



## Collaborative Digital Storytelling-based Task for EFL Writing Instruction: Outcomes and Perceptions

**Yek Amin Azis**

*Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram, Indonesia*

**Husnawadi**

*Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram, Indonesia*

Despite a myriad of studies documenting the educational benefits of digital storytelling (DST) on EFL learners' language mastery, the majority of the research is not grounded in the theory of L2 instruction, say task based language teaching (TBLT). To fill this void, this action research involving 28 students investigated the efficacy of collaborative DST-based task in an Indonesian EFL writing classroom. Anchored in collaborative TBLT methodology instruction of Willis (1996) that met a set of task criteria coined by Ellis (2009), this study aimed to unveil the effect of collaborative DST-based task on the students' writing skills; how the students perceived the use of the learning approach; and the challenges they encountered. The statistical evidence indicates that there was a significant difference on the students' pre- and post-writing scores, which indicates that the use of collaborative DST-based task significantly improved students' writing skills. The writing students perceived that the learning design could promote their English Language skills Development, engagement, motivation, and interpersonal relation. Another finding revealed that the students found the technological and pedagogical circumstances were their challenges. This study offers implications and recommendations for future research and practices for marrying TBLT and technology in ELT classrooms.

**Keywords:** collaborative writing, DST, EFL, ELT, TBLT, writing skills

### Introduction

Writing is one of the most difficult skills for English as foreign language (EFL) learners to acquire inasmuch as it requires their knowledge of what to write and how to write. The former refers to the ideas that the students are actually required to write, while the latter relates to the lexico-grammatical choices and how they structure and translate the ideas into comprehensible texts. Due to its complexities, it takes abundant of time for EFL learners to be able to write well in the learnt language due to the lack of exposure to the target language. This long process of mastery often discourages them to learn in that it requires more intricate processes, including a number of feedback and revisions from their English language writing instructors.

Similarly, in the Indonesian EFL writing context, as in Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram abbreviated UIN Mataram (Mataram State Islamic University), where this study was undertaken, there are some pedagogical barriers for the teaching of writing, including big-classes with mixed-ability students, grammar-oriented learning, textbook reliant and the absence of English use in everyday encounter. For example, individual students are often instructed to write their past-experiences with unprecedented grammatical input necessary for carrying out the task. This results in lexico-grammatical errors

prevalently found in their narrative writing products. In addition, this inhibits them to generate ideas as they find it more difficult to recall and transfer their past memory into readable texts in English. Such a mundane practice is also often a pressure for lower ability students in the class, which indicates the importance of collaborative learning, enabling them to learn from higher ability peers. In addition, given our today's digital literacy practices, in which students are everyday involved in the use of digital multimedia for exercising their writing skills, there is also a need to equip them with this new immersing skill, to be digitally literate, the ability to read, interpret, and produce digital texts. With this regard, Elola and Oskoz (2017) assert the importance of revitalizing the L2 writing curriculum with the inclusion of the aforementioned digital writing competence.

For this reason, it is necessary to rejuvenate the teaching of English writing practices in the university through the use of digital technologies that afford the visual and aural modes, which enable the writing students not only to accelerate their English writing skills but also their technological skills for communicative purposes. One of the instructional approaches that incorporates such multimodalities for communicative purposes is Digital Storytelling (DST), which has sparked an exponential interest of researchers and practitioners, particularly in English Language Teaching (ELT) landscape to facilitate the development of students' target language skills and collaborative learning (Nishioka, 2016).

DST is regarded as creating or narrating stories by means of digital apps or software (Nishioka, 2016; Robin, 2008; Smeda, Dakich, & Sharda, 2014). Robin (2008) opines that DST has been potent and highly engaging for instructors and learners since its emergence as a medium of instruction over the past years. Due to its educational potentials, DST has gained its prominence, particularly in the ESL context; a wide range of studies use computer software and draw on available book stories to create DST (e.g., Robin, 2008; Smeda et al., 2014); not to mention in EFL classrooms as attested by the ample evidence in the sphere, such as the effect of DST on Speaking skills (Eissa, 2019; Hwang, Shadiev, Hsu, Huang, Hsu, & Lin, 2016; Razmi, Pourali, & Nozad, 2014; Rokni & Qarajeh, 2014; Thariri, Tous, & MovahedFar, 2015); linguistics and non-linguistics skills (Gimeno-Sanz, 2015); Writing skills and visual memory (Abdel-Hack & Helwa, 2014; Sarica & Usluel, 2015). The findings of some of the aforementioned and other relevant studies also showed the impact of DST on students' increased motivation (Aktas & Yurt, 2017; Hava, 2020; Liu, Tai, & Liu, 2018; Razmi et al., 2014; Thariri et al., 2015; Yang & Wu, 2012). More specifically, in the Indonesian EFL context, to the authors' best knowledge; two articles have been published in reputable international journals pertinent to the use of DST. Lestariyana and Widodo (2018), for example, investigated the educational benefits of the employment of DST for primary school students, which unveiled that the use of the learning method could engage the pupils in meaning making process, enabling them to exercise their (non)linguistic resources, promoting their creativity and allowing them to share their ideas. Another study by Putri (2018) evidenced that the use of DST could be a multidimensional medium for pre-service teachers to promote environmental care.

Although there have been a myriad of studies documenting the educational benefits of DST on EFL learners' language mastery, the majority of the research is not grounded in the contemporary English language teaching theories, say Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), especially task-based language teaching (TBLT). Unless anchored in the L2 acquisition theory, the learning of language integrating technologies will be less effective (González-Lloret, 2017b; González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014; Ziegler, 2016). Additionally, due to the nature of L2 writing and the classroom complexities of present study, big-size and mixed-ability students, it would also yield greater potentials to employ the Collaborative Writing (CW) approach, a joint authorship of text throughout the stages of writing that results in the joint responsibility and possession of the text among the learners (Nguyen, 2020; Storch, 2019). Secondly, the majority of the abovementioned studies drew on computer and Web-based software and available storybooks with a dearth of studies using a smartphone and its apps necessary for orchestrating the DST. McMinn and Li (2012) opine that tablets or smartphones play significant role in the social encounter and provides promising educational benefits for learners. The authors found that using tablet-based task methodology could promote students interactions. Similarly, McCarty, Obari, and Sato (2017) advocate that the use of mobile phones allow the learners to collect pictures, create videos, share links or materials in and outside the classroom.

Such affordances are also prevalent in the studies of Lestariyana and Widodo (2018) and Hava (2020), where the learners were respectively collecting pictures and finding relevant suitable words for the composition of DST project. However, there is a lack of empirical evidence with regard to DST-based task in the Mobile Assisted Language Learning context (MALL) despite the existing of conceptual studies presenting the possibility of marrying DST and TBLT in such a learning landscape (e.g., Dal, 2010; Jarvis, 2015; Kiernan & Aizawa, 2004). In addition, given a lack of studies on the deployment of DST in the Indonesian EFL writing classrooms, another study is needed to fill the void.

Drawing on the rationales above, the current study aimed to provide empirical evidence on the efficacy of collaborative DST based task orchestrated by a smartphone app in an Indonesian EFL writing classroom. The following research questions guide this study:

1. To what extent did the implementation of Collaborative DST-based task affect students' writing skills?
2. How did the students perceive the implementation of collaborative digital storytelling-based task as an approach to the teaching of writing skills?
3. What were the students' barriers or challenges in the use of the learning approach for learning writing?

## Literature Review

### Theoretical Framework

With the immergence of technological devices as an integral part of everyday life and its upsurge use in ELT classrooms, González-Lloret and Ortega (2014) and Ziegler (2016) assert that such uses supporting L2 learning will be less effective unless they are grounded in a theory deriving from SLA research, such as TBLT. As the final product of CLT, TBLT has gained its escalating interest among L2 scholars since the late twentieth century with reference to the work of 'Candlin and Murphy' (Ellis, 2009, p. 221). This process-based approach, deriving from Dewey's work 'experiential learning' or 'learning by doing', emphasizes engagement, meaning, and the use of language for certain communicative purposes (González-Lloret, 2017a; Ziegler, 2016). Drawing on various definitions and principles of Tasks, Nunan (2004, p. 4) defines TBLT, with reference to the term 'pedagogical tasks', as goal-oriented classroom activities having a continuum of pre-, during, and post-tasks that allow learners to comprehend, manipulate, produce and engage themselves in the use of the learnt language during which they pay attention on exercising the grammatical knowledge oriented toward meaning instead of form manipulation.

Despite the focus on meaning, Ellis (2009) contends that the concept of TBLT does not exclude the grammar-focused instruction, which is termed as 'focused-tasks', the tasks that focus on the use of specific hidden grammatical features because English teachers do not explicitly teach the grammar or rule of the language. He also admits the possible use of explicit form instruction in the model. For the same token, Littlewood (2007) asserts that teacher educators in EFL context need to adapt TBLT rather than adopt given the contextual complexities, where focus on form is also mandated in the curriculum. When it comes to focus on form tasks, Willis (1996) suggests that learners begin to work on given tasks by drawing on the linguistic resources they have learnt in the previous lessons. For this reason, it is argued that the students cannot perform the tasks accurately unless they possess prior lexicogrammatical competence necessary to capitalize on in order to successfully operate the tasks and achieve the intended outcomes. Likewise, Skehan (1996) points out that it is pivotal to have a space for form-focus instruction in the task design without depriving of the essence or values of the tasks that stoke up students' interests in learning. The absence of input in the TBLT has also sparked a debate among scholars. In response to this, by drawing on Willis' (1996) framework, Leeming and Harris (2020) offered an alternative framework "*Integrated input output framework for TBLT*" that aim to respond to the importance of input for building the students' prior knowledge as this is critical for the students who have low English proficiency and a lack of exposure to the target language use. Although they assert that Willis' (1996)

framework did not accommodate the input such as reading, we rather viewed it as a flexible framework depending upon the creativity of the English instructors according to their teaching contexts.

Though the abovementioned framework is of paramount importance, particularly in terms task procedure, task-based learning also requires guiding principles in order to meet the intended learning objectives. One of such prominent TBLT principles currently becoming a buzzword in the context of ELT is the four core criteria of task coined by Ellis (2009), namely meaning oriented, the presence of gap, reliability on the use of the available (non)linguistic resources, and targeted outcomes. The interconnection between technology and TBLT is evidenced in the application of DST in classrooms as it engages the students in the process of orchestrating the digital story from planning, collecting pictures, narrating story, recording, revising and editing. This digital storytelling making process accords with the nature of TBLT in a way that engages the students in the learning by doing, in which students learn English by carrying out certain communicative tasks that require the communicative language use to achieve the target outcome. With this regard, the application of the aforementioned four core criteria featuring tasks of Ellis (2009) have been conceptually adopted by Jarvis (2015) to present an example of how TBLT differing from Presentation, Practice and Production (PPP), in mobile assisted language learning (MALL) context. The author provides a practical example of TBLT approach used for a lower intermediate English language classroom and compared it to that of being undergirded by PPP (see Jarvis, 2015). Due do the active engagement in the process of making DST, the students' attention is directed to focus on meaning, where form is sidelined to some extent; enforces the learners to seek for information necessary for the composition of the DST through the exercising of (non)linguistic resources or multimodalities, such as pictures, sounds, words, lexicogrammar, and etc., to achieve the appropriate digital video products.

With reference to the nature of L2 writing and where big-class size and mixed-ability students are prevalent as in our teaching context, CW approach may offer pedagogical merits to the aforementioned issues, such as making individual learner to be more proficient in writing as it allows higher ability students to scaffold their lower-ability counterparts, which may escalate their theoretical knowledge, critical reflection, and awareness of the participants (Herder, Berenst, Glopper, & Koole, 2018). In collaborative learning environment, students work collaboratively to generate certain learning outcomes or products through sharing of knowledge, linguistic resources, engagement and negotiation of meaning (Widodo, 2013). This concept of collaborative learning has been adopted in various L2 writing classrooms and has contributed to the students' L2 language development (e.g., Shehadeh, 2011; Storch, 2019; Zhang, 2019). Other recent published studies also have witnessed the successful application of such approach in technology writing classrooms (e.g., Andrew, 2019; Ferdiansyah, 2018; Hynninen, 2018; McDonough & Vleeschauwer, 2019; Nguyen, 2020).

Drawing on the interplay between TBLT, DST and Collaborative writing instruction as discussed above, the current study incorporated the three approaches to underpin its learning design, termed collaborative DST-based task. Therefore, anchored in the aforementioned four characteristics of TBLT proposed by Ellis (2009) and Willis' (1996) TBLT framework as well as CW approach, this study aimed to provide empirical evidence on the efficacy of Collaborative DST-based task on the students' writing skills and learning in the context of an Indonesian EFL writing classroom.

## **Previous Studies on the Use of DST**

DST, a novel means of narrating stories using technologies, has gained its escalating use as a teaching strategy signalled by the immergence of The Center for DST in 1998. Current literature has shown a wide range of empirical evidence on the employment of DST as a teaching strategy both in the context of education and ELT of various levels. Several studies look into the deployment of certain educational framework informing the use of DST and its effects. For example, Robin (2008), amid the debate over the effectiveness of technologies in classrooms, advocates the use of technological pedagogical and content knowledge (TPACK) as the framework in that it allows teachers to think about what, and how to teach certain subjects using technologies. Other studies, drawing on the constructivist learning theories, such as

Smeda et al. (2014), Shin (2016) and Green (2013), assert that such a learning theory fits the use of DST as it allows the learners to (re)construct their own learning. Green (2013), drawing on the American librarians' inability to provide a support for English language learning, discussed the pedagogical practices of DST by employing the term 'story-structure', which allows learners to repeatedly and intentionally learn the target language and advocates that such affordances help learners enrich vocabularies, and develop linguistic accuracy and fluency more effectively. The author also asserted that the multimodal affordances, such as the availability of images, error editions, broader audiences, encourage the learners to use English as a means of communicating digital stories.

A great body of recent research has documented empirical evidence of the impact of DST on the students' language mastery and related aspects in ELT context. For example, Thariri et al. (2015) and Abdolmanafi-Rokni and Qarajeh (2014) investigated the effect of DST on oral skills, in which both studies yielded similar results that the use of DST could significantly improve students' speaking skills compared to their peers taught using conventional teaching method. Similarly, Hwang et al. (2016) unveiled that the Taiwanese students taught English using DST learning method gained greater speaking skills development compared to their counterparts in the control group.

Several current studies have also looked into the effect of DST on writing skills and related skills. Sarica and Usluel (2015) carried out a seven-week experimental study to investigate the impact of DST on the visual memory capacity (VMC) and writing skills at Educational Volunteers Foundation of Turkey (TEGV). They found that the use of DST significantly developed students' writing skills. It engages them in the complex writing and revision process and improve their performance and knowledge. Likewise, Green (2011) in her Ph.D. design-based research examined the use of DST in the teaching of writing process involving 266 pre-service teachers over the four semesters at an American University. The study unveiled that the pre-service teachers were more cognizant of the reflection in the writing process and valued DST as an effective strategy for the teaching of writing. They could also see the connection of the planning process in the text-based and digital environment. Another finding also unveiled that the use of storyboard and a reflective planning afforded in the DST allowed the pre-service teachers to better see the connection between words and images for meaning making. Another five-month experimental study by Rahimi and Yadollahi (2017) also found that the students taught using DST gained a significant difference in terms of literacy skills (Reading and Writing) given the UNCOVA result ( $F = 11.680$ ,  $p = .00$ ; partial eta squared = .222) and the descriptive statistical data that showed the experimental group outperformed the control group given the mean score ( $M = 32.818$ ) and ( $M = 30.772$ ) respectively.

DST used in the studies of Spanish and Japanese also showed affirmative findings. Lee (2014) investigated how digital news storytelling-based task could promote students' content knowledge and oral skills in Spanish. The study discovered that DST promoted the students' engagement, motivation and content knowledge regarding the given topics as well as honing their digital literacy skills. It allowed them to use the learnt language meaningfully outside classrooms. Nishioka (2016) examined the language learning processes and outcomes of the Japanese students who partook in the process of collaborative DST orchestration. It was unveiled that the students drew on their vernacular, grammatical terminologies and individual (private) speech for constructing knowledge collaboratively.

Drawing on the aforementioned studies, there is some impetus for the employment of collaborative DST-based task in this study. First, though it has been widely applied in the context of ELT, the adoption of DST in the sphere is not grounded in L2 acquisition theories, particularly TBLT. Secondly, the majority of the aforementioned studies employ Web and computer software programs, instead of free mobile apps for the creation of digital stories. The possibility of marrying TBLT and smartphones has been conceptually proven feasible (e.g., Dal, 2010; Jarvis, 2015). Nevertheless, these two conceptual studies on Task-based DST in MALL context lack empirical evidence. Third, there is a scarcity of research on the use of DST in the Indonesian EFL writing classrooms. For these reasons, the current study aimed to provide empirical evidence on the efficacy of collaborative DST-based task in an Indonesian EFL writing classroom.

## Method

### Research Design

The current study employed action research (AR) design, which garnered both the quantitative and qualitative data. The use of AR aimed to improve pedagogical practices and yield better changes or overcome a particular pedagogical problem that circumvents students' learning in certain learning context (Burns, 2010). The reason for the employment of the AR in this study was to bring about a new pedagogical atmosphere that may encourage the students to learn and help them improve their learning outcomes, writing skill.

### Data Analysis

#### Quantitative

To answer the research question No. 1 (R1), pre- and post-tests were respectively given before and after the course. Students' writings were then analyzed and scored using adapted format of New Jersey Holistic writing rubric. The reason for using this rubric was for time efficiency during marking. The researcher and another writing English writing expert analysed and marked students' writing test products together to ensure the validity and reliability of the marking. The data were input and analysed using SPSS 20. Apart from the presentation of the descriptive data, a paired-samples t-test was carried out because it only measured one variable from two categorical variables (Creswell, 2014), which was to figure out whether or not the use of collaborative DST-based task significantly influenced students' writing skill.

#### Qualitative

To answer the research questions No. 2 (R2) pertaining to the students' perceptions and 3 (R3) their challenges faced throughout the course, semi-structured focus group interview, students' reflection, and pictures reflecting tasks were applied to garner the intended qualitative data. For the semi-structured focus group interview, purposive sampling technique was applied. Twelve students from four different groups were invited for the interview at the end of the course and were audiotape recorded. The interview was conducted in Indonesian, which was then transcribed and translated into English involving another Indonesian-English translator to ensure its validity. The students' reflective journals were collected at the end of the class reflecting their experiences of using this learning approach to writing, including the challenges they encountered. Both of the data from the interview and reflection were then analyzed separately for themes using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis procedure, which encompassed six phases, namely "familiarizing yourself with your data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, producing the report" (p. 87). The categorization of themes involved two experts in the area to avoid misinterpretation of the data.

### Procedure

#### Participants

This study was carried out at Mataram State Islamic University (UIN Mataram) Indonesia involving 28 mixed-ability of sophomore majoring in English and education. Their English language level varied from elementary to pre-intermediate. They undertook a once-week of 100-minute Written Intensive Communication Practice 2 (WICP2), a supplementary essay writing class of academic year 2017-2018. The participants were relatively technologically savvy in that the majority of them possessed laptops,

tablets, and mobile phones. However, they did not realize how these technologies could be used to help them improve their learning the target language.

## Learning design

WICP2 course was aimed to help the students be able to operate the accurate use of English skills in writing and communicating their ideas orally in terms of persuasive, narrative, and descriptive texts. The main textbooks used were the third edition of Boardman's and Frydenberg's (2008) *Writing to communicate 2: Paragraphs and essay* and the second edition of Robitaille's and Conelly's (2007) *writer's resources: From paragraph to essay*. The mobile app used in this class was Viva Video, a free video making up for Android use (visit <https://vivavideo.en.softonic.com/android> for more details). Despite this, for collaborative video edition, some groups in the class used its software installed on laptops.

The class lasted for 16 weeks. In week 1, the students were introduced to the learning goals, assessments, learning materials and how to use Viva video apps, and they were given pre-writing test question. They were also divided into a group of three. Table 1 succinctly illustrates the students' writing tasks throughout the semester.

TABLE 1  
*Students' Written Tasks throughout the Term*

Lesson	Tourism Destination (Persuasive)	Excursion (Narrative)	Islamic Figures (Descriptive)
<b>Pre-task</b>	Present tense (simple, continuous, perfect continuous). Writing mechanics (connectors). Analysis of grammatical features through sample reading about tourism Discussing assignment with the lecturer and between the students collaboratively	Past tense (simple, continuous, perfect). Writing mechanic (connectors). Analysis of Grammatical features of sample text (My short excursion to Tapias Viejas taken from <a href="http://creativeessays.blogspot.co.id/2008/05/narrative-essay-my-short-excursion-to.html">http://creativeessays.blogspot.co.id/2008/05/narrative-essay-my-short-excursion-to.html</a> )	Combination of the two (Present & Past Tenses) Writing Mechanic (Connectors) Analysis of Grammatical features of sample text (Islamic figure)
<b>During task</b>	Collaboratively navigate, download, and save pictures of local tourism destinations on the Internet. Collaboratively Plan or outline the essay Collaboratively Write the first draft Collaboratively present the essay plan by using PowerPoint attached with pictures (Photovoicing Storyboard) in front of the class. Independently notice the errors committed by the presenters, write down some errors, and give the constructive feedback. Collaboratively create DST using Viva Video Apps.	Take an excursion to a tourism destination in Lombok with group, and take and collect some pictures. Collaboratively Plan or outline the essay Collaboratively Write the first draft Collaboratively present the essay plan by using PowerPoint attached with pictures (Photovoicing Storyboard) in front of the class. Independently notice the errors committed by the presenters, write down some errors, and give the constructive feedback. Collaboratively create DST using Viva Video Apps.	Collaboratively navigate, download, and save pictures of local Islamic figures Collaboratively Plan or outline the essay Collaboratively write the first draft. Collaboratively present the essay plan by using Powerpoint attached with pictures (Photovoicing Storyboard). Independently notice the errors committed by the presenters, write down some errors, and give the constructive feedback. Collaboratively create DST using Viva Video Apps.
<b>Post-task</b>	Peer-Assessment on Essay writing and DST mediated by the instructor. Essay edition and revision Video edition and revision	Peer-Assessment on Essay writing and DST mediated by instructor. Essay edition and revision Video edition and revision	Peer-Assessment on Essay writing and DST mediated by the instructor. Essay edition and revision Video edition and revision

## Findings and Discussion

### R1: The Effect of Collaborative DST-Based Task on the Students' Writing Skills

Drawing on the descriptive statistics of the data, there was an increase in the students writing scores in that the mean score of the post-test ( $M = 5.2$ ) was greater than that of the pre-test ( $M = 3.6$ ) (see Table 2 for details).

TABLE 2  
*Descriptive Statistics*

	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Pre-test writing	3	5	3.6	.65
Post-test writing	4	6.5	5.2	.59

*N*: 28

To uncover whether there was a significant improvement or not, a paired-samples t-test was performed. The statistical evidence indicated that there was a significant difference on the students' writing scores for pre-test ( $M = 3.6$ ,  $SD = .65$ ), and for post-test ( $M = 5.2$ ,  $SD = .59$ ) conditions;  $t(27) = -19.51$ ,  $p = .000$ .

This empirical evidence echoes the previous research findings (say Rahimi & Yadollahi, 2017; Rong & Noor, 2009; Sarica & Usluel, 2015). Sarica and Usluel (2015) uncovered that the students studying using DST improved their writing skills more significantly compared to those using conventional method with mean of gain score "0.80" for the control and "1.48" for the experimental group (p. 305). Similarly, drawing on the pre-experimental study that investigated the effect of DST elements on the students' writing skill, Rong and Noor (2009) found that the students gained significant improvement in writing, and all the elements of the DST contributed to the significant outcome, including the element of "Good Grammar Language Usage" (see Rong and Noor (2009, p. 124). This writing skill improvement in the current study can also be justified by the enrichment of the students' vocabulary facilitated by the readings in the initial stage and through their search of related words using their smartphone during the orchestration of the DST and writing of the story. This also accords with the finding of a case study carried out by Chiew et al., (2019) on the perceived impacts of the DST on the students' vocabulary. The students perceived that their English vocabulary mastery significantly improved after being engaged in the joint production of the DST. Hava (2019) also found that 77% of the students perceived that DST significantly enriched their vocabulary during the writing of the story, while 44% of them admitted their writing improvement.

Because writing is an integral part of DST, it engages the learners from the initial stage such as essay outlining or planning to the subsequent stages of writing the story (Sarica & Usluel, 2015). The pre-task learning activities in this study allow the students to develop their lexicogrammatical awareness prior to writing. This is supported by the theory of the present study, which puts forward the importance of input in the TBLT. The types of the input afforded by the learning design include lexicogrammar, content knowledge, and essay organization afforded by the lecturing, readings, and collaborative grammar and error analysis. The former is clearly facilitated in almost all the stages of the learning design, e.g., in the initial phase of narrative writing task, the teacher taught the students past tense through lecturing and narrative text analysis followed by the error noticing during the presentation in the During Task stage, and collaborative errors analysis in the final stage. This finding provides evidence of the importance of input in the TBLT as advocated by Leeming and Harris (2020), who argue that this input based learning in the TBLT framework is of critical importance for the language learning environment, where the low ability English language learners and less exposure to the target language remain rampant. The collaborative nature of the learning design of the current study also allows the lower ability students to learn from their higher counterparts. The latter scaffold their former throughout the learning process from the pre- to post-task learning activities (Nishioka, 2016; Storch, 2019; Widodo, 2013).



## R2: Students' Perceptions on the Use of Collaborative DST-Based Task for Learning Writing

Overall, the students positively perceived the use of Collaborative DST-based task as an approach to the teaching of writing inasmuch as it promotes their English language skills development, engagement, motivation, and interpersonal relation.

TABLE 3

*Summary of the Students' Perceptions on the Use of Collaborative DST-based Task for Learning Writing*

Themes	Sample Excerpts
Language skills development	<p><i>"This learning design improves my English skills, particularly grammar. Before we went to do the project, you taught us about past tense in narrative essay writing. The use of presentation in the project allowed me to correct my pronunciation, because you (instructor) and other friends gave me feedback in terms of grammar and pronunciation."</i></p> <p>[Focus group interview]</p> <p><i>"... when I find it difficult to write or brainstorm ideas, they (group members) can help by sharing their own ideas and we can discuss it together."</i></p> <p>[Student reflective journal]</p>
Engagement	<p><i>"I think this way of instruction (collaborative DST-based task) afforded me the chance to use my English mainly in speaking and writing. Not only did it allow me to use English in the classroom, such as during the group discussion, presentation, and error analysis of each activity, but also it afforded me the opportunity to use and share ideas in English outside classrooms. For example, during the excursion, I and my group members captured the pictures needed, planned our essay and presentation, and even we met some foreign tourists to whom we practiced our English ..."</i></p> <p>[Focus group interview].</p> <p><i>"In the second project (task), narrative essay, ... We met foreigners and spent much time together."</i></p> <p>[Student reflective journal]</p>
Motivation	<p><i>"With the use of DST in learning essay, it makes me want to create another video story with my friends for our own collection"</i></p> <p>[Focus group interview]</p> <p><i>"In the second project (task), Narrative essay, was very exciting for me as I and my group had an excursion to Kuta Beach (a white-sand beach in South Lombok)".</i></p> <p>[Student Reflection]</p>
Confidence	<p><i>"... Now, we feel more confident to tell our experience in English, for instance, because we think we have learnt the correct one from our friends and lecturer."</i></p> <p>[Focus group interview]</p> <p><i>"Presentation using video is an effective way for me to convey my materials because it trains me to be more confident when performing in front of the audiences."</i></p> <p>[Student reflective journal]</p>
Interpersonal relation	<p><i>"This approach strengthens my relationship with my friends, especially my group members because I spend much time to do discussion and making decisions which attractive places to visit. I went there with them to do various fun activities. Also, We share our ideas to make an essay, slide, and videos. Because I spend much more time with my friends, this makes me understand each other more."</i></p> <p>[Focus group interview]</p> <p><i>"... togetherness is another reason why I like this way of learning, particularly narrative essay writing activities. Leaving, arriving, and having meal together strengthen our relation.... Moreover, when were at the beach, we swam together..."</i></p> <p>[Student reflection]</p>

The first qualitative finding accords with the previous research findings cited in the literature review section of the present study on the use of DST for promoting English language mastery (e.g., Abdolmanafi-Rokni & Qarajeh, 2014; Green, 2011, 2013; Rahimi & Yadollahi, 2017; Sarica & Usluel, 2015; Shadiev et al., 2016; Thariri et al., 2015). The collaborative task-based learning design in this study allowed the students to work collaboratively in and beyond the classroom. While they were doing the tasks, they were writing up their story, collecting pictures, and composing them into readable multimodal texts. Also, it reduced the task overload enabling the lower ability to learn from their higher ability

counterparts (Herder, et al., 2018), and afforded them more opportunities to use English during the process of task completion, which made them focus on meaning rather than form. The collaborative nature of the learning design allows the learners to share ideas and linguistic repertoires, take joint responsibilities for the completion of task, get direct feedback their peers, learn writing tasks management, maintain social relation, and develop critical thinking throughout the collaborative task completion (Widodo, 2013; Storch, 2019). In addition, the multimodal affordances of DST helped the students more easily to communicate their ideas as the semiotic resources, such as pictures, can be clues for their language production both during the presentation and their essay and digital video composing.



**DST co-editing with peers and instructor**



**Collaborative peer-feedback**

In terms of engagement, other relevant studies also reported that students were highly engaged in learning (e.g., Lee, 2014; Lestariyana & Widodo, 2018; Niemi & Multisilta, 2016). Niemi and Multisilta (2016), for example, drawing on the Vigotsky's sociocultural learning theory, found that collaborative DST engaged the students in learning. The factors affecting this high enthusiasm were the digital tool used, MoViE learning medium, and collaborative learning design. The use of the digital tool allowed the students to produce, recombine, and shoot someone's story with group members, while they are collaboratively creating videos throughout the process. Similarly, a long-term collaborative DST study in a mixed ability classroom carried out by Huang, Liu, Wang, Tsai, and Lin (2017) unveiled that low ability students' engagement was increased over time (see Huang et al., 2007 for more details). In the present study, the students were highly engaged in and outside the classroom. The task-based design, information gap with reference to one of the Ellis's (2009) task characteristics used in this study in terms of collaborative grammatical errors noticing, peer-feedback on the essay writing, oral presentation, and DST video creation, promotes such an intense engagement. This is correspondence to Nunan's (2004) characteristics of task that engage learners in the use of English while exercising their grammatical knowledge oriented toward meaning.

The improvement of the students' motivation also echoed the findings of previous studies cited in the literature review (i.e., Aktas & Yurt, 2017; Liu et al., 2018; Razmi et al., 2014; Thariri et al., 2015; Yang & Wu, 2012). Thariri et al. (2015) discovered that the use of DST significantly motivated the Iranian students compared to their peers in the control group. Likewise, Liu et al. (2018) unveiled that the students learning using DST gained higher motivation than those treated using conventional method in the control group (see Liu, 2018 for more details). Gimeno-Sanz (2015) found that 88% of the Aerospace Engineering students studying ESP found the use of DST in the learning to be very motivating. Likewise, Kasami (2017) found that 77.77% of the Japanese students taught English using DST was more motivated to learn compared to the use of traditional storytelling. This was because DST afforded them more fun and varieties of learning tasks, allowed them to create movies and present their work, and improved their creativity and self-efficacy. The affordances of the digital tool for the development of ownership and several practices or rehearsals prior to the production of the DST were the motivational drivers (Green, 2013). In addition, the second task in this study, writing narrative essay, seems to be the most enjoyable learning experience because it allows the students to learn in tandem with taking an excursion with group members. This can also facilitate learning to take place outside the classroom both with their group members or foreigners they meet in the tourism objects.

With regard to confidence arousal, the empirical evidence parallels to some previous research findings (e.g., Mokhtar et al., 2011; Razmi et al., 2014). Razmi et al. (2014) found that the PowerPoint presentation where texts and pictures as gist allowed them to speak more confidently. The nature of collaborative learning and affordances of task design in the present study contributes to the greater level of students' self-confidence in using English. In the study of CW, Shehadeh (2011) unveiled that the students benefited from the application of the learning approach. They became more confident as they also saw their peers making mistakes; it helped them learn from each other through immediate feedback. The aforementioned benefits of collaborative learning were prevalent when students employ DST. Smeda et al. (2014) pinpointed that DST fosters students' collaboration as it promotes collaborative learning between groups and found that the students studying with DST had greater communication and management skills as well as higher self-confidence particularly when it comes to responding and giving opinions. In addition, the repeated practices afforded by the learning design escalated the students' mastery in terms of fluency and readiness. The higher the students' ability is, the more confident they will be as they can capitalize on their adequate linguistic repertoire. The enactment of this collaborative DST-based task approach for facilitating the learning beyond the classroom has assisted the students' language learning with some foreigners and native speakers they met in the tourism objects, which in turn promotes their self-confidence as they feel that they could communicate their ideas in English with native speakers.



**Collaborative presentation**



**The students pose with foreigners during the excursion (Narrative Writing task)**

The contribution of this learning approach to social relation was rather surprising, in which the students believed that this learning approach strengthened their friendship with their peers. This finding advocated the previous research results. Yuksel, Robin, and McNeil (2011) discovered students' improvement in social skills as one of the advantages of learning with DST. It was unveiled that a greater social relation, such as empathy, sense of belonging, cooperation, and social and communicative competence, between the group members was established. Indeed, the students in this study spent most of their time learning with the same group members from the beginning. The outdoor trip, when carrying out narrative essay activities, afforded them more time and opportunities with their group members to interact, share ideas, and do the task together.

### **R3: The Perceived Challenges of the Collaborative DST-based Task.**

The primary challenges for the students using this learning design were the technological knowledge for the orchestration of the digital video and pedagogical circumstances.

TABLE 4

*Summary of the Students' Perceptions on the Challenges of Using Collaborative DST-based Task for Learning Writing*

Themes	Sample Excerpts
Technological Challenges	<p><i>"Another challenge is our dearth of knowledge of how to operate VivaVideo. We did not understand what you have shown us but during the process it was a bit difficult. Yet, luckily another group member helps us, so this can be tackled."</i></p> <p>[Focus group interview]</p> <hr/> <p><i>"The problem during the 3 tasks was when I made a video. It was hard for me to match the pictures, my voice, and text. It was frustrating sometimes, yet it could be tackled by editing and rerecording it."</i></p> <p>[Student reflective journal]</p>
Pedagogical circumstances	<p><i>"One of the challenges during this learning is determining our destination, particularly during the excursion lesson. The success of this learning is much dependent on the situation. For example, when it was raining heavily, we couldn't take better and more pictures. As a result, we could not explain our trip as we expected due to the blurriness of the pictures."</i></p> <p>[Focus group interview]</p> <hr/> <p><i>"A limited amount of time for doing the task was a challenge for me. We need more time to do the task because we had so many assignments from other courses"</i></p> <p>[Student reflective journal]</p>

These findings correspond to that of previous studies. Drawing on the students' experiences, Kasami (2018) discovered that the problems faced by the students during their learning using DST were difficulties in adjusting the volume, time shortages, technological skills, and copyright issue. Some of the students in the present study were reluctant to ask for help from their teacher if they did not understand. It was because they were probably shy of questioning in the class. As a result, when they faced these technological issues, they rather tried to overcome the problems themselves rather than seeking for the instructor's assistance. Nevertheless, the current study unveiled that the students could learn from their counterparts who had better technological skills. This was because of the collaborative nature of the learning design. It allowed the lower ability students to learn from their higher ability counterparts throughout the process of DST production, from planning to the production stage. Nishioka (2016), who discovered that the less proficient students could learn from their higher ability counterparts, has also empirically attested this. Likewise, Smeda et al. (2014) discovered that DST could promote students' collaboration, engaging them in soliciting for mutual assistance regarding problem solving.

Apart from the technological challenges, the second task or the Narrative essay task of the present study requiring the students to take a short trip was challenging for them because the weather during the excursion was not friendly, heavy rain at the time of executing the task. This out of class language learning may become a challenge for the writing instructors in order to design the learning activities carefully; assigning the students to carry out outdoor learning should consider the climate issue. This study is distinct from other previous studies in that the majority of them engage the students in the creation of the digital story by collecting pictures and stories from books and the internet. Hence, similar issues were not found in the current literature of DST to best of authors' knowledge. Taking into account, the appropriate time for carrying out the task can be a panacea though.

## Conclusion and Implications

This action research study has provided empirical evidence on the successful integration and application between TBTL theory and DST for the teaching and learning of writing in an EFL context. The findings of this study show that such a learning approach positively contributes to both the students' linguistic and sociocognitive competence. It promotes their language skills development, engagement, motivation, confidence, and social skills development. Nonetheless, the students encountered some challenges in its implementation, such as a lack of technological skills and appropriate time for executing

the second task. However, the nature of collaborative learning in this study helps students solve the technical issue because it allows them to ask for help from other members or friends who possess better technological knowledge. Additionally, such collaboration in learning lowers students' anxiety and allows lower ability students to learn from their higher ability counterparts, which in turn develops their self-confidence in English.

Drawing on the weaknesses of the current study in terms of instruction, future instructors should provide more guidance for the creation of DST in terms of using video making apps or software, and encourage the students to ask for any further explanation in case of misunderstanding pertaining to the technological issues. In designing task, future teachers should take into account the contextual issues, such as weather if they want to encourage students' learning outside classrooms. With reference to the second writing task in this study, Narrative writing task requiring the students to take an excursion for the creation of narrative text and DST, it is highly recommended that another empirical study with TBLT theory be conducted for ESP classrooms, such as in Vocational Tourism classes. This will likely be exciting for the students majoring in Guiding to learn to be a tourist guide, while simultaneously exercising their English skills.

In addition, more studies documenting the empirical evidence showing the efficacy of TBLT and technology in ELT classroom are needed. As this study does not compare the writing outcomes of the students with students in conventional classrooms, future empirical research needs to document such a finding through, for example, pure experimental study design, to see how effective it is when compared to traditional writing teaching method. Second, future studies also need to investigate the impact of the learning approach on the students' critical thinking, reading, listening, grammar, motivation, and self-confidence, which probably can be garnered through the use of questionnaires and interview. In short, the present study is the catalyst for future studies and practices marrying TBLT and technology in the realm of ELT.

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### **The Authors**

*Yek Amin Azis* (corresponding author) is an associate professor in the English Education Study Program of Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram, Indonesia. He gained his master's degree and Ph.D. from Universitas Negeri Jogjakarta. His research interests fall within the area of TBLT, curriculum and material design, content-based instruction, and CALL.

English and Education Study Program  
The Faculty of teacher training and Education  
Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram  
Mataram, 83116, Indonesia  
Tel: + 620370620783  
Mobile: + 620818364175  
Email: aminazis@uinmataram.ac.id

*Husnawadi* is an associate lecturer at English Education Study Program of Universitas Islam Negeri Maratam, Indonesia. He gained his master's degree in TESOL from Flinders University in 2015. His research interests range from TBLT, authentic learning, collaborative process approach, L2 writing, motivation in the L2 learning, and issues in TELL, such as TPACK, digital storytelling, flipped classroom, and multiliteracy.

English and Education Study Program  
The Faculty of Teacher Training and Education  
Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram  
Mataram, 83116, Indonesia  
Tel: + 620370620783  
Mobile: + 6281907256068  
Email: husnawadi1985@uinmataram.ac.id

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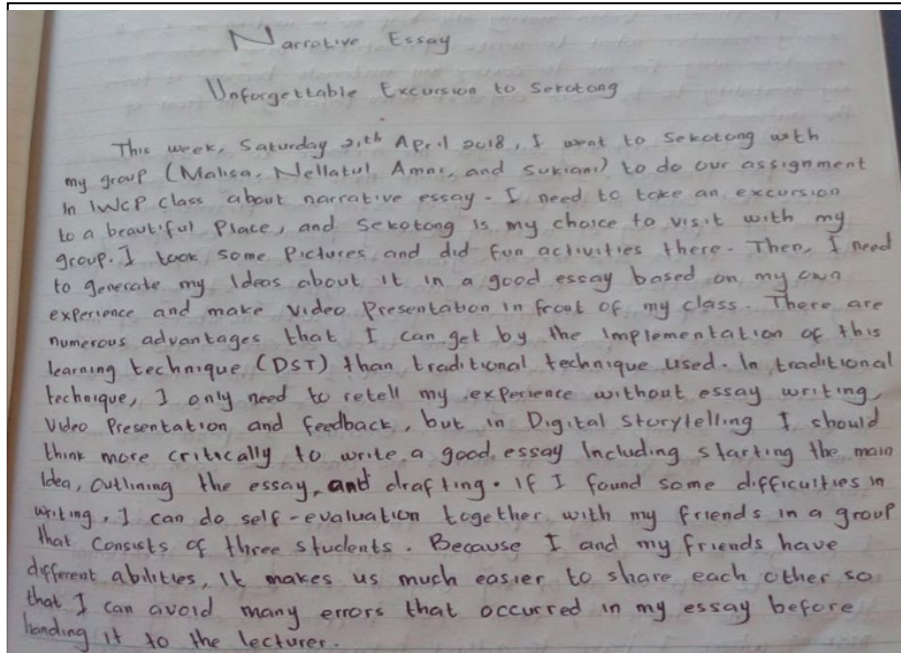
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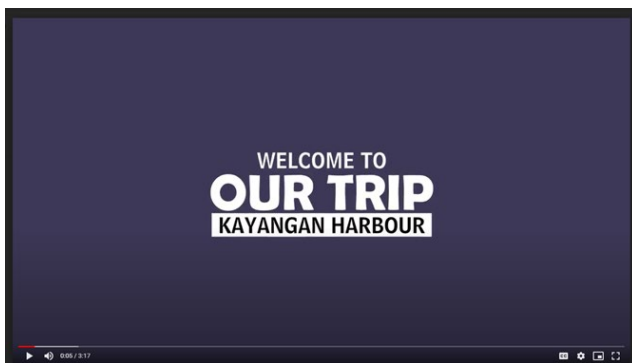
## Appendix A

### Sample of Students' Reflection



## Appendix B

### Student Digital Storytelling: Trip to Kayangan Lombok Indonesia



Video Link: [https://drive.google.com/open?id=1fIVp3uD9rt4reSVL8J\\_7D3XrTQ2Pc8K4](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1fIVp3uD9rt4reSVL8J_7D3XrTQ2Pc8K4)