



Teacher Perceptions Towards the Use of Multimodal Digital Storytelling in Teaching Speaking Skills in an EFL Classroom

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Abstract

This study explores teachers' perceptions of the use of multimodal digital storytelling in teaching speaking skills in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. The study aims to examine how the strategy is implemented in speaking instruction and how teachers perceive its effectiveness in supporting students' oral communication. This research employed a qualitative case study design involving two English teachers who have experience integrating this approach into classroom activities. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns related to classroom implementation and perceived benefits. The findings show that teachers apply several stages in the learning process, including introducing storytelling concepts, guiding students in preparing scripts, producing story videos, and presenting the final projects. Through these activities, students combine images, narration, text, and audio while practicing speaking. Teachers reported improvements in students' fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary use, confidence, engagement, and motivation. However, challenges such as limited technological resources, differences in students' digital literacy, and time constraints were also identified. Focusing on teachers' perspectives, this study highlights the pedagogical potential of multimodal storytelling as an interactive and student-centered approach for developing speaking skills in EFL classrooms.

1. Introduction

Speaking is widely recognized as a fundamental skill in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) because it functions as the primary medium for communication and social interaction (Sudarmo, 2021). In many EFL contexts, learners' language proficiency is often reflected in their ability to communicate ideas clearly, accurately, and confidently in spoken form. Speaking competence involves not only linguistic knowledge but also communicative abilities such as fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary use, and grammatical accuracy. Mastery of speaking enables learners to participate actively in academic discussions, social interactions, and broader global communication.

Despite its importance, speaking remains one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners. Many students experience difficulties in expressing their ideas due to limited vocabulary, inaccurate pronunciation, and hesitation in using grammatical structures. In addition to linguistic barriers, psychological factors such as anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and low self-confidence can further limit students' participation in speaking activities (Geria, 2022). As a result, learners may become passive during classroom interaction and show limited willingness to communicate. In some classrooms, speaking instruction is still conducted through conventional practices such as memorized dialogues or scripted presentations, which may not adequately represent authentic communicative situations (Suban, 2021). These approaches can limit opportunities for meaningful interaction and reduce students' motivation to actively practice speaking. Therefore, more engaging and innovative instructional approaches are needed to support meaningful communication and enhance students' confidence in using English.

The rapid development of digital technology has created new opportunities for language learning and teaching. The integration of technology in EFL classrooms enables teachers to utilize multimedia resources, interactive platforms, and collaborative tools that can enrich learning experiences (Suban, 2021). Technology-supported learning environments can provide authentic materials, facilitate communication, and allow students to practice language skills in more flexible and creative ways. In speaking instruction, digital tools may support repeated practice, self-reflection, and creative expression, which can help learners improve their oral communication skills while reducing anxiety associated with speaking activities.

One approach that has gained increasing attention within technology-enhanced language learning is multimodal digital storytelling. Digital storytelling refers to the creation and presentation of stories through digital media by combining multiple modes of communication such as images, narration, written text, audio, video clips, and music (Balaman, 2018). This approach is closely related to the concept of multimodality, which emphasizes that meaning can be constructed through the interaction of different semiotic resources rather than

through language alone. In educational contexts, multimodal digital storytelling encourages students to organize ideas, construct narratives, and present meaningful messages through oral expression.

In speaking instruction, the process of creating digital stories typically involves several stages, including brainstorming ideas, preparing story scripts, practicing narration, and producing digital story videos. These activities allow students to integrate multiple modes while simultaneously developing their speaking skills. Furthermore, digital storytelling encourages creativity, collaboration, and active participation in learning activities (Eisazadeh & Rajendram, 2020). Previous studies have reported that the use of digital storytelling can improve students' fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary development, motivation, and engagement in speaking activities (Fu, Yang, & Yeh, 2022).

Although the potential benefits of digital storytelling in language learning have been widely discussed, many previous studies primarily focus on students' learning outcomes or experimental comparisons. Relatively limited attention has been given to teachers' perspectives regarding how this approach is implemented in real classroom contexts. Teachers play a crucial role in designing learning activities, facilitating the storytelling process, integrating technology, and guiding students throughout the learning experience. Their pedagogical beliefs, technological readiness, and classroom practices strongly influence how digital storytelling functions as a learning strategy.

Addressing this gap, the present study explores teachers' perceptions toward the use of multimodal digital storytelling in teaching speaking skills in an EFL classroom. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on teachers' lived experiences and instructional practices in implementing digital storytelling within authentic classroom settings. By examining teachers' perspectives, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of how the approach is applied, the perceived benefits for students' speaking development, and the challenges encountered during its implementation.

Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) How do teachers implement digital storytelling in teaching speaking skills in an EFL classroom? (2) How do teachers perceive the use of digital storytelling in improving students' speaking skills?

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative research design using a descriptive case study approach to explore teachers' perceptions of the use of multimodal digital storytelling in teaching speaking skills in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences, beliefs, and interpretations rather than to measure variables quantitatively.

The descriptive case study design allowed the researcher to investigate the phenomenon within its real-life educational context and to produce rich and contextualized insights (Yin, 2018). Qualitative inquiry is particularly suitable for examining educational practices and teacher perceptions because it enables a detailed exploration of instructional processes and classroom realities.

The research was conducted in a public senior high school located in Garut, Indonesia. The school implements English as a compulsory subject in the curriculum and supports the integration of technology in learning activities. The learning environment allows students to use digital devices such as smartphones and computers during certain classroom activities, which facilitates the implementation of multimedia-based learning approaches. Multimodal digital storytelling had been applied in several speaking classes where students were required to create and present digital stories as part of their speaking practice.

The participants of this study consisted of two English teachers who teach speaking skills in the senior high school. The teachers were selected through purposive sampling based on specific criteria: (1) actively teaching speaking skills in EFL classes, (2) having experience integrating multimodal digital storytelling in speaking instruction, and (3) being willing to participate in the study. The selected teachers were responsible for teaching several classes at the tenth and eleventh grade levels where digital storytelling activities had been incorporated into classroom instruction.

Purposive sampling is commonly used in qualitative research to select participants who have direct experience with the phenomenon being studied (Etikan & Bala, 2017). By involving teachers who had practical experience with digital storytelling, the study aimed to obtain in-depth insights into instructional strategies, classroom implementation, and perceived benefits and challenges of the approach.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which served as the primary research instrument. Semi-structured interviews are widely used in qualitative research because they allow flexibility while still maintaining alignment with the research objectives (Kallio, Pietila, Johnson, & Kangasniemi, 2017). The interview questions were developed based on relevant literature and theoretical frameworks related to speaking instruction, technology integration, and digital storytelling in language learning.

The interview protocol focused on several aspects, including the stages of implementing digital storytelling in speaking instruction, teachers' perceptions of its impact on students' speaking development (such as fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and confidence), student engagement during the activities, and challenges encountered during the implementation process. Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes and was conducted in a comfortable setting at the school. Prior to the interviews, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their voluntary participation. Written consent was obtained from

each participant, and confidentiality was ensured by anonymizing personal information. The interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' permission to ensure accurate data collection, and the recordings were transcribed verbatim to facilitate systematic analysis.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model of qualitative data analysis proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2019), which consists of three main processes: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. After the interviews were transcribed, the researcher carefully read the transcripts several times to become familiar with the data. The analysis began with an open coding process in which meaningful units of information were identified from the transcripts.

These initial codes were then grouped into broader categories based on similarities in meaning. Through this process, several themes emerged that corresponded with the research questions, including the stages of digital storytelling implementation, perceived benefits for students' speaking development, student engagement, and challenges encountered during classroom practice. The categorized data were then organized and displayed to facilitate interpretation and to identify relationships among themes before drawing conclusions.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, several strategies were applied. Credibility was enhanced through member checking, in which the participants were given the opportunity to review summaries of the interview findings to confirm the accuracy of the interpretations. Dependability was maintained by documenting the research procedures in detail, including the processes of data collection and analysis. Confirmability was supported by grounding interpretations in the participants' statements and maintaining an audit trail of coding decisions and analytical procedures throughout the research process (Nowell, Norris, & Moules, 2017). These procedures helped ensure that the findings were transparent, reliable, and accurately represented the teachers' perspectives on the use of multimodal digital storytelling in teaching speaking skills in the EFL classroom.

3. Result

This section presents the findings obtained from the analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted with English teachers who have experience implementing multimodal digital storytelling in teaching speaking skills in an EFL classroom. The analysis aimed to describe how the approach is implemented in speaking instruction and how teachers perceive its impact on students' speaking development. The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns related to the research questions. Four major themes emerged from the analysis: (1) implementation of multimodal digital storytelling in speaking instruction, (2) teachers' perceptions of its impact on students' speaking

performance, (3) students’ engagement and motivation, and (4) challenges in implementing digital storytelling.

To provide a clearer overview of the findings, the themes and subthemes identified in the analysis are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Themes and Subthemes

Theme	Subthemes
Implementation of multimodal digital storytelling	Introducing storytelling concepts; script preparation; digital production; classroom presentation
Impact on students’ speaking performance	Improvement in fluency; pronunciation awareness; vocabulary development; increased confidence
Students’ engagement and motivation	Enjoyment of multimedia storytelling; creative expression; collaborative learning
Implementation challenges	Technical skills; time constraints; access to technology

Implementation of Multimodal Digital Storytelling in Speaking Instruction

The interview findings indicate that teachers implement multimodal digital storytelling through several structured stages designed to support students’ speaking development. These stages generally include introducing storytelling concepts, preparing story scripts, producing digital storytelling videos, and presenting the final projects in class.

At the beginning of the activity, teachers introduce the concept of digital storytelling and provide examples of storytelling videos to help students understand how stories can be presented through narration, images, and music. As one teacher explained:

“First, I show examples of digital storytelling videos so students can understand how stories combine pictures, narration, and music.” (Teacher 1)

After understanding the concept, students move to the preparation stage where they develop story ideas and write short scripts to guide their narration. Teachers assist students in organizing ideas and selecting appropriate vocabulary. “Students usually write a short script before recording their story. It helps them organize what they want to say.” (Teacher 2)

In the production stage, students record their narration and combine it with multimedia elements such as images and background music using digital devices such as smartphones or laptops. Finally, students present their completed digital storytelling projects in front of the class. During this stage, teachers provide

feedback on pronunciation, fluency, and clarity of expression, allowing students to practice speaking in a meaningful and communicative context.

Teachers' Perceptions of the Impact on Students' Speaking Performance

Teachers generally perceive multimodal digital storytelling as an effective strategy for supporting students' speaking development. According to the interview data, this approach contributes to improvements in several aspects of speaking performance, particularly fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary use, and confidence.

Teachers observed that students tend to practice their narration multiple times before submitting their final video, which helps improve fluency.

"Students usually practice their narration many times before submitting the final video, so their speaking becomes more fluent." (Teacher 1)

Pronunciation awareness also improved because students listened to their own recordings and corrected mistakes.

"When students listen to their recordings, they notice pronunciation mistakes and try to improve them." (Teacher 2)

In addition, the process of writing storytelling scripts encouraged students to search for new vocabulary to express their ideas more effectively. Teachers also reported increased confidence among students, particularly those who previously felt shy when speaking in front of the class. The possibility of repeating recordings helped reduce anxiety and allowed students to focus on improving their speaking performance.

Students' Engagement and Motivation

Another important finding relates to the increased level of student engagement during digital storytelling activities. Teachers reported that students generally showed enthusiasm and interest when participating in the activity.

Students enjoyed creating storytelling videos because the activity resembled digital content creation that they often encounter outside the classroom.

"Students enjoy making storytelling videos because it feels similar to creating content for social media." (Teacher 1)

The use of multimedia elements also encouraged students to express creativity by selecting images, adding background music, and designing visual elements that supported their stories.

"Students try to make their stories more creative by adding pictures, music, and visual effects." (Teacher 2)

In some cases, students also collaborated with their peers to discuss story ideas or assist each other during the recording and editing process. Through this collaborative process, students not only practiced speaking but also developed teamwork and communication skills.

Challenges in Implementing Digital Storytelling

Despite the positive perceptions reported by teachers, several challenges were identified during the implementation process. One challenge relates to students' technical skills. Some students were unfamiliar with video editing applications and required additional guidance from teachers.

"Some students do not know how to use editing applications, so I need to guide them step by step." (Teacher 2)

Time constraints were also mentioned as a limitation. Digital storytelling projects require several stages such as script writing, recording narration, editing videos, and presenting the final product, which may require more time than traditional speaking activities.

"The activity takes more time because students must prepare scripts, record their voice, and edit the video." (Teacher 1)

Another challenge involves unequal access to technological resources. Not all students have smartphones, laptops, or stable internet connections, which may affect the production process. Nevertheless, teachers believe that these challenges can be addressed by using simple applications, providing clear guidance, and encouraging collaborative work among students.

4. Discussion

This section interprets the findings of the study by connecting the interview results with relevant theories and previous research on digital storytelling, speaking instruction, and technology integration in language learning. Rather than repeating the results, the discussion provides deeper interpretation of how multimodal digital storytelling functions as a pedagogical approach in EFL speaking instruction and how teachers perceive its potential and challenges.

The Implementation of Multimodal Digital Storytelling in Teaching Speaking

The findings show that teachers implement multimodal digital storytelling through a sequence of structured learning stages, including introducing storytelling concepts, guiding students in script preparation, producing multimedia stories, and presenting the final products. This process reflects the instructional structure of digital storytelling described by Balaman (2018), who explains that digital storytelling typically involves stages of story development, multimedia production, and story sharing.

From a pedagogical perspective, these stages demonstrate how digital storytelling can function as a form of project-based learning in speaking instruction. Instead of practicing isolated speaking drills, students engage in a more complex learning process that involves planning, organizing ideas, producing content, and presenting their work. This approach aligns with communicative language teaching principles that emphasize meaningful communication and learner participation in authentic tasks (Sudarmo, 2021). Through storytelling activities, students are

encouraged to express ideas creatively while practicing oral communication in a purposeful context.

The practice of showing digital storytelling examples before students begin their projects also reflects principles of multimedia learning. According to Fu, Yang, and Yeh (2022), learners can better understand concepts when information is presented through multiple channels such as visual and auditory input. By observing examples of storytelling videos, students are able to recognize how images, narration, and music can work together to convey meaning. This modeling stage helps learners understand both the narrative structure and the language needed to communicate their stories.

Another important aspect highlighted in the findings is the script-writing stage. Preparing a script allows students to plan their speech and organize their ideas before performing the speaking task. Eisazadeh and Rajendram (2020) emphasize that pre-speaking preparation plays an essential role in supporting learners' oral production, particularly for students who may feel anxious about spontaneous speaking. In this study, script preparation functioned as a scaffolding strategy that helped students structure their narratives and select appropriate vocabulary.

Furthermore, the integration of images, narration, text, and sound during the production stage reflects the concept of multimodality in language learning. Suban (2021) explains that communication in contemporary digital environments often involves the interaction of multiple semiotic resources. By combining these modes, digital storytelling allows learners to express meaning beyond language alone. This multimodal environment can support learners with different learning preferences and encourage more creative forms of expression.

Overall, the findings suggest that multimodal digital storytelling can provide a structured yet flexible learning environment that supports speaking development. The integration of planning, multimedia production, and presentation creates opportunities for meaningful language use while simultaneously fostering creativity and learner autonomy.

Teachers' Perceptions of Digital Storytelling in Improving Speaking Performance

The results also indicate that teachers perceive digital storytelling as beneficial for improving several aspects of students' speaking performance, particularly fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary development, and confidence. These findings support previous studies that highlight the potential of storytelling-based learning for enhancing oral communication skills (Fu et al., 2022).

One important interpretation of the findings relates to the role of repeated practice in improving speaking fluency. Teachers observed that students tend to rehearse their narration multiple times before producing the final recording. This repeated practice provides opportunities for learners to refine their speech and

reduce hesitation. Clement and Murugavel (2018) argue that fluency develops through sustained practice in meaningful communication tasks. Digital storytelling naturally facilitates this process because students must rehearse their narration in order to produce a clear and coherent story.

The findings also suggest that digital storytelling can enhance pronunciation awareness. When students listen to their recorded narration, they become more conscious of how they pronounce words and are able to self-correct errors. This process reflects the role of reflective learning in language development. Clement and Murugavel (2018) note that self-monitoring and feedback are important components of pronunciation improvement. In digital storytelling activities, feedback can occur both through self-evaluation and teacher guidance during the presentation stage.

In addition, the storytelling process encourages students to expand their vocabulary as they attempt to express ideas more clearly in their narratives. According to Khan et al. (2018), vocabulary development is more effective when learners use words in meaningful contexts rather than memorizing isolated lists. Story creation provides such a context, as students must select appropriate words to construct coherent and engaging narratives.

Another key finding concerns students' confidence in speaking English. Teachers observed that students who are usually hesitant to speak in class felt more comfortable recording their narration because they could repeat the recording if they made mistakes. This suggests that digital storytelling may reduce speaking anxiety by providing a less threatening environment for oral practice. Suban (2021) explains that reducing learners' anxiety can increase their willingness to communicate and participate in speaking activities.

The findings also indicate that digital storytelling increases students' motivation and engagement. Teachers reported that students enjoy the creative process of producing storytelling videos, especially because it resembles digital content creation commonly seen on social media. Charoula, Nicos, and Andri (2016) emphasize that motivation plays a crucial role in language learning success. When students perceive learning activities as meaningful and enjoyable, they are more likely to invest effort in developing their language skills.

Digital Pedagogy and Teacher Readiness

While teachers expressed positive perceptions of digital storytelling, the findings also highlight the importance of teacher readiness in implementing technology-based learning activities. Teachers noted that not all educators feel confident in using digital tools or guiding students through multimedia production processes. This issue reflects a broader challenge in technology integration within language education.

According to Baran, Sari, and Tondeur (2019), effective technology integration requires teachers to develop Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), which involves the ability to combine subject knowledge, pedagogical strategies, and technological tools. Teachers who lack training in digital pedagogy may find it difficult to design meaningful technology-based learning activities or to support students during multimedia production tasks.

The findings also show that digital storytelling requires teachers to play multiple roles, including facilitator, technical guide, and language instructor. Teachers must support students not only in language use but also in navigating digital tools and managing project-based activities. Therefore, professional development opportunities focusing on digital pedagogy and multimedia learning tools are essential for helping teachers effectively implement digital storytelling in language classrooms.

Pedagogical Implications for EFL Teaching

The findings of this study provide several pedagogical implications for EFL teachers who wish to integrate digital storytelling into speaking instruction. First, teachers should provide clear guidance and structured stages when implementing digital storytelling activities. Introducing examples of digital stories and explaining the stages of story development can help students better understand the task and reduce confusion during the learning process.

Second, digital storytelling can be integrated gradually into speaking instruction. Teachers may begin with simple storytelling tasks, such as short video narrations, before progressing to more complex multimedia projects. This gradual approach can help students develop both speaking skills and digital literacy simultaneously.

Third, collaborative learning can enhance the effectiveness of digital storytelling activities. Encouraging students to work in pairs or small groups can support idea development, facilitate peer learning, and reduce technical difficulties during the production process. Collaboration also allows students to practice communication skills during the project development stage.

Another important implication relates to teacher professional development. Schools and educational institutions should provide training programs that support teachers in developing digital pedagogical skills. Workshops focusing on multimedia learning tools, video editing applications, and digital storytelling strategies can improve teachers' confidence and competence in integrating technology into language teaching.

Finally, teachers should consider using clear assessment criteria when evaluating digital storytelling projects. Assessment rubrics can help teachers evaluate both language performance and creative elements of students' stories. As suggested by Hamilton, Rubin, Tarrant, and Gleason (2019), well-designed rubrics provide transparent expectations and guide students in improving their speaking

performance.

Limitations of the Study

Despite providing valuable insights into teachers' perceptions of multimodal digital storytelling in speaking instruction, this study has several limitations. First, the study involved a small number of participants from a single educational context. As a result, the findings may not fully represent the perspectives of teachers in different schools or regions.

Second, the study relied primarily on interview data to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences. Although interviews provide rich qualitative insights, the findings may be influenced by participants' subjective perspectives. Additional data sources such as classroom observations or student performance assessments could provide more comprehensive evidence regarding the effectiveness of digital storytelling.

Third, the study focused mainly on teachers' perspectives rather than directly examining students' measurable learning outcomes. Future studies may combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to investigate how digital storytelling influences students' speaking performance more systematically.

Finally, technological factors such as access to digital devices and internet connectivity may vary across educational contexts. These factors may influence the feasibility of implementing digital storytelling in other schools. Future research involving larger participant groups and multiple data sources would help develop a more comprehensive understanding of the role of digital storytelling in supporting speaking development in EFL classrooms.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to explore teachers' perceptions toward the use of multimodal digital storytelling in teaching speaking skills in an EFL classroom. Based on the findings obtained from semi-structured interviews with English teachers, the study shows that multimodal digital storytelling is implemented through several structured instructional stages, including introducing storytelling concepts, guiding students in preparing story scripts, producing digital storytelling videos, and presenting the final stories in class. These stages provide opportunities for students to practice speaking while integrating various multimodal elements such as images, narration, text, and audio.

The findings also indicate that teachers generally perceive multimodal digital storytelling as a beneficial instructional strategy for improving students' speaking performance. According to the teachers' perspectives, digital storytelling helps students develop several aspects of speaking skills, including fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and speaking confidence. The opportunity to rehearse and record their narration allows students to practice speaking repeatedly, which supports the development of their oral communication skills.

Additionally, the integration of multimedia elements increases students' engagement and motivation in participating in speaking activities.

However, several challenges were also identified during the implementation of digital storytelling in the classroom. These challenges include limited technological resources, students' varying levels of digital literacy, and time constraints in completing digital storytelling projects. Despite these limitations, teachers still consider digital storytelling as a valuable learning strategy that can support more interactive and creative speaking instruction in EFL classrooms.

This study also has several limitations. First, the number of participants involved in the study was relatively small and limited to teachers in a specific educational context, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Second, the study relied mainly on interview data to explore teachers' perceptions without incorporating additional data sources such as classroom observations or student performance assessments. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as context-specific insights rather than universal conclusions about the effectiveness of digital storytelling in all EFL settings.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed for both teaching practice and future research. For English teachers, it is recommended to integrate multimodal digital storytelling as part of speaking instruction in order to create more engaging and meaningful learning experiences. Teachers should provide clear guidance and structured stages during the storytelling process, including topic selection, script preparation, multimedia production, and presentation. In addition, teachers may encourage collaborative work among students to support both language development and digital literacy skills.

Educational institutions are also encouraged to provide adequate technological support and professional development programs for teachers. Training related to digital storytelling tools, multimedia learning strategies, and technology integration in language teaching can help teachers implement digital storytelling more effectively in the classroom.

For future research, it is recommended that researchers involve a larger number of participants and conduct studies in different educational contexts to gain a broader understanding of teachers' perceptions and practices related to digital storytelling. Future studies may also combine multiple data collection methods such as classroom observations, student interviews, and speaking performance assessments to obtain more comprehensive findings. Additionally, further research could explore students' perspectives on digital storytelling and examine its long-term impact on the development of speaking skills in EFL learning environments.

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