

## DIGITAL STORYTELLING: A NEW POWERFUL STRATEGY IN TEACHING SPEAKING SKILL

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to share ideas about digital storytelling and its implementation in teaching speaking. Digital storytelling is a strategy that can develop the university students' speaking skill through performance by telling a story and record it. This approach is different from traditional storytelling in terms of the availability of revising process and heavy use of technology. The use of digital storytelling as an approach to integrate ICT in the learning and teaching process can make the students become more creative. This paper also provides step-by-step technical procedures for implementing digital storytelling, namely developing the story and script, designing storyboard, producing the story by recording the video, getting feedback from friends and teacher, revising the story, and publishing their work in YouTube.

**Keywords:** *digital storytelling, speaking skill, ICT based*

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### INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the language skills that should be mastered by the students. They need to develop their proficiency in speaking in order to make them become more successful in learning because the goal of teaching speaking is that they can use the language communicatively and effectively. Harmer (2007) says that speaking is "the ability to speak fluently and presupposes not only knowledge of language features, but also the ability to process information and language on the spot".

Some previous studies show some students may find difficulties in speaking English because of several factors. First, they lack of confidence because they are afraid of making mistakes and they lack of adequate vocabulary (Fauzan, 2014). Second, the students' knowledge is not sufficiently automated to ensure fluency and accuracy. The students also have limited knowledge on the English components including pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary due to the limited time in learning English (Eviyuliwati, 1997 cited in Cahyono 2004). Third, Ihsan (1999) reported that students frequently make errors such as the use of part of speech, syntactical construction, choice of words, and intonation.

The abovementioned problems can be solved by using an innovative strategy involving technology in order to help the students improve their speaking skill. Technology is one of the most important tools in teaching and learning activity, and it has essential role in fostering 21st century skills. Thus, the teacher should consider using alternative strategy involving digital technology in teaching speaking, for example digital storytelling. Afrilyasanti (2009) finds that teaching speaking by using digital storytelling is an effective strategy to overcome the students' problem.

There are some previous studies showing that the implementation of digital storytelling in EFL speaking classes could effectively boost students' vocabulary, develop sentence complexity, and improve pronunciation (Abdel-Hack & Helwa, 2004; Kim, 2014). A study conducted by Kim (2014) regarding the use of digital storytelling to improve EFL learners' oral proficiency revealed that participants were excited to practice pronunciation in digital storytelling project "because they could check and assess their speaking after listening to their own recordings". As reported by one participant in Kim's (2014) digital storytelling class, the recording program "was very flexible

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and convenient since she could record her speaking many times as well as monitor it, thus helping to improve her speaking”.

This paper presents ideas and provides information about digital storytelling that can be implemented in teaching speaking. It also discusses ways to implement the strategy step by step, the advantages as well as the challenges of digital storytelling. This paper will be beneficial for teachers/practitioners who want to teach speaking for university students.

### Teaching Speaking as a Tool for Communication

The Indonesian National Standards for Foreign Language Learning (2006) underscored the importance of developing language learners’ communicative competence in the foreign language learning process. Communication is one of the five content goals for foreign language learning put forward in the National Standards (2006). These are communication (communicate in a foreign language), cultures (learn knowledge and understand other cultures), connections (connect with other disciplines and acquire information), comparison (develop insight into the nature of language and culture), and communities (participate in multilingual communities and cultures at home and around the world).

Communicative proficiency implies that learning to speak English requires the students not only to know the grammatical rules but also to know how to use the language in appropriate context. In other words, “effective oral communication requires the ability to use the language appropriately in social interactions” (Shumin, 2002). According to Canale and Swain (1980), communicative competence includes four components namely grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence.

In speaking activity, grammatical competence can help the students to understand better and use the language more appropriately and accurately. Therefore, it can make the students become more confident in using the language. Another component is sociolinguistic competence. Savignon (1983) says that the students should understand the social context in which language is used. This includes the roles of the participants, the information they share, and the function of interaction. Additionally, the students also need to develop their discourse competence. Luciana and Aruan (2005) believe that by developing the students’ discourse competence the students can utilize the basic elements of spoken discourse in English involving not only full linguistic properties but also the knowledge of proposition, context, and sociocultural norms underlying the speech. The last is strategic competence which can enable the students to keep the conversation going.

### Digital Storytelling: a Teaching Strategy to Teach Speaking

Champion (2013) states that storytelling is an oral activity where language and gestures are used in a colorful way to create scenes in a sequence. Storytelling has been widely used to help students in improving their speaking skill. It can help students to be more confident in expressing themselves spontaneously and creatively. Storytelling is not new strategy to teach speaking but the idea of digital storytelling is new (Meadows 2003). There are some differences between traditional storytelling and digital storytelling as shows in Table 1.

**Table 1** The differences between traditional storytelling and digital storytelling

<b>Traditional Storytelling</b>	<b>Digital Storytelling</b>
The students do not use technology to perform their story	The students use technology in performing a story by recording and editing the video
The students cannot evaluate their performances and check their	The students can use video recording that can help them evaluate their own speaking

pronunciation, grammar, and intonation.	performance.
The students cannot revise and publish their work.	The students can revise their work based on the teacher's and other students' feedback and they can publish their work in YouTube.

Digital storytelling has become a new pedagogical endeavor that emerged the use of digital technologies including digital cameras and editing software. The use of digital storytelling can improve students' speaking skill because they can tell, record, edit, and publish a story (Wang & Zhan, 2010). According to Porter (2005), digital storytelling is the combination of the ancient art of oral storytelling with a palette of technical tools to weave personal stories using digital images, graphics, music, and sound mixed together with the story teller's own voice. It is very different with traditional storytelling because digital storytelling shapes its power by integrating digital technologies, thereby giving a deeper dimension and vivid color to each character, situation, experience, and insight that could improve the experience for the audiences and storytellers.

The use of digital storytelling can also have an impact in improving students' speaking in the narration process (Nelson, 2006), linguistic structure, vocabulary, sound patterns, and prosody of the foreign language (Verdugo & Belmonte, 2007). By incorporating Web 2.0 technologies into storytelling, students are able to find their voice, produce professional-quality work, reach more authentic external audiences, and improve their speaking skills in an engaging learning environment (Frazel, 2010). In the process of making a digital storytelling, the students need to brainstorm an idea, develop the ideas, get feedback from the teacher, develop the script and storyboard, present the stories ideas and get feedback from another group, produce the story, publish the digital storytelling in YouTube, get feedback from teachers and other groups, edit and revise the digital storytelling.

In addition, students need to evaluate their own speaking performances through videos. Using video recording as a means to help students conduct written self-reflections also provided a fruitful and helpful insight in the students' effort to evaluate their performance (Nguyen, 2012; Christianson, Hoskins, & Watanabe, 2009). Moreover, while telling a story, students are naturally assimilating the vocabulary language patters and the structure of a story (Kim, 2014). The students may find difficulties in remembering a number of new words at the same time, but once these words are included into a story and presented in context they will remember the words easily.

Digital storytelling also can be a potential learning experience that encompasses much of what society hopes that students will know and be able to perform in the 21st century (Jakes & Brennan, 2005). In the 21st century literacy skills the students should be able to use the latest technology to communicate effectively.

### Steps in Implementing Digital Storytelling to Teach Speaking

There are several steps in implementing digital storytelling to teach speaking for university students of the English Department. First, the teacher should build the students' enthusiasm on digital storytelling. Although digital storytelling might be a field that most students have not stepped into before, teachers need to be careful that extensive theory and introduction should be avoided for it may have the risk of weakening motivation (Dirksen, 2012).

Second, the teacher gives warming up and brainstorming activity of a narrative text that is going to be used to develop digital storytelling. In this step, the teacher gives an example of digital storytelling by using narrative text and the students should identify some important elements that can be used to make digital storytelling. After introducing the narrative text, the teacher can

invite the students to use role-play to demonstrate some of dialogues in the text. When carrying out role-play activities, the students can get an opportunity to express the dialogue. Ormrod (2010) agrees that the students should be involved physically with subject matter in order to get their attention.

Third, the students are divided into groups of 3-4 and they are assigned to develop the story. After developing a story and getting feedback from the teacher, they are required to make a scrip and storyboard. This activity can be done outside the classroom. Furthermore, the students should present their story ideas and their storyboard in the class in order to get feedback from the other students.

Fourth, the students should produce the story by taking into account the feedback from other students. The application of technology will enhance the students' creativity. In taking a video, the students will have a chance to improve their pronunciation, intonation, tone, articulation, expression, and fluency to enhance their performance. Every student should take an equal opportunity to tell the story. The students can evaluate their performances through video recording and revise it if necessary. After taking the videos, the students need to edit and they can add some images, narration, special effects and sound effects. Then, the students can post their digital storytelling on the website. The videos can be shared on a wide range of social media websites, thus reaching more audience and having bigger influence.

Fifth, the students will get feedback from another groups and the teacher. The teacher gives feedback related to the students' pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and other important components in speaking. Finally the students should edit, revise, and publish the videos in order to get final score from the teacher.

### **The Advantages and Challenges of Digital Storytelling**

Based on some previous studies, digital storytelling gives some advantages in teaching speaking. Many studies have found that digital storytelling in various ways positively affects and supports students' learning by encouraging the students to organize and express their ideas and knowledge in an individual and meaningful way (Robin, 2005). Another previous study shows that by telling stories in a dramatic way, students are not only equipped with linguistic knowledge but also learn to utilize other dynamics like tone, volume, and space to make meaning and they can become confident English speakers (Clipson & Boyles, 2012). As proved by Kim (2014), students admitted that another added benefit which digital storytelling projects brought to them was that they felt more confident while delivering speeches. This is very helpful for the students because they are getting exposure in using the language. The storytellers are expected to develop their speaking skill in terms of their pronunciation, fluency, and accuracy.

In addition, when digital storytelling is published on the website, the students may have the opportunity to share their work with their peers and they will get valuable experience in giving comments for other students' work (Robin, 2012). The use of digital storytelling can make the students collaborate with their group because they need to share their opinions and ideas in making a digital storytelling. According to Robin (2012) the process of making digital storytelling can develop the students' creativity. In addition, students who participate in the creation of digital storytelling may develop enhanced communication skills by learning to organize the ideas, ask questions, express opinions, and construct narratives.

Even though there are a lot of advantages in using digital storytelling but there are some challenges that have been found in two previous studies. Wang and Zhan (2010) find that the use of digital storytelling to improve students' speaking skill is still challenging because this type of storytelling involves many different skills both creativity and the use of technology. The students

should be able to operate supporting technologies to make digital storytelling. Lannotti (2004) also reports that digital storytelling is very time consuming because it can take many hours to work on all of the components. The teacher should be aware that the students may take several attempts in creating digital storytelling before they are able to demonstrate it.

To sum up, based on some previous studies there are some advantages on the implementation of digital storytelling which can improve the students' speaking skill through their performances in presenting the digital storytelling. However, there are also a number of disadvantages which make the implementation of this strategy quite challenging in certain contexts. The teachers should be well-prepared technically and pedagogically if these problems may occur in the teaching and learning process.

## CONCLUSIONS

The development of technology has been very useful in helping students become more effective in learning English. Some previous studies and theories have proved that using digital storytelling can improve the students' speaking skill. By implementing digital storytelling, the students can evaluate their performances through videos. The students can also improve their pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary while telling a story. However, digital storytelling also has its own limitations. In implementing digital storytelling, students and teacher should provide computer, camera, audio-recording, necessary software to edit both audio and video, and skills that are required to operate the technology.

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