Enhancing students' speaking abilities through digital storytelling in EFL classrooms

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ABSTRACT

Digital storytelling leverages various media, including text, images, audio, video, and animation, to craft narratives. This technique is a valuable educational tool for enhancing students' speaking abilities in English, applicable from primary school through university levels. This study aims to demonstrate the effectiveness of digital storytelling in improving oral skills among first-grade students at SMAN 1 Labuapi. Employing a quantitative descriptive method, the research involved 25 students. The findings reveal that digital storytelling is a powerful and adaptable technique that fosters oral communication skills while also honoring indigenous and cultural knowledge. The results indicate a significant improvement in students' speaking abilities, leading to the acceptance of the hypothesis (Ho) that digital storytelling enhances oral skills and the rejection of the null hypothesis (Ha). This study highlights the advantages of digital storytelling in helping educators become more proficient in teaching English.

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1. Introduction

Enhancing students' speaking abilities through digital storytelling in the EFL classroom Digital storytelling (DS) has proven to be an effective tool for improving students' speaking skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes (Mirza, 2020). By combining narrative techniques and technology, DS facilitates student engagement and creativity, allowing them to express themselves more effectively (Tsigani & Nikolakopoulou, 2018). Research shows that DS not only enhances speaking skills but also improves listening, reading, and writing abilities, as well as supporting intercultural competence and digital literacy (Zhussupova & Shadiev, 2023). In addition, the storytelling method has proven to make learning more enjoyable, which contributes to an increase in students' motivation and speaking skills (Lucarevschi, 2016). Platforms like YouTube are also recognized for their ability to boost students' confidence and comfort when speaking English, highlighting the importance of utilizing well-known digital tools in language education (Santiana & Marzuki, 2022).

However, although digital storytelling platforms and social media can enhance speaking skills, some educators express concerns about the potential distractions and superficial engagement that may arise from the use of these tools (Cladis, 2020), leading them to recommend a balanced approach in their application in EFL teaching (Aulia, 2021).

Given these concerns, it is crucial for educators to consider the use of digital tools with a thoughtful strategy in EFL instruction (Akayoğlu et al., 2020). The implementation of digital storytelling should be accompanied by clear guidelines and adequate supervision to minimize distractions and ensure that the focus remains on developing speaking skills (Matsiola et al., 2022). Furthermore, effective integration of digital storytelling can be achieved by combining traditional and digital methods (Hossain, 2015), creating a balanced and supportive learning environment (Lewallen et al., 2015).

In this way, digital storytelling not only becomes an innovative tool in language learning but also serves as a bridge between conventional teaching methods and modern technology (Lim & Noor, 2019), which overall enhances students' speaking abilities comprehensively (Mangaleswaran & Aziz, 2019).

Although the benefits are clear, the implementation of Digital Storytelling (DS) also brings several challenges (Purnama et al., 2022). Some educators are concerned about the potential distractions from digital tools that could reduce the effectiveness of teaching if not managed properly (Schmidt 2020). Therefore, a balanced approach is needed in integrating digital tools, including clear guidelines and oversight to ensure that the focus remains on language skill development (Chetty et al., 2018). Although digital tools can enhance effective communication, interpersonal skills, and technological literacy (Falloon, 2020), the success of their implementation requires careful planning to minimize distractions and maximize learning outcomes (Fensie et al., 2024).

Digital storytelling (DS) has great potential to transform the way English is taught as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Akdamar & Sütçü, 2023), particularly in enhancing students' speaking skills (Sakinah, 2019). However, to maximize its impact, educators need to carefully balance the use of this technology with traditional teaching methods (Paudel, 2021), ensuring that every digital tool applied supports broader learning objectives (Rao, 2021). This requires clear guidance, consistent oversight, and ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of DS in developing students' language skills (Kane & Wools, 2019). With a well-planned approach and the right strategy (Gadong & Chavez, 2016), DS will not only enrich the learning experience but also empower students to become more confident and skilled communicators in English (Pellas, 2020).

Considering the challenges and benefits of digital storytelling (DS), it is essential to implement a planned and balanced approach to maximize its potential in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Putri, 2018). For the integration of narrative techniques and technology to be effective, clear guidance and consistent supervision are needed to minimize distractions and ensure learning objectives are achieved (Lawn et al., 2017). Educators need to balance the use of digital tools with traditional teaching methods and regularly evaluate the impact of DS on students' language skills (Youssef et al., 2022). With the right strategies and careful planning, DS will not only enrich the learning experience but also help students become more confident and skilled communicators in English (Gupta, 2019).

My teaching method using real-life stories is Princess Mandalika's Story. Then the student will repeat the agenda with an oral narrative. This method builds students' confidence in their speaking skills by providing visually and auditively attractive media that enhance learning.The study offers insights into how digital narrative can be used in practice in the EFL classroom and how it affects student learning goals.

The study objectively describes the benefits of digital storytelling in improving student oral communication skills with an emphasis on speaking skills. This research provides objective information about the beneficial effects of digital stories on speaker skills through the use of quantitative methodologies.

The study highlights the advantages of technology in education by showing how digital stories can enhance learning and benefit skills development. It improves students' ability to communicate, argue, and engage in conversations in the target language by teaching them how to speak more fluently and creatively.

In conclusion, Digital Storytelling (DS) has proven to be an effective and innovative method for enhancing students' speaking skills in English as a Foreign Language classes. (EFL). By combining narrative techniques with technology, DS not only enhances student engagement and creativity but also strengthens intercultural skills and digital literacy. Although the benefits are clear, it is important for educators to adopt a balanced approach by strategically combining traditional and digital methods.

1.1. Problem Statement

Even with the possible advantages, speaking English remains a challenge for a large number of pupils in EFL classes. In a research involving first-graders, it was found that 23 pupils were either at a good or good enough level, with two students performing really well. The pupils mentioned pronunciation issues and a small vocabulary as reasons why they felt uneasy communicating in English. Additionally, they frequently read presentations from slides since they felt uncomfortable speaking in front of the class in English. This lack of practice and confidence emphasizes the necessity of efficient speaking skill improvement techniques.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate how using digital storytelling in the classroom might greatly enhance students' speaking abilities. The study will objectively show how well digital storytelling techniques improve students' oral communication skills by emphasizing the speaking component. To gather unbiased information about the beneficial effects of digital storytelling on students' speaking abilities, a quantitative methodology will be used.

1.3. Research Questions

1. What effect does digital storytelling have on students' ability to speak in EFL classes?
2. What particular advantages can digital storytelling provide for enhancing students' self-assurance and English language proficiency?
3. How do students feel about using digital storytelling to improve their public speaking skills?

2. Method

This research uses quantitative research. According to Creswell (2003), quantitative research is data collection, in order for data to be assessed and statistically examined.

This quantitative research design is used to:

1. Improve students' English language skills.
2. Doing or telling a real life story is the story of the Mandalika daughter in front of the classroom.
3. Evaluate student speaking skills both before and after engaging in digital narrative activities.
4. Measures the level of improvement in student speaking skills after intervention.

At that time, students did not seem so interested in using English as a means of communication in class because they said it was different from writing, reading, listening and especially speaking. They were afraid to speak English because of some words and problems with English pronunciation. Besides, also that students are still in the learning phase of using English and also students seldom try to use and speak English especially in front of class. Besides, students have problems related to telling stories in English, especially in English language skills. students are very uncomfortable or hesitant when speaking English so they are not sure. Besides, when they make a presentation in front of the class, they still see the slide or read it. Regarding problems in speech skills, there are some technologies that have been surveyed by an English teacher.

Using digital storytelling can also improve school English skills. In digital storytelling usually generate digital stories follow these steps:

1. First, students will watch the video provided by the teacher in the form of a you tube.
2. students will tell the agenda they are watching (YouTube) with audio and video narration in the format of a You tube.
3. After that, the students will say it back in front of the classroom with a YouTube video.

After doing this research, we finally got the result that of the 25 students in the 1st class, only 2 students got very good and the other 23 students got good.

2.1. Sample Description

Table 1. Students Presentation: Pre-Test And Post-Test

No	Students Name	Gender	Profiency Level	
			Pre-Test	**Post-Test**
1	Adinda Fatimah Azzahra	woman	60	80
2	Ahmad FahrurRozi	man	65	80
3	Ahmad Rian Hidayat	man	60	85
4	Ahmad Suwandi	man	58	84
5	Andromeda Andin	woman	65	80
6	AzzahraDewiYandani	woman	70	90
7	Dina Aulia Putri	woman	65	84
8	FikriArdiansyah	man	50	85
9	Flora Ananta	woman	68	80
10	HalmatunZahro	woman	60	88
11	LidyaPratiwi	woman	65	84
12	Lulu HalawatulAzizah	woman	50	80
13	M. DinezalEfendy	man	68	85
14	Maherawati	woman	65	80
15	MaulanAngginSofiani	man	50	70
16	MellysaNurtahira	woman	65	84
17	Meylani Putri Nabila	woman	65	80
18	Muhammad Nazril	man	50	84
19	OktaviaWulandari	woman	65	80
20	RahayuPuspitasari	woman	50	84
21	Rifki Al Hudzaifi	man	65	85
22	RizkaPebriyanti	woman	60	85
23	Sri Warningsih	woman	65	86
24	Surni	woman	50	85
25	Kayla Meilani Putri	woman	60	80

Table 2. Pre-Test And Post-Test Performance

	MEAN	STANDAR DEVIATION	P. VALUES	
			PRE-TEST	**POST-TEST**
PRE-TEST	60.9600	6.94910	0.316	
POST-TEST	83.3200	3.50856		

The average score climbed dramatically from 60,960 (pre-test) to 83,320 (post-test), according to the pre- and post-test data, suggesting an overall improvement in SMAN 1 LABUAPI's remaining performance. The standard deviation also showed improvement after the exam, going from 6.94910 on the pre-test to 3.50856 on the post-test. Additionally, as the P.Value value in the paired T-Test is 0.316 > 0.05, the statistical test value indicates that the data is normally distributed. This means that since it can be demonstrated that there is a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results, hypotension from H1 is accepted while hypotension from H0 is denied.

3. Findings and Discussion

The research results indicate a significant improvement in students' speaking skills through the use of digital storytelling. The alternative hypothesis (H1) is supported, as evidenced by a P value of 0.316, which exceeds the significance threshold of 0.05. The results of this statistic confirm that the observed increase among 25 students from SMAN 1 is significant and not a coincidence.

Although digital storytelling shows promising results, its effectiveness can vary depending on how the storytelling is integrated into teaching strategies and how well students can engage with the content. Although digital narratives make learning more interactive and engaging, the challenges related to their implementation need to be considered. Variations in student adaptation and the need for careful

integration into the curriculum indicate that digital storytelling requires thoughtful implementation, despite its clear benefits.

Overall, this research emphasizes that digital storytelling can significantly enhance speaking skills and encourage student participation in speaking activities. Despite some limitations, these findings support the use of digital narratives in language education to improve student engagement and language proficiency.

4. Conclusion

The study highlights how digital storytelling has a major positive effect on students' speaking abilities in EFL classrooms (English as a Foreign Language). Digital narrative instruction not only increases student interest and engagement, but it also enhances spoken communication abilities. The average score of the SMAN 1 LABUAPI pre- and post-test went from 60,960 to 83,320, indicating a significant improvement in the speaking abilities of the students. The pair T-Test results demonstrate the statistical significance of this rise.

Students are encouraged to narrate the story of the Mandalika princess through the use of digital storytelling, which offers a student-centered approach. This approach not only helps students overcome common obstacles like low vocabulary and pronunciation issues, but it also makes learning more engaging and relevant. When text, audio, and visual components are combined to create a digital story, students' English communication skills improve and they become more confident speakers.

The results of this investigation align with earlier studies conducted by Sinaga et al. (2021) and Kim (2014), which emphasized the pedagogical advantages of digital storytelling. Digital stories help students enhance their speaking abilities in a unique and genuine way by offering visually and auditorily interesting information. This study demonstrates that digital storytelling is an effective teaching technique for languages, improving students' linguistic and technical proficiency. Digital storytelling is an effective way to develop English-speaking skills using digital storylines, since research indicates that it can greatly increase speaking skills for pupils.

Declarations

Author contribution	:	A. J. conducted the data collection and performed the analysis
		H. conceptualize the study and design the experiment
		R.R. contributed to to the interpretation of the result and manscrpt
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