Authenticity of Storial.co as virtual application in creative writing

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Abstract

Virtual applications in English Language Teaching are no longer a current issue to be applied in any class activities. Various types of applications are there and need teachers' hand to make use of them into proper way of teaching. Students are also at their wide chance to utilize technology independently as tools to study, especially language. Storial.co is one of writing platforms which offer its users to read and write literature in the form of poem, short story, or even novel. Writing is considered a personal activity hence it needs time and space to gather the feelings and ideas into a composition. Through storial.co, students are able to write intensively at any place and time though some drawbacks may occur during writing process. Using online questionnaire, a designated data related to the use of storial.co during the creative writing class is distributed to know whether students can utilize the platform at its most. As a final conclusion, significant implication is dedicated to the lecturer and students of creative writing to keep on using virtual application, especially a writing platform to be able to sharpen their language use productively.
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Keywords: *creative writing; storial.co; virtual application*

INTRODUCTION

Virtual application is commonly used nowadays in the digital era. Not only in the area of industry, but also somewhat beneficial in education field. The term virtual refers to a digitally replicated version of something real with no less real function as the replication is created with software (Awati, 2022). While an application (more commonly known as an app) is software that bundles together certain features in a way that is accessible to a user (Adjust, 2022). Based on both definitions, it can be said that virtual application is a software used by users to act in a digital version of something real. In this term, the researchers specify the virtual application of storial.co to perform creative writing activity digitally.

Creative writing is one of the writing courses taught in Universitas PGRI Wiranegara. It is given to the students in the fifth semester as the following course of Essay Writing. The course description of Creative Writing is to analyze and criticized English creative writings, as well as creating students own writing creation in the form of poem and short story. Creative writing is a form of writing where creativity is at the forefront of its purpose through using imagination, creativity, and innovation in order to tell a story through strong written visuals with an emotional impact, like in poetry writing, short story writing, novel writing, and more (School, 2022). In addition, Anderson & Arrivello (2022) stated that creative writing could be "defined"

broadly as the pursuit of artistic ends through the written word. They also added that while it is important to be creative in such a class, it is equally important to keep in mind the skills or techniques being practiced in a given assignment.

There are several assignments that students have to fulfill during the course. According to Donovan (2021), the types of creative writing assignments are free writing, journals, diaries, letters, memoir, essays, journalism, poetry, song lyrics, scripts, storytelling, speeches, vignettes, and blogs. Among the assignments that students have to create during Creative Writing class are writing poem, song lyrics, short story, prequel story, and sequel story.

All those assignments should be uploaded into a certain virtual application required by the lecturer. The virtual writing application used is called storial.co. *Storial.co* (2020) is an online reading and writing platform which can be done at any time and from anywhere. Readers can write any genres of stories and writers can get royalty as well.

Each student of Creative Writing class has to sign up an account in this platform using their real names so that it will be easier to recognize the name and to look for the writing creation. They can also create appropriate cover photo for the creative writing book. One book consists of several chapters based on the creation results. This way, the students' chapters consist of poem, song lyrics, short story, prequel story, and sequel story.
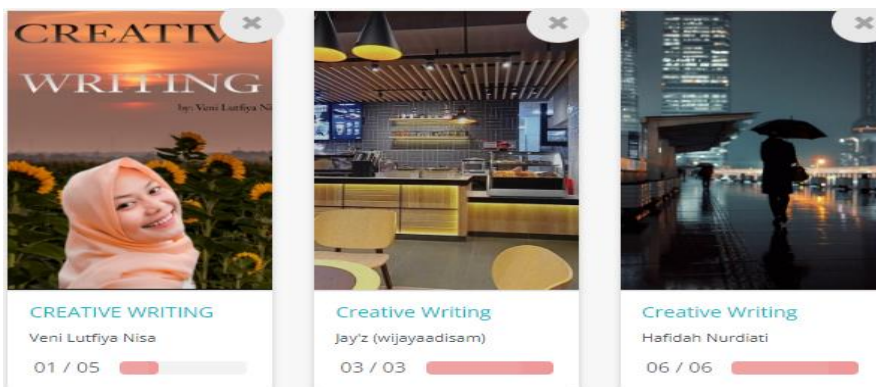

Figure 1. Students' book cover in storial.co

Indeks	Judul Bab	Total Kunjungan	Jumlah Kata
1.	Chapter 1. Song Lyric	20	304
2.	Chapter 2. Story	38	283
3.	Chapter 3. Characterization	57	306
4.	Chapter 4. Weekend Holiday Part 1	42	853
5.	Chapter 5. Weekend Holiday Part 2 - The Ending	21	954

Figure 2. Chapters in students' Creative Writing Book

As part of scientific activity to prove the background above, the researcher is intended to know whether students of creative writing class have already used storial.co at its most as virtual application to practice their writing and know their opinion about storial.co using.

METHOD

This research is based on the descriptive qualitative design which describes certain phenomenon happened in the society. To be more specific, a case study is used as the research design due to the specialty of evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals (Creswell, 2014).

Respondents

The case study included the participants of English Education Study Program students of Universitas PGRI Wiranegara who are having the course of creative writing. There are 38 students in Creative Writing class with 33 female and 5 male students.

Instruments

Students as research participants are required to fill in the information being asked in the online questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 7 questions with the outline of 5W+1H in accordance with the use of storial.co as virtual application in creative writing.

Procedures

In gathering the data, the researcher used the google form application. This application was chosen to ease the researcher in distributing the questionnaire and students were able to fill in the questionnaire efficiently at any place and time only by using their own gadget. A link to do the questionnaire was shared to the class via WhatsApp Group chatroom so that students can access and do it instantly within minutes (https://bit.ly/AngketStorialCW).

Data analysis

Then, the result of the questionnaire was automatically saved into the answer sheet file to make ease for the researcher in analyzing it. The data analyzed by describing in detail the results of the questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As to illustrate the result of the obtained data, findings are given in the description below as well as adequate explanation towards the figures and participants' responses. Among the seven questions in the questionnaires, the researchers classify the findings into five sub-titles based on the topic discussed.

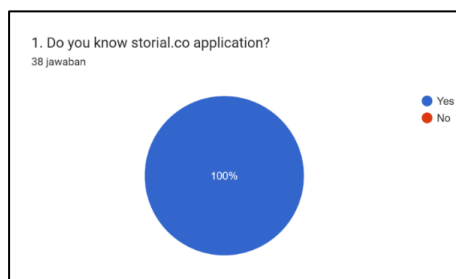**Students' knowledge of storial.co application**
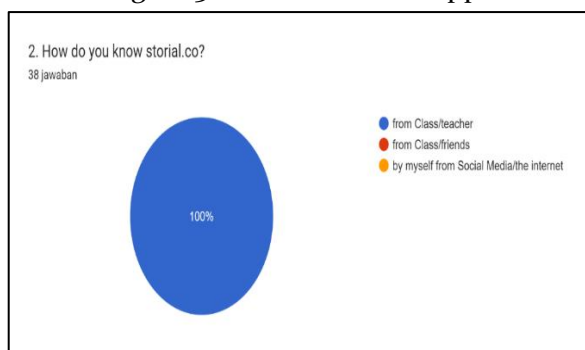
Figure 3. About storial.co application

Figure 4. First known of storial.co

From Figure 3, it is shown that 100% of students have already recognized storial.co application. Figure 4 also shown an absolute result of answer that they know storial.co application from the class activity, especially the writing lecturer.
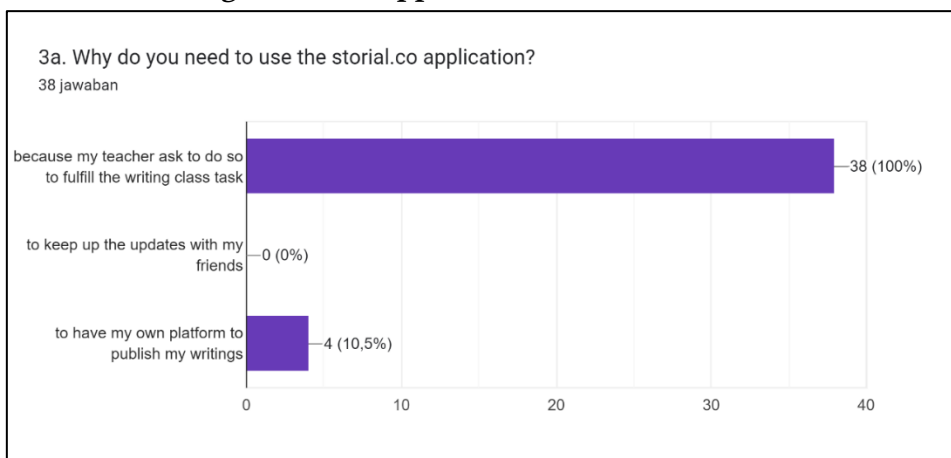
Reasons of using storial.co application

Figure 5. Necessity of using storial.co application

The need of using storial.co as a virtual writing application is considered necessary by 100% of the students as an obligation given by the teacher to fulfill the writing task. Only few of 4 students (10.5%) who are also have the intention in having their own platform to publish their writing instead of only completing the task obtained in creative writing class.

Another question of "Why do you need to use the storial.co application?" was asked and several interesting responses from the participants are:

"Storial.co is a worldwide virtual novel/story. It's a good platform to share your story across nation" (student 1).

"Because the application is easy to use for novice writers" (student 17).

"Since storial.co is a platform, I can write anything through my thoughts and also the features are very useful (especially for free use)" (student 34).

"Because it is more effective than the other application" (student 35).

Statements from students above showed that storial.co is considered as an adequate platform to writing. It is easy to use and more effective for novice writer to express their thoughts. The results of their writings are also most likely be read by readers across the nation as this is an open application for all users.

Difficulties in using storial.co application
Though students agreed that storial.co is an easy application to perform writing, some difficulties were faces by students during using the platform.

"Probably the problem is when we uninstall it and redownload it again at the second time, when we try to login there is some problem like lagging or the buffering is stuck and we need to wait longer in order to signed in" (student 3).

"Sometimes we need more time whe we have to upload some our story" (student 4).
"In first used application I feel confused, but after I ask to my teacher I understand" (student 18).

"Yes. The features are limited so I can't get the effect I want" (student 38).
Amongst the responses, the most common difficulties are from the network error and limited features. This way, it is needed a longer time to upload a story especially when there is also lagging of connection. Limited features are also a drawback because writers can only explore their writing without adding any illustration such as pictures or other decorations.

Benefits of using storial.co application
Utilizing virtual application in writing should be able to support and be beneficial for the users. Below are the students' responses towards the benefits of using storial.co application:
"The benefits I get are many, like I can write creatively because it's a new experience for me" (student 6).

"I can read my friend's writing task; I can get feedback or give comment to the other" (student 24).

"I can use a new application for saving my stories in online application" (student 25).

"I can write as much as I can and take all my inspiration while writing comfortably" (student 31).

As stated in the students' testimony, they could obtain the benefit of using storial.co as part of new experience to creative writing. Students can also read and share feedback on each other's writings. They can save their creation of writing creatively and will be able to enjoy it in the future.

Students' opinion of using storial.co application

Students were also asked about whether or not storial.co is appropriate to be used in creative writing class. This question is also part of evaluation if storial.co application can be used next time in the future.

"Yes, because we get feedback for our writing not only from lecturer but from anyone" (student 5).
"I think it's very suitable because the application makes experienced students and those who initially don't like writing like writing creatively" (student 6).

"Yes, i do because in storial.co we can practice to make a story, and also challenges our writing skill" (student 22).

"Very suitable. Because it is very easy to use and suitable for novice writers" (student 30).

Using storial.co in creative writing is proven as not only beneficial for the writer itself, but also for the readers. Students shared the opinion that they are content by having feedback from the readers on the comment box. Storial.co can also boost the writing intention to write even more creatively. Novice writers got the experience to publish their writings and improve them through the feedback.

Discussion

Considering the results described in the findings, there are significance results of the research, most important is about the authenticity of storial.co as virtual application in Creative Writing class. As supported by Saba (2020) that it is imperative to have a platform that provides the necessary freedom and cradles writers' talent sincerely. Accordingly, it is necessary to provide students with proper writing platform since writing is not solely a pen and paper activity anymore, when it can be done virtually.

As novice writers, students feel that it is helpful to use writing application which have useful features and easy to write their thoughts effectively. A linier statement described by Oge (2022) that writing is an essential and tough skill, there are many tools and apps available today for creative writing that can help students create compelling content and improve their writing. These apps can help to improve writing skills, make work process a lot more efficient, and transform into a fantastic writer.

The ease of technology and the exposure of modern applications are not merely making the students to adjust their knowledge into different platforms features. Dealing with technology, the network error and limited features require a longer time to upload a story especially when there is also lagging of connection. However, there are still more benefits of using storial.co that students can read and share feedback on each other's writings. They can save their creative writing and will be able to enjoy it in the future.

Storial.co (2020) provided three benefits to support the writer's activity: 1) Colaboration; 2) Audience Getter; and 3) Reward. Those three benefits will allow the writers to create a collaboration writing and have the opportunity to gather readers or audience of the writing as well as gaining royalty towards the number of readers for the writing's stories.

Generally, students conclude the thoughts that it is appropriate and useful to utilize storial.co for their creative writing practice. According to Bradford (2018), The 7 Stages of writing process are Planning, Drafting, Sharing, Evaluating, Revising, Editing, and Publishing. Related to these process, students of Creative Writing class can do all the 7 stages in one platform of storial.co application. This way, an effective and efficient process of writing practice can be done smoothly and yet more perfectly.

CONCLUSION

To sum up the result of this research, the researcher is certain that storial.co is considered an authentic virtual application for students to conduct their creative writing activity. Though in some criterions, students utilize this application only in Creative Writing class. Some difficulties which occur during using the application are not significantly limit the students' creativity in writing. However, continuing to use storial.co in creative writing class is accounted as practical implications that may advance the field study of creative writing. In addition to suggestion for future research, researchers in the future could have an experimental study to get more impactful results toward the effect of particular virtual application in creative writing activity.

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