



## DEVELOPING STUDENTS' MULTIMODAL LITERACY AND SPEAKING SKILLS THROUGH DIGITAL STORYTELLING IN EFL CLASSROOMS

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**Rasulova Dilnoza Boisonovna**

*Teacher at the Department of Integrated English Course N1*

*Uzbekistan State World Languages University*

*Email: dilnozarasulova1409@gmail.com*

**Abstract.** *In recent years, digital technologies have significantly transformed foreign language education, creating new opportunities for developing students' communicative competence and multimodal literacy. This article examines the role of digital storytelling in enhancing speaking skills and multimodal literacy among students in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Digital storytelling combines verbal language, visual elements, audio, animation, and interactive media, allowing learners to express ideas creatively while improving language proficiency. The study discusses the theoretical foundations of multimodal literacy and explores how digital storytelling promotes speaking fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition, critical thinking, and learner motivation. Furthermore, the article analyzes practical strategies for integrating digital storytelling into EFL instruction and highlights the pedagogical benefits and challenges associated with its implementation. The findings demonstrate that digital storytelling fosters active participation, collaboration, learner autonomy, and meaningful communication, making it an effective pedagogical tool for modern language education.*

**Keywords:** *digital storytelling, multimodal literacy, speaking skills, EFL classrooms, communicative competence, language learning, educational technology, learner motivation*

### INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technologies has transformed educational practices across the world, especially in the field of foreign language teaching. Traditional language instruction, which mainly focused on grammar and memorization, is increasingly being replaced by learner-centered approaches that encourage communication, creativity, and interaction. In this context, digital

storytelling has emerged as an innovative pedagogical method that integrates language learning with multimedia production.

Digital storytelling refers to the process of creating and sharing stories using digital tools such as images, videos, narration, music, and animations. In EFL classrooms, this method enables students to practice speaking and communication skills while simultaneously developing multimodal literacy. Multimodal literacy



involves the ability to interpret and create meaning through various modes of communication, including text, audio, visuals, gestures, and digital media.

Today's learners are surrounded by multimedia content and digital communication platforms. Therefore, language education should prepare students not only for linguistic competence but also for effective participation in digital environments. Digital storytelling addresses this need by combining language learning with technology-based creative expression.

This article explores how digital storytelling contributes to the development of students' multimodal literacy and speaking skills in EFL classrooms. It also discusses practical applications, pedagogical advantages, and potential challenges of using digital storytelling in language education.

The concept of multimodal literacy. Multimodal literacy is a modern educational concept that extends traditional literacy beyond reading and writing printed texts. According to multimodal theory, communication occurs through multiple modes, such as visual images, sounds, gestures, movement, and digital media.

In EFL education, multimodal literacy helps students:

- interpret information presented in different formats;
- create meaningful multimedia content;
- develop critical thinking and digital communication skills;

- improve intercultural understanding;

- engage actively in collaborative learning environments.

Digital storytelling naturally supports multimodal literacy because students combine spoken language, written scripts, visuals, and sound effects to communicate ideas. Through this process, learners become active creators of knowledge rather than passive recipients of information.

Digital storytelling in EFL education. Digital storytelling integrates technology with narrative practices to create engaging and interactive learning experiences. Typically, students create short digital stories by combining:

- written scripts;
- voice narration;
- photographs or illustrations;
- background music;
- video clips;
- animations and transitions.

In EFL classrooms, digital storytelling encourages students to use English meaningfully in authentic communicative situations. Learners often work individually or collaboratively to develop stories related to personal experiences, cultural topics, social issues, or imaginative narratives.

The process of digital storytelling usually includes several stages:

1. Topic selection;
2. Script writing;
3. Storyboarding;
4. Multimedia collection;
5. Audio recording;



6. Video editing;
7. Presentation and reflection.

Each stage contributes to language development and multimodal competence.

Developing speaking skills through digital storytelling. One of the most important advantages of digital storytelling is its positive impact on speaking skills. Many EFL learners experience anxiety and lack confidence when speaking English in traditional classroom settings. Digital storytelling creates a supportive environment where students can practice oral communication more comfortably.

Improving pronunciation and fluency. When students record their narrations, they often listen to their speech repeatedly and make corrections. This process improves pronunciation, intonation, and fluency. Rehearsing scripts before recording also enhances speaking confidence.

Expanding vocabulary and grammar usage. Creating digital stories requires students to use descriptive vocabulary, transitional phrases, and appropriate grammatical structures. Because language is used in meaningful contexts, vocabulary retention becomes more effective.

Encouraging authentic communication. Digital storytelling promotes authentic language use. Students communicate personal experiences, emotions, and opinions, which increases engagement and communicative competence.

Reducing speaking anxiety. Recording audio or video allows learners to practice multiple times before presenting their final product. As a result, students feel less pressure compared to spontaneous classroom speaking activities.

Enhancing collaborative speaking. Group storytelling projects encourage peer interaction, negotiation, and discussion in English. Collaborative tasks strengthen communication and teamwork skills.

Pedagogical benefits of digital storytelling. Digital storytelling offers numerous educational benefits in EFL classrooms.

Increasing learner motivation. Technology-based activities are highly motivating for modern students. Multimedia creation makes learning more enjoyable and interactive.

Promoting creativity and critical thinking. Students make decisions about story structure, visual design, sound effects, and language use. This process develops creativity and analytical thinking.

Supporting learner autonomy. Digital storytelling encourages independent learning. Students take responsibility for planning, editing, and presenting their projects.

Developing digital competence. In addition to language skills, students learn how to use digital tools and media platforms effectively, which is essential for 21st-century education.



Enhancing cultural awareness. Students can create stories about cultural traditions, social issues, or personal identities, promoting intercultural communication and global awareness.

Challenges of implementing digital storytelling. Despite its benefits, digital storytelling also presents certain challenges.

Limited technological resources. Some schools may lack sufficient computers, internet access, or multimedia software.

Insufficient teacher training. Teachers may need professional development to effectively integrate digital storytelling into language instruction.

Time constraints. Creating digital stories requires considerable time for planning, recording, editing, and presentation.

Unequal digital skills. Students may have different levels of technological competence, which can affect participation and project quality.

However, these challenges can be addressed through proper planning, teacher support, and gradual integration of digital tools into classroom activities.

Practical strategies for teachers. To successfully implement digital storytelling in EFL classrooms, teachers can:

- use simple and accessible digital tools;
- provide clear instructions and examples;
- encourage collaborative projects;

- focus on communication rather than technical perfection;

- integrate storytelling with curriculum objectives;

- offer constructive feedback on both language and multimedia elements.

Popular tools for digital storytelling include:

- Microsoft PowerPoint;
- Canva;
- Adobe Express;
- Storybird;
- Animoto;
- iMovie;
- Flip.

These platforms allow students to create engaging multimedia projects even with limited technical experience.

Conclusion. Digital storytelling is an effective and innovative approach for developing students' multimodal literacy and speaking skills in EFL classrooms. By combining language learning with multimedia creation, digital storytelling promotes communicative competence, creativity, critical thinking, and learner engagement. It creates meaningful opportunities for authentic language use while helping students become confident digital communicators.

Although challenges such as technological limitations and time constraints may arise, the pedagogical benefits of digital storytelling significantly outweigh its difficulties. As education continues to evolve in the digital age, integrating digital storytelling into EFL instruction can help teachers prepare students for successful



communication in multilingual and multimedia environments.

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