits, such as improving foreign language skills and cultural literacy.

Based on the results of the documentation conducted by researchers, It was found that several benefits were obtained in implementing an online application namely *storyweaver.org.in* to create storybooks, they are:

1. Develop Foreign Language

TEYL students who want to be English teachers can enhance their students' English abilities by developing English storybooks because they can build teaching sources or media based on the learning objectives that they want to attain. (Gunawardhana & Palaniappan, 2016). In their story books, they can adjust the vocabulary, grammar, and content that they will teach based on their students' level. Most importantly, hopefully, they can translate Indonesian into the English language correctly and avoid direct translation. If some mistakes may happen, they can easily revise the storybooks because they own their account in *storyweaver.org.in*. These storybooks can help with foreign language comprehension. The tales are teaching resources that combine realism, recognition, and enjoyment to enable successful learning (Suhardiana & Lestari, 2020).

2. Preserve the Culture

In the Indonesian context itself, some younger generations tend to have exposure to global culture with a wide spread of information on the internet and technology. This phenomenon may decrease their knowledge of their own culture. Thus, teachers can insert cultures in the storybooks to preserve and teach about their own cultures to their students (Windarti, 2017), especially for young learners, storybooks can be an easy and fun way to learn about culture (Sambada Wijasa & Frans, 2021). Moreover, to support the benefits number one, implementing local-culture material improved vocabulary as well as students' behavior in the classrooms (Raihana & Nurkhamidah, 2022). Reading cultural storybooks can also improve the students' reading comprehension if the teachers use them regularly (Ratminingsih et al., 2020).

CONCLUSION

To sum up, creating storybooks to cope with the limited English books that have good English translation can be done through three stages, namely planning,

implementing, and evaluating. This activity can also provide some benefits, such as improving foreign language skills and cultural exposure from a young age in simple and interesting ways. According to (Ratminingsih & Budasi, 2018), the use of picture storybooks based on local culture is essential for improving young learners' reading skills, establishing joyful learning, building young learners' English comprehension, and maintaining local customs.

The use of *storyweaver.org.in* was proven to have a positive perception from the students, therefore, the use of *storyweaver.org.in* as a medium for creating English children's storybooks must continue to be done. So, the researchers suggest that teachers implement the students inside or outside the class to develop foreign languages and preserve culture for children. The teachers also have to be able to create an interesting story, so that students do not bore when learning from storybooks. The teacher as facilitator must be able to prepare appropriate storybooks that will be given to the students based on their needs. For future researchers, this study could be a reference in conducting research. Those who want to conduct a similar topic about the online application with different topics or themes.

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