

DIGITAL STORYTELLING AS AN INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGY FOR ENHANCING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract. *This article examines digital storytelling as a contemporary pedagogical technology that enhances student engagement in the process of learning a foreign language. The analysis focuses on the method’s theoretical framework, its role in strengthening motivation and communicative competence, and the significance of multimodal resources in promoting active learning. Drawing on international research and classroom experience, it explores the motivational effects of digital storytelling, its methodological advantages, and its alignment with modern educational requirements. The study outlines concrete examples of digital storytelling practices in English language teaching.*

Keywords: *digital storytelling, student engagement, multimodality, communicative competence.*

INTRODUCTION.

Digital storytelling has gained significant popularity in modern pedagogy due to its ability to integrate multimedia technologies with narrative-based learning. This strategy enables students to express ideas through video, audio, images, and text, thereby strengthening emotional engagement and developing essential 21st-century competencies. As a result, digital storytelling helps learners become confident, creative, and digitally literate individuals.

The concept of digital storytelling was advanced by Bernard Robin, who defines it as a multimedia narrative created by learners to convey personal or academic experiences [Robin B., 2008, 221p.]. Joe Lambert, founder of the Center for Digital Storytelling, emphasizes the importance of the Seven Elements of Digital Storytelling, including point of view, emotional content, and dramatic structure [Lambert J., 2013].

International studies show that digital storytelling increases learner autonomy, enhances project quality, and strengthens motivation [Sadik A., 2008, 129 p.]. Research also demonstrates its impact on multimodal literacy [Greenwood L., 2022, 114 p.], oral fluency development and culturally oriented learning [Beler M., 2023, 80 p.].

In Kazakhstan, digital storytelling is also viewed as a promising educational technology.

Kaprasheva G.T. analyzes the role of digital stories in developing communicative competence among secondary school learners [Kaprasheva G., T., 2020, 35 p.].

Urazbayeva A. highlights increased motivation and creativity when implementing storytelling in English language instruction [Urazbayeva A., 2019, 68 p.].

Suleimenova D. investigates its potential in fostering cultural and media literacy [Suleimenova D., 2021, 209 p.].

Our teaching experience with Intermediate-level students illustrates that digital storytelling effectively supports language development and emotional engagement. Below are five digital projects successfully implemented during English language teaching:

1. Project “My Culture and Traditions”

Students created 1–2-minute video stories using photos of family celebrations, traditional dishes, and national clothing.

Teaching observations:

- increased participation among low-activity students due to personal relevance.
- improved pronunciation through multiple audio recordings.
- expanded vocabulary related to traditions and cultural identity.

This corresponds with Sadik’s findings on motivation gained through personal storytelling. The presence of students from different ethnic backgrounds made the project particularly insightful.

2. Project “Travel Guidebook”

Students designed digital travel guides about a city or landmark using museum websites, travel platforms, and photographs.

Results:

- enhanced monologic speech skills;
- improved information-searching and critical-thinking abilities;
- greater confidence during oral presentations.

This reflects Greenwood’s emphasis on multimodal literacy development.

3. Project “The Most Influential Person in Past/Modern History”

Students created a long-term project-story told from the first-person perspective of a historical or modern influential figure (e.g., Queen Elizabeth II, Abraham Lincoln, Atatürk, Salah-ud-Din).

Benefits:

- development of creative writing;
- balanced engagement with facts and imagination;
- improved monologue structuring.

4. Project “Future Story: My Life in 2035”

Students created digital stories about their future profession, home, and lifestyle using Future Tenses. Aim of the lesson was to consolidate Future Tenses.

Benefits:

- development of extended coherent monologue;
- high personal relevance and engagement.

5. Project “Story Behind the Object”

Students brought personal objects, for example family jewelries, souvenirs, old family photos, and created digital stories about their significance.

Benefits:

- development of intercultural competence;
- improved descriptive and emotional language;
- strong individualization of learning tasks.

This approach supports Beler’s ideas on the cultural and emotional value of digital stories. Therefore, this project is a good example of combining digital storytelling with learning about real cultural elements, which helps make the English lesson more educational and meaningful.

These pedagogical examples confirm that digital storytelling is an effective strategy for increasing motivation and engagement, developing communicative skills, fostering cultural understanding, and enhancing multimodal literacy. It transforms traditional English language instruction into an interactive, meaningful, and culturally rich learning experience. Our teaching practice demonstrates that digital storytelling supports communicative competence, encourages cultural exploration, and aligns with the needs of modern learners.

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