

DIGITAL STORYTELLING AS A TOOL TO ENHANCE ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS IN EFL LEARNERS

Scientific supervisor:

Oripova Muhabbat Jo'raqulovna

PhD, associate professor

Uzbek National Pedagogical University

Department of the Theory and Methodology of English

Email: jurakulovna76@gmail.com

Rustamov Firdavs Rafael o'g'li

Student of Uzbek National Pedagogical University

Email: rustamovfirdavs588@gmail.com

Jumayev Bekzodjon To'ra o'g'li

Student of Uzbek National Pedagogical University

Email: bekzodjumayev0000@gmail.com

Abstract: In the past decade, digital storytelling has gained recognition as an engaging and interactive instructional approach that can substantially improve English language acquisition, particularly in developing speaking abilities among EFL learners. Through the integration of multimedia tools with narrative expression, this method nurtures learners' motivation, creativity, and communicative competence. The present paper examines the effective incorporation of digital storytelling in EFL contexts and its influence on learners' oral fluency, motivation, and intercultural understanding.

Keywords: digital storytelling, EFL, oral proficiency, multimedia learning, communicative competence, learner motivation

Аннотация За последнее десятилетие цифровое сторителлинг (digital storytelling) получил признание как увлекательный и интерактивный метод обучения, который может значительно повысить эффективность изучения английского языка, особенно в развитии устной речи у изучающих английский как иностранный (EFL). Интеграция мультимедийных инструментов с повествовательным выражением способствует развитию мотивации, творческих способностей и коммуникативной компетенции учащихся. В данной статье рассматривается эффективное внедрение цифрового сторителлинга в контексте EFL и его влияние на беглость устной речи, мотивацию и межкультурное понимание обучающихся..

Ключевые слова: цифровое сторителлинг, EFL, устная речь, мультимедийное обучение, коммуникативная компетенция, мотивация учащихся.

INTRODUCTION

As global communication demands increase, educators continuously seek innovative strategies to enhance students' oral proficiency in English. Conventional teaching practices often prioritize grammar and reading while giving less attention to speaking skills. Digital storytelling (DST)—the process of narrating stories through digital means such as videos, images, sound, and animation—offers a creative, learner-centered solution to this challenge. It enables students to express ideas imaginatively, enhances confidence, and fosters collaboration and cultural appreciation. According to Robin (2008), digital storytelling merges spoken narration, visuals, and background music to convey meaning effectively. This multimodal approach not only enriches language fluency and pronunciation but also encourages learners to produce authentic communication. For EFL students, DST creates real-life contexts for speaking practice and helps refine articulation and intonation through repeated rehearsals. One of its notable strengths lies in reducing foreign language anxiety. Learners can record, edit, and improve their speech before public presentation, which provides a sense of safety and control. For instance, a student narrating a personal story may record several takes, choose appropriate visuals, and adjust pacing until satisfied—thereby improving fluency and rhythm naturally. Unlike mechanical drills, digital storytelling invites learners to speak about real experiences and emotions, resulting in more meaningful and memorable communication. When learners share narratives connected to their own lives, they develop both linguistic and emotional engagement, which strengthens retention and confidence. Moreover, DST is a powerful motivational tool for digital-age learners. The creative use of visuals, sounds, and personal choice empowers students to take ownership of their projects. This autonomy stimulates intrinsic motivation and leads to deeper learning. Collaborative storytelling projects further enhance social interaction, peer feedback, and authentic language use. For example, teams producing stories on environmental themes must discuss vocabulary, rehearse dialogues, and evaluate each other's performance—all of which enhance communicative competence.

Cultural Awareness and Global Perspective

Beyond language improvement, digital storytelling contributes to intercultural competence. By exchanging stories reflecting personal traditions and cultural practices, learners gain empathy and broaden their worldview. In multicultural classrooms,

students can present cultural narratives—for example, an Uzbek learner introducing Nowruz traditions while peers share experiences about Christmas or Lunar New Year. These exchanges transform the language classroom into a miniature global community, where storytelling bridges cultures through English communication. For educators, successful implementation requires structured guidance. Teachers should support learners in script development, pronunciation practice, and the use of digital editing tools. Some learners may initially struggle with technology or stage anxiety; however, consistent encouragement and scaffolding can build both digital and linguistic confidence. Clear assessment rubrics are equally vital—evaluations should consider pronunciation, fluency, coherence, vocabulary range, and creativity. Providing model digital stories helps students visualize expectations and quality standards. Integrating DST within project-based learning modules is highly effective. When storytelling projects serve as the final task of a thematic unit, they consolidate multiple language skills while fostering creative output. Nevertheless, educators must address challenges such as limited access to technology, insufficient teacher training, and time constraints. Assessment must also ensure that students go beyond script reading and engage in authentic, spontaneous oral production.

Conclusion

Digital storytelling stands out as a transformative pedagogical technique for enhancing English speaking skills among EFL learners. By uniting technology, creativity, and narrative, it cultivates fluency, confidence, and intercultural sensitivity. It also provides teachers with an innovative medium for oral performance assessment. While implementation may present practical challenges, the pedagogical benefits far exceed these limitations. As digital communication continues to shape education, storytelling—empowered by multimedia tools—will remain a vital approach to fostering communicative competence and learner engagement in modern language classrooms.

REFERENCES

1. Robin, B. R. (2008). *Digital Storytelling: A Powerful Technology Tool for the 21st Century Classroom*. *Theory Into Practice*, 47(3), 220–228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405840802153916>
2. Yuksel, P., Robin, B., & McNeil, S. (2011). *Educational uses of digital storytelling all around the world*. In *Proceedings of Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference* (pp. 1264-1271). Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE).

3. Sadik, A. (2008). *Digital storytelling: A meaningful technology-integrated approach for engaged student learning*. Educational Technology Research and Development, 56(4), 487–506. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-008-9091-8>
4. Lambert, J. (2013). *Digital Storytelling: Capturing Lives, Creating Community* (4th ed.). Routledge.
5. Herrington, J., & Oliver, R. (2000). *An instructional design framework for authentic learning environments*. Educational Technology Research and Development, 48(3), 23–48.
6. Sylvester, R., & Greenidge, W.-L. (2009). *Digital Storytelling: Extending the Potential for Struggling Writers*. The Reading Teacher, 63(4), 284–295. <https://doi.org/10.1598/RT.63.4.3>
7. Hafner, C. A., & Miller, L. (2011). *Fostering learner autonomy in English for Science: A collaborative digital video project in a technological learning environment*. Language Learning & Technology, 15(3), 68–86.
8. Ohler, J. (2013). *Digital Storytelling in the Classroom: New Media Pathways to Literacy, Learning, and Creativity*. Corwin Press.