

## Students' Creativity For Writing About Environment By Using Storybird Website

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### Abstract

One of the aspects needed to get success in writing is creativity. This study was aimed at investigating students' perception towards creativity by using the Storybird website as a digital platform in writing skill. The study employed a descriptive quantitative within a survey design. The instrument of the research used a questionnaire. The subjects of the research 60 students at one of the universities in Malang - Indonesia. The results showed that the students positively thought about the importance of creativity in supporting writing skills by using the Storybird application. In this case, they felt to be flexible in creating new ideas, to be original in finding new ideas, and to be curious in imagining what they could write about environment as the crucial topic. Finally, the creativity built for writing through using the Storybird application also impacted to the increase of the vocabulary acquisition, writing performance, and organization of their writing. Hence, it is also recommended that EFL teachers should lead the students build their creativities in writing by using the Storybird application.

**Keywords:** Creativity, Writing Skill, Storybird Website, Environment

### 1.Introduction

The success of learning English as a foreign language for the students cannot be separated from writing skill. Writing is concerned with the acts of transforming information and developing the thinking skills in the written form. Nasser (2018) states that writing may involve the texts and contexts to be composed together through the knowledge and skills owned by the writers. Hence, there should be the transformation of the writers' ideas to be the information given to the readers.

There are various topics that can be written by the writers. One of the topics which is supposed to be a trend to be talked about is related to the environment. In this case, it is expected that all people have a good attention to what happens to the environment. It is the fact that environment is supposed to be one of the problems faced by society such as pollution, rubbish, and natural disasters caused by bad environment treatment. Hence, teachers have the mission to make the students be aware of keeping or saving the environment (Wahyudin & Malik, 2019). In other words, the students are also expected to be the agents for thinking about solving the environmental problems (Gürsoy & Salı, 2014).

However, writing is not easy to be done. Not all students have a good competence in writing. There are some aspects needed to be paid attention for the students to build the capacity for writing such as understanding about grammar, structures, lexical content, and meaning (Kazemi et al., 2014). That's why, the teachers are expected to contribute how the students can write successfully. In writing, the students need to know what to write and how to write. What to write is concerned with the background knowledge they have. This is concerned with the way how they can understand about the topics to be written. And how to write is concerned with the understanding about grammar. They must understand how to arrange the words into good sentences written.

One of the aspects needed to build the writing competence is creativity. Creativity is assumed to be the ability to create something. What people create may be the ideas for solving the problems faced. Greenstein (2012) states that creativity can be built through the supporting elements such as flexibility, originality, and curiosity. Flexibility is considered a form of flexible mindset in accepting new situations in learning activities (Yang, 2022). Another element to consider in cultivating creativity is originality. Originality leads to efforts to be able to give birth and develop new ideas

creatively (Lee, 2019). The final element in cultivating creativity is curiosity. Curiosity is access for each individual to do something. Curiosity becomes an impetus to create reasons why the individual needs to do something.

Digital platforms are expected to be the solution for students in improving their learning activities. This is because what happens in education today cannot be separated from the acts of conducting online learning activities with the use of technology through digital platforms. The use of technology through digital platforms can solve the problems concerning the influence of cultural dimensions such as getting passive in class, focusing on getting good grades, expecting the teachers' domination in the class, and getting fond of being given playful learning activities (Mulyanto & Sujiatmoko, 2022). According to Lin and Maarof (2013), learning with digital technology can improve students' abilities in the language. Among all the platforms existing, one of the platforms in the form of a website that can be used by teachers for supporting writing skill is known as Storybird.

Storybird is a digital learning tool with quality visualization for learning writing skills (Elli, 2020). This web-based application offers easy access such as enhancing their ideas to write visually appealing stories. Storybird allows its users to collaborate with other people. According to Chengxia (2017), the Storybird platform for writing emerges as a new form of documenting one's experience through picture book creations, blogs, and fiction comics. Using Storybird is interesting for students since they can collaborate with other users of Storybird upon completing their story. Working collaboratively while using Storybird helps her students share experiences and create identities upon producing digital storybooks (Wertz, 2014). Specifically, Storybird provides five features ranging from picture books, long-form stories, comics, flash fiction, and poetry. One of the features that help students enjoy writing is the picture book feature. According to Pasaribu (2017), the picture book is excellent teaching material because it provides a source of information, helps students to understand vocabulary words in different context areas, motivates students to learn English, stimulates imagination, and provides models for writing.

In the past few years, some studies focusing on the issues have been conducted by the previous researchers. Ramirez (2013) found that students' have a positive attitude towards the production of stories and vocabulary to use complex language forms in writing by using Storybird. Another previous study by Hillson et al., (2019) conducted research on Storybird website as a learning tool in ESL classrooms to improve students' writing skills in building simple sentences. The result showed that students were motivated to make simple sentences because they enjoy the process of using Storybird. However, limited information is found regarding the students' perception towards creativity by using Storybird as a digital platform in their writing skills. In previous studies, Storybird has been frequently used in junior high school and university level that focused on vocabulary and writing without creativity using experimental and qualitative methods. Meanwhile, the current study tended to know the students' perception towards creativity by using Storybird in their writing skills at the senior high school level by using quantitative descriptive using survey methods.

Therefore, this research was conducted to collect the data related to the following research questions: What are the students' perceptions about creativity by using the Storybird website as a digital platform in writing skill? What is the students' perception of the impacts of creativity in their writing skills after using the Storybird website? This research is only limited to senior high school students' context, hopefully conducting this research will help teachers determine an effective digital platform for students when learning writing with creativity.

## **2. Method**

The study employed a descriptive quantitative using a survey research design. A survey research design is typically used to collect data from the population of people who describe their perceptions, preferences, and attitudes toward something being researched (Creswell, 2015). This study was conducted at one of the state universities in Malang - Indonesia. There were 60 participants as the subjects of the research. The researcher used the questionnaire instrument using Google Forms to obtain data from respondents. The data were analyzed by using SPSS.

## **3. Findings and Discussion**

### **Students' Flexibility in Practical Usage of Storybird Website in Writing**

Flexibility represents as the students' flexible thoughts and performance to accept a variety of new situations in their learning (Yang, 2022). Therefore, the students employ flexibility in their writing about environment by using the Storybird platform to make their writing more creative:

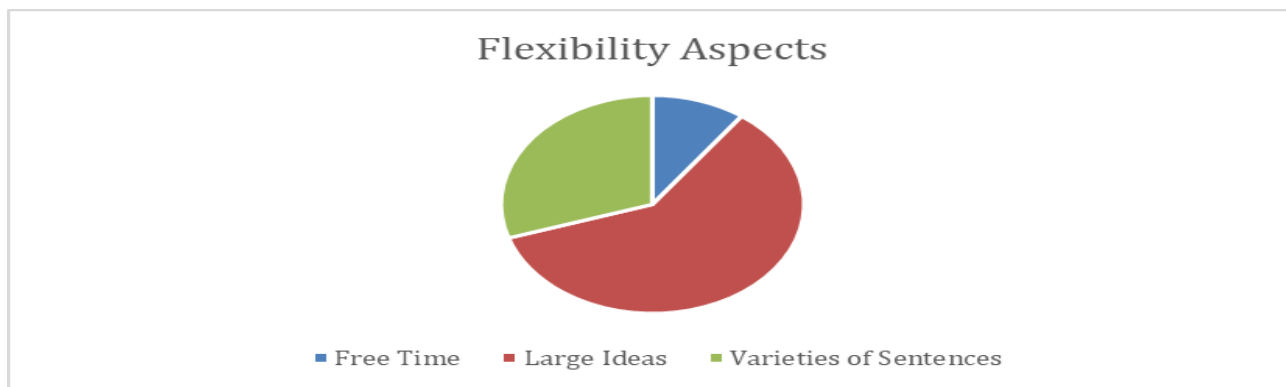


Figure 1. Flexibility Aspect of Building Creativity for Writing

The results indicated that most of the students (60%) felt to be have potential in creating and developing ideas when writing using Storybird application. The students could find various ideas to support their writing. Having various ideas were supposed to be important in writing. There were 30% of students who felt to be free in making various forms of the sentences in writing. It seemed that the students tried to be creative in making not only one form of the sentences by understanding and using various kinds of grammar concepts to be applied when writing using the Storybird application. Trying to vary the forms of sentences also indicated that the students had a good capacity in understanding various concepts of grammar to be applied for making sentences in their writing. And finally, there were only 10% of the students who felt to connect with their leisure time availability in writing using the Storybird application.

Based on the findings in figure 1, the students showed positive responses towards several things. In the first point, most participants revealed that they enjoyed writing stories creatively twice a week with an average of one to two hours each time they accessed Storybird. The results are in line with Yunus and Ishak (2018) who state that most students were more interested in interactive writing with a longer time to find many ideas in enhancing their writing skills in a digitally creative manner using Storybird. In digital Storybird there are interactive courses and examples of academic and non-academic writing from teachers or experts that include many language styles that can support students to be more flexible in writing. The result is also in line with Ting and Shukor (2022) that the Storybird platform was a technique to excite students' interest in actively participating in writing stories for developing their themes or topic by accessing writing tips from experts and teachers to enrich their knowledge.

**Students' Originality in Writing by Features When Using Storybird Website**

Originality represents as the ability to generate new ideas and concepts when using technology (Lee, 2019). Originality can be obtained from students' original ideas and imagination when using some of Storybird features in writing. When students can develop original ideas and imaginations well, they can increase their creativity for writing according to the generic structure of the story.

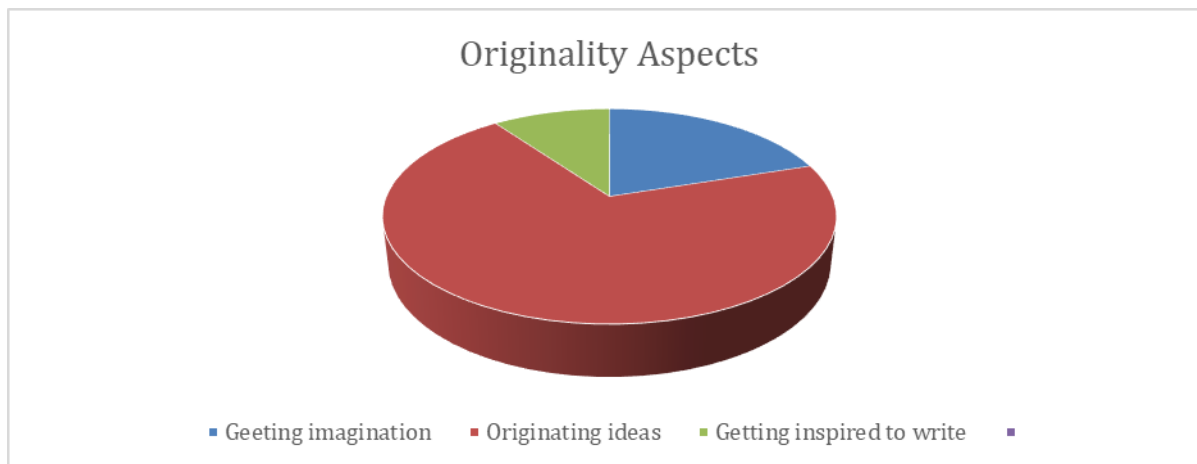


Figure 2. Originality Aspect of Building Creativity for Writing

Figure 2 presents the student’s perception of the writing originality by using the features of Storybird. The data showed that Storybird could help students write originally with their ideas and imagination by using features in Storybird. 70% of the students felt that they could originate their own ideas in writing about environment when using the Storybird application. By doing this they could felt that what they wrote was something original coming form their own thoughts and feelings. Meanwhile, there were 205 of the students who got imagination through using the Storybird application for writing. The Storybird application also provided some features who could make the students be more imaginative for thinking about whet they could write. And finally, 10% of the students got inspired from other things found in Storybird application like the possible pictures that could be seen and used as the reference for creating the ideas for writing.

It shows that pictures in Storybird could help students develop various sentences in students' stories. The results are in line with Hillson et al., (2019) revealing that there was an improvement in students’ writing skills in building simple sentences. They were also motivated to build various sentences as they enjoyed the process of using the long-form story feature in Storybird. Next, students' ideas and imaginations to write the stories are helped by using pictures and quizzes featured in Storybird. Besides Abdullah et al., (2020) found that students could generate new ideas for writing a story, construct the generic structure of English writing, and consider grammatical features of English texts from some pictures in Storybird.

**Students’ Curiosity in Writing after Using Storybird Website**

Curiosity represented as the aspect to lead the students to explore new ideas. After using Storybird, it is important for students to be curious to explore ideas to help them develop their creativity in writing.

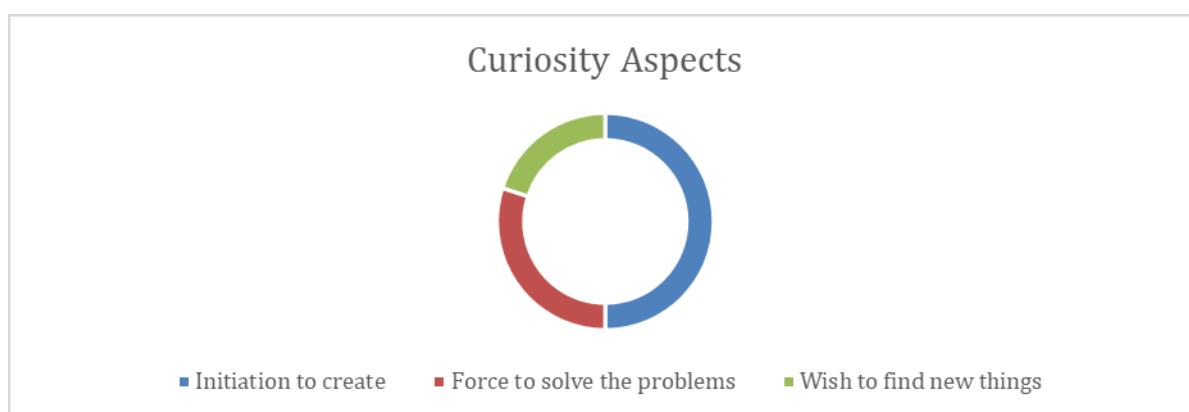


Table 4.

Figure 3. Curiosity Aspect of Building Creativity for Writing

Figure 3 presents the students’ curiosity in writing after using the Storybird website. The findings revealed that 50% of the students had a good initiation to create the new things as the aspect supporting their curiosity in writing about environment when using the Storybird application. 30% of the students tended to force themselves to solve the problems in building their curiosity when writing with the use of the Storybird application. And finally, there were only 20% of the students who wished to find the new things in writing about environments using the Storybird application.

Based on the results above, it can be exclaimed that curiosity cannot be left from the aspects of building creativity in writing. The results are in line with Zakaria et al., (2016). Storybird has significant implications for the potential use of Storybird as a pedagogical tool for English courses to explore ideas and imagination. In addition, they can try combining ideas with their stories to improve their writing skills.

**Students’ Perception about the Impacts of Creativity in Their Writing Skills after using Storybird Website**

The use of Storybird application for building the creativity in writing also had some impacts such as making a well-organized writing, getting the increase of their vocabulary acquisitions, and improving the writing performances. It can be seen from the diagram below.

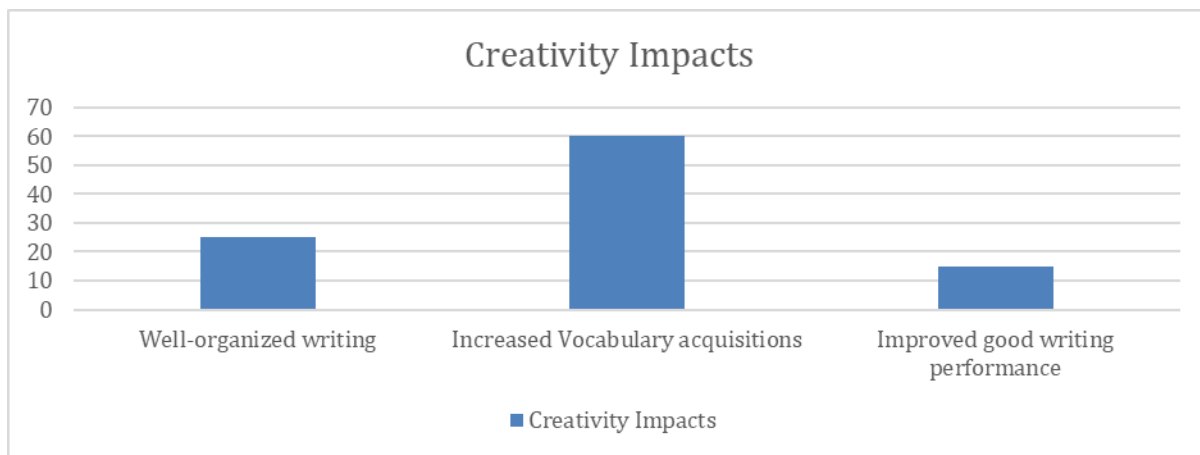


Figure 4. Impacts of Creativity for Writing by Using the Storybird Application

Figure 4 presents the student's perception of the impacts of their creativity after using Storybird on writing skills. It is known that 60% of creativity in writing was concerned with the increase of vocabulary acquisitions owned by the students. 25% of the creativity impact went to the well-organized writing the sentences performed by the students. And finally, 15% of the creativity impact of the students' creativity for writing was concerned with the improved writing sentences performance done by the students in writing about environment using the Storybird application.

The first impact of building creativity for writing by using the Storybird application is the increase of vocabulary acquisitions owned by the students. This is in line with Shukri and Puteh (2017) who investigated the acquisition of receptive vocabulary through Storybird in Malaysia. The results revealed that while reading the stories in Storybird, they have significant improvement in the 3000-word vocabulary and language styles test. The second impact of building creativity for writing through using the Storybird application is leading the students to produce well-organized writing. This is in line with Thonghattha (2017) finding that students was successfully to organize the text with various sentences according to grammatical features. The second impact is , The last impact about improving the writing performance is in line with Shamsulbahri and Aziz (2020), who showed that students' creativity when finding out new ideas through Storybird helped students to improve their writing skills in the narrative text as well as their performance to develop ideas to have good content with detail topics

#### 4. Conclusion

Creativity can be the primary aspect of writing that must be owned by the students. It is because creativity leads the students to think of being flexible, original, and curious in creating the sentences in writing. And also, creativity is very crucial for writing certain topics like about environment. The students are claimed to be flexible in emerging new ideas to write, to be original in creating every sentence, and to be curious for thinking about the solutions to the problems faced through writing.

In short, all the findings of the current research were factual to reveal about the contributions of building creativity in writing about the environment for the students by using the Storybird application. In other words, such application was also useful to lead the students to be more creative in writing. Hence, it is also recommended that the EFL teachers use such application to help the students build creativity for supporting their writing skills. However, it still needs conducting further researchers with other designs to prove better the importance of creativity and contribution of the Storybird application to improve the students' writing skills

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