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**ПІДВИЩЕННЯ МОВЛЕННЄВИХ НАВИЧОК СТУДЕНТІВ  
ШЛЯХОМ ВИКОРИСТАННЯ ЦИФРОВОГО СТОРІТЕЛІНГУ  
У ВИКЛАДАННІ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ В УНІВЕРСИТЕТІ**

**ENHANCING STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS BY USING DIGITAL  
STORYTELLING IN TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE AT THE UNIVERSITY**

**Iryna SHKOLA,**

Candidate of Philological Sciences,  
Associate Professor

[ireneshkola@gmail.com](mailto:ireneshkola@gmail.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1455-6371>

**Bohdana SALIUK,**

Candidate of Philological Sciences,  
Associate Professor

[bohdanasaliuk@gmail.com](mailto:bohdanasaliuk@gmail.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9952-2399>

*Berdiansk State Pedagogical  
University,*

✉ 4, Schmidt st., Berdiansk,  
Zaporizhzhia region, 71100, Ukraine

**Ірина ШКОЛА,**

кандидат філологічних наук,  
доцент

**Богдана САЛЮК,**

кандидат філологічних наук,  
доцент

*Бердянський державний  
педагогічний університет,*

✉ вул. Шмідта, 4, м. Бердянськ,  
Запорізька обл., 71100, Україна

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**ABSTRACT**

*The article is dedicated to the method of digital storytelling in teaching the English language to higher education establishments, in particular enhancing students' speaking ability which is seen as an interaction and social and situation-based activity. The significance of speaking of learners of English as a second (foreign) language is out of doubt whereas it becomes the dominant tool for communication. Therefore, the necessity to teach students to use language as a communicative means rather than to inform them about the language leads educators to implementation of modern teaching methods.*

*Storytelling as a teaching method has been confidently placed within English teachers' work for the last two decades and recommended as quite effective and handy which assists to reduce students' psychological barriers to speaking such as anxiety to perform in public and lack of motivation. It is noticed in the article that several constant and traditional story plots (elementary, butterfly effect or groundhog day, Cinderella syndrome, quest, etc.) are well-known and easily recognizable so teachers can use them to create a comfortable learning environment aimed to support learners' speaking skills and, as such, focused mostly on their development.*

*The fact that storytelling has great potential while digital storytelling integrates the traditional art of oral storytelling with the technology available in the twenty-first-century classroom is highlighted in the article. This facilitates the process of information perception by young people with clip thinking because the visualization attracts their attention and forms interest in one or another topic or discipline in general. Digital storytelling is mentioned as the practice of combining narrative with digital content,*

*including images, sound, and video to create a digital story using online platforms or appropriate software. Digital storytelling might be incorporated in higher education both working offline and during distance or blended learning, either to introduce new material, encourage conversation, and make abstract or conceptual topics easier to understand.*

**Key words:** *digital storytelling, method, speaking skills, higher education.*

**Introduction.** Due to globalization English has become an international language of communication. EL learners are required not only to read and understand messages in a written form but also to understand messages presented orally, understand the content of speech and express their thoughts.

In this aspect, we consider speaking as an integral part of people's daily life because speaking is seen as an interaction and social and situation-based activity, which language learners develop because they should use language for communication instead of learning about the language. In this case, digital storytelling can be really helpful because storytelling has the power to encourage students to explore their unique expressiveness and can heighten a student's ability to communicate and express their thoughts and feelings. Storytelling is a synthetic approach to teaching and learning, combining multiple web sites, practices, and social media.

Storytelling as a teaching method plays an essential role in the sphere of interest of many scientists from different countries. Pedagogical works since the 2010s have focused on the ways of introducing the storytelling method, including the digital one, into education at all levels. Thus, Australian scientists (Najat Smeda, Eva Dakich, and Nalin Sharda) created and tested the e-Learning Digital Storytelling (eLDiSt) framework, which is considered a pedagogical model in the context of a constructivist approach to education. Alterio (2001), N. Bondarenko (2019), H. Hych (2015), A. Karnaukhova (2021), and Mukminatus Zuhriyah (2017) characterize storytelling as an effective teaching method that helps to develop speaking skills. Abdelmageed and El-Naggar (2018) found that digital storytelling integrates the traditional art of oral storytelling with the technology available in the twenty-first-century classroom. Amelia and Abidin (2018) found out the positive effects of tablet-based digital storytelling on English language learning among young ESL learners. L. Panchenko tells about digital storytelling in adult education (2020).

Alterio (2001) wrote that «to learn through storytelling is to take seriously the human need to make meaning from experience, to communicate that meaning to others, and, in the process, learn about ourselves and the worlds in which we reside» [4]. In general, most of the studies on digital storytelling and speaking skills focus on secondary or elementary education, but the detailed examination of using of storytelling in higher education indicates that it requires further details and experimenting. This study attempted to address this gap and examine the relationship between university students' engagement in digital storytelling and their speaking skills and motivation when learning English as a foreign language

**The purpose of the article** is to investigate digital storytelling as an innovative method, in particular in teaching English to students of higher education, the application of which will contribute to developing their speaking skills.

**Research methods and techniques.** The research used the method of analysis and synthesis of pedagogical and methodological literature in order to highlight the concept of digital storytelling, its potential in the educational process, in particular when teaching foreign languages, as well as the observation method (the effectiveness of learning material by students thanks to digital storytelling).

**Results and discussions.** Speaking skills are considered important skills, however, many facts show that many students avoid speaking using the target language. It can be influenced by many factors such as anxiety and lack of motivation. The first is strongly linked to speaking performances because the students should perform in front of many people. Therefore, teachers should create a situation of success for their students to make them confident. In this case, storytelling has great potential and digital storytelling integrates the traditional art of oral storytelling with the technology available in the twenty-first-century classroom. The last is in the sphere of interest of modern students and engages them in the learning process. We have to emphasize that technological developments have changed storytelling's affordances. New digital tools have vanished the barriers to creating media, including capturing, editing, and repurposing. Students can add to their digital stories hypertext, links to locative media, and games.

Shkola and Saliuk wrote that «The three-component structure of storytelling, which enables the creation of actual stories, is determined by the presence of a character(s), intrigue/conflict, and plot» [2 : 378]. This is completely correlated and even based on the standards of archaic storytelling – myths and fairy tales, the primary purpose of which was educational and didactic, namely the transfer of experience and a list of social rules of behavior, corresponding prohibitions, and incentives. There are several constant plots that teachers can use: Elementary plot, Butterfly Effect/Groundhog Day, Cinderella Syndrome/Success Story, and Quest/Detective.

*The Elementary plot* is a classic plot that is the basis for the rest of the plots. It occurs in most of the fairy tales we know.

Structure: Protagonist – Goal – Obstacles on the way to the goal (various problems) – How to overcome obstacles (various means) – Result.

It is used to motivate students, as well as for mentoring, explanation of the process or phenomenon, and selection of means of solving the problem (task).

*Butterfly Effect* (or so-called Groundhog Day) is a «what if...» plot. To achieve the goal, the hero must learn life lessons and realize the right strategy.

Structure: Hero – Goal – Schemes of actions of the hero and return to the starting point – Results, depending on the actions of the hero – Choosing the right strategy of actions (learning lessons, correcting mistakes) – Final positive result. The teacher involves students in the discussion process during the story.

*Cinderella Syndrome* (or so-called Success Story) is a story where the hero moves to new conditions or a new level of life. The hero was poor – became rich, was ugly – became beautiful. In addition, students should answer the question: How did he/she do it?

Structure: Protagonist – New situation and conditions the hero finds himself in – Appearance of problems/appearance of enemies – Events of the

hero/manifestations of positive qualities of the hero – Help of friends – Happy resolution of the issues – Result (final transition to a new level).

Examples: the fairy tale «Cinderella», and the film «Beauty».

The main purpose of using this plot are motivation, process explanation, comparison of processes and phenomena, selection of problem-solving tools, and revealing the evolution of the process.

Features: active use of visual aids (presentation, mind-map, infographics, video inserts, etc.) to enhance the effect of the story; clear «Before» and «After» levels; the presence of anti-heroes (good Cinderella – evil sisters).

*Quest or Detective* is the plot about the hero who starts the journey and solves various problems. This plot can be traced in such works as «Captain Grant's Children», «The Snow Queen», «The 12 Labors of Hercules», «The Wizard of Oz» and others.

Structure: Protagonist – Goal – Locations (quest points) – Solving certain problems in each Location – Achievement of mini-results – Achievement of the main goal.

It is used to model problem situations; solve various analytical tasks; practice skills and abilities; clarification the procedure. Using listed activities helps teachers to create a learning environment aimed to support learners' speaking skills and, as such, it focuses mostly on their development.

As a part of speaking activities in the class, storytelling is also an effective teaching tool that enables students to focus on story structure. Storytelling is a procedure that empowers a student to play a large role in reconstructing stories. It underlines both social and academic development. Speaking is a crucial part of second language learning and teaching. Moreover, teaching speaking is indeed really different, unlike teaching listening, writing, and reading, because speaking needs a habit formation because it is real communication.

Modern teachers agree that students should learn to speak a foreign language by interacting with each other. In this case, students should master several speaking components', such as vocabulary and fluency. Also, English teachers should be creative in developing their teaching process to create a good atmosphere, improve the students' speaking skills, give attention to the speaking components and make the English lesson more exciting.

In this case, digital storytelling can be used as a multimedia tool in language learning to help students to improve their foreign language speaking skills using technology to tell the story in their own words and voice [10], and as such, it is a powerful learning tool. It is one of the promising ways of using information and communication technologies in education. Digital storytelling works within the educational standards of many countries, including international standards of educational technologies ISTE Standards regarding the formation of students' and teachers' qualities of creativity and innovation, communication and cooperation, research and information literacy, formation of critical thinking, solving problems, qualities of digital citizens, fluent use of technologies and content.

The difference between digital storytelling and traditional is the digitization of stories, and the use of computer programs and Internet platforms to create visual content. This facilitates the process of information perception by young people with clip thinking because the visualization of information attracts their attention and forms interest in one or another topic or discipline in general. Digital storytelling from our point of view is the practice of combining narrative with digital content, including images, sound, and video to create a comic using online platforms (Canva, animoto.com, prezi.com, Jamboard), software (PowerPoint) or to create a short movie. For example, the free tool My StoryMaker allows users to create a simple story in the form of a children's book by choosing the main character, his goal, and the objects that he wants to find, get, etc. With the help of the StoryBird service, you can project stories with diverse styles, in particular in the style of cartoonist H. Bidstrup.

Pedagogical benefits and opportunities are evident, most particularly in terms of teaching students to be critical, creative consumers and producers of digital media.

When implementing digital storytelling, it is worth using a variety of tools such as infographics, scribing, mind maps, comics and various types of videos (explainers, animations), interactive presentations, etc. The choice of the tool depends on the topic and goals of the lesson, the content, and most importantly, the creativity and technical skills of the teacher or student during active learning. Developing their projects (stories) motivates students and allows them to express their creativity so storytelling not only enhances their speaking abilities but also has a considerable effect on students' motivation toward language learning in general and speaking skills in particular.

Teachers can use digital storytelling both when working in the classroom (offline) and during distance or blended learning. Digital stories can be used in higher education to introduce new material, encourage conversation, and make abstract or conceptual topics easier to understand. Using multimedia in the classroom, according to Bernard R. Robin [6], assists with memorizing new knowledge and comprehending complex subjects. Students who make digital stories are taught to organize their thoughts, voice their opinions, ask questions, develop narratives, and share their ideas and information in a unique and relevant manner.

Digital Storytelling can be used as individual or group work. When students work in groups they are expected to discuss the topic and the assignment collaboratively and communicate actively in a process of making a story, and share duties (speaker, note-taker, leader, etc.). Collaborative activities in digital storytelling enhance students' understanding and communication skills. When students speak using an animated Character, they develop their imagination and improve their pronunciation, fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension. Moreover, if teachers use storytelling in accordance with Bloom's system of learning outcomes this teaching method contributes to the improvement of learning.

The procedure of teaching speaking through the use of digital storytelling according to Frazel (8, 20) divides the process of digital storytelling into three stages:

preparation, production, and presentation. Active group discussions while they produce their stories allow students to agree or disagree, and mutually criticize reasoning, allowing them to take advantage of the social aspect of learning with the ultimate objective of allowing members of the small group to 'scaffold' one another.

Analysis of scientific sources [1-10] showed that experts in the pedagogy of different countries who used digital storytelling believe that digital storytelling: allows learners to construct their own understanding or experience work in the field of content; promotes joint activities and work in groups; contributes to the organization of discussion in the classroom and in the audience; helps to form problem-solving and critical thinking skills; helps learners understand complex ideas; promotes familiarity with new content.

So, we can note the powerful potential of the method of digital storytelling in education. At the same time, we should note the insufficiency of the involvement of teaching staff in the use of such technology. The Poll of scientific and pedagogical workers of Berdyansk State Pedagogical University and in-service secondary teachers of various specialties, conducted during training courses at Berdyansk State Pedagogical University in 2021-2022 showed that only about a quarter of the respondents practiced and practice this method of teaching.

Results of over 2 years of practice have shown that digital storytelling helped students to improve their oral skills while practicing their speech during the creation of digital history. Students of Berdyansk State Pedagogical University commented on their work and showed that they were more active and self-directed in the learning process, which boosted motivation and involvement. 76 respondents participated in this experiment in 2020-2022.

*Table 1*

**The average mean score of the students' speaking fluency**

Indicators	Mean Score		The Improvement (%)
	Pre-test	Post-test	
Fluency	64	82	28%

Table 1 above showed that the score of fluency in expressing ideas was improved (28%) from the mean score 64 in pre-test to be 82 in post-test. Significantly different. It was observed that the research participants were motivated to learn English and speak it making digital stories because during the COVID-19 lockdown and online learning in the War period the only technology accessible to Berdyansk students was their smartphones because the town was occupied.

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### **АНОТАЦІЯ**

*Стаття присвячена методу цифрового сторітелінгу у викладанні англійської мови у закладах вищої освіти, зокрема вдосконаленню мовленнєвих здібностей студентів, що розглядаються як взаємодія та соціально-ситуаційна діяльність. Значення спілкування для тих, хто вивчає англійську як другу (іноземну) мову, не викликає сумнівів, оскільки мова стає домінуючим інструментом спілкування. Тому необхідність навчити учнів користуватися мовою як засобом спілкування, а не інформувати їх про мову спонукає педагогів до впровадження сучасних методів навчання.*

*Сторітелінг як метод навчання впевнено входить до практики вчителів англійської мови протягом останніх двох десятиліть і рекомендований як досить ефективний і зручний, який допомагає зменшити психологічні такі бар'єри учнів щодо мовлення: тривога виступати на публіці та відсутність мотивації. У статті зазначається, що кілька постійних і традиційних сюжетів (елементарний, ефект метелика чи день бабака, синдром Попелюшки, квест тощо) добре відомі та легко впізнавані, тому викладачі можуть використовувати їх для створення комфортного освітнього середовища, спрямованого на підтримку мовленнєвих навичок студентів і, як такого, що зосереджений переважно на їх розвитку.*

*У статті підкреслюється той факт, що сторітелінг має великий потенціал, тоді як цифровий сторітелінг об'єднує традиційне мистецтво усного оповідання з технологіями, доступними в класі двадцять першого століття. Це полегшує процес сприйняття інформації молодими людьми з кліповим мисленням, оскільки візуалізація привертає їх увагу та формує інтерес до тієї чи іншої теми чи дисципліни в цілому. Цифровий сторітелінг – практика поєднання наративу з цифровим вмістом, включаючи зображення, звук і відео, для створення цифрової історії за допомогою онлайн-платформ або відповідного програмного забезпечення. Цифровий сторітелінг може бути включений у вищу освіту як в режимі офлайн, так і під час дистанційного або змішаного навчання для подання нового матеріалу, заохочення до розмови, полегшення розуміння абстрактних чи концептуальних тем.*

**Ключові слова:** *цифровий сторітелінг, метод, навички говоріння, вища освіта.*