Oksana TSYMBALYSTA,
orcid.org/0000-0003-4895-472X
Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor,
Associate Professor at the Department of Foreign Philology and Translation
State University of Trade and Economics
(Kyiv, Ukraine) o.tsymbalysta@knute.edu.ua

Oksana KRYVENKO,
orcid.org/0000-0003-2359-9434
Senior Lecturer at the Department of Foreign Philology and Translation
State University of Trade and Economics
(Kyiv, Ukraine) o.kryvenko@ knute.edu.ua

Olha DUBININA,
orcid.org/0000-0001-5688-6806
Senior Lecturer at the Department of Foreign Philology and Translation
State University of Trade and Economics
(Kyiv, Ukraine) o.dubinina@knute.edu.ua

DIGITAL STORYTELLING AS A TOOL FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

Digital storytelling has become an innovative and effective tool in language education, combining narrative techniques with digital technologies to enhance learning. By integrating text, images, audio, video, and interactive elements, it allows students to create engaging and meaningful stories that develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. This approach promotes vocabulary acquisition, grammar practice, and communicative competence while fostering creativity, critical thinking, and digital literacy. In language classrooms, students can write short narratives, produce video diaries, record podcasts, design comics, and create interactive presentations, applying new language structures in authentic contexts. In Business English lessons, digital storytelling enables learners to simulate professional tasks such as presenting business ideas, conducting negotiations, creating marketing materials, and analyzing case studies, while practicing relevant terminology and persuasive communication strategies. The teacher plays a crucial role as facilitator and guide, supporting students in planning, scripting, multimedia creation, and peer review, as well as providing feedback on both language use and technical execution. Digital storytelling also enhances learner motivation and engagement by offering personalized and collaborative tasks, promoting reflection and peer interaction. Although challenges such as technical skills and time management exist, careful planning and structured guidance ensure that digital storytelling remains an effective pedagogical method. Overall, digital storytelling transforms traditional classrooms into dynamic, learner-centered environments, preparing students for real-world communication and the demands of a digital, globalized society. Its integration in language education supports both linguistic and professional development, making it a versatile and highly valuable teaching strategy.

Key words: digital storytelling, language learning, Business English, digital literacy, narrative competence, vocabulary acquisition, interactive learning, educational technology.

Оксана ЦИМБАЛИСТА,
orcid.org/0000-0003-4895-472X
кандидат філологічних наук, доцент,
доцент кафедри іноземної філології та перекладу
Державного торговельно-економічного університету
(Київ, Україна) o.tsymbalysta@knute.edu.ua

Оксана КРИВЕНКО,
orcid.org/0000-0003-2359-9434
старший викладач кафедри іноземної філології та перекладу
Державного торговельно-економічного університету
(Київ, Україна) o.kryvenko@knute.edu.ua

Ольга ДУБІНІНА,
orcid.org/0000-0001-5688-6806
старший викладач кафедри іноземної філології та перекладу
Державного торговельно-економічного університету
(Київ, Україна) o.dubinina@knute.edu.ua

ЦИФРОВИЙ СТОРІТЕЛІНГ ЯК ІНСТРУМЕНТ ВИВЧЕННЯ МОВИ

Цифровий сторітелінг став інноваційним та ефективним інструментом у мовній освіті, поєднуючи наративні техніки з цифровими технологіями для підвищення ефективності навчання. Завдяки інтеграції тексту, зображень, аудіо, відео та інтерактивних елементів він дозволяє студентам створювати захопливі й змістовні історії, що розвивають навички читання, письма, говоріння та аудіювання. Такий підхід сприяє засвоєнню лексики, практикуванню граматики та формуванню комунікативної компетентності, водночас розвиваючи креативність, критичне мислення й цифрову грамотність. На заняттях з іноземної мови студенти можуть писати короткі оповідання, створювати відеощоденники, записувати подкасти, розробляти комікси та готувати інтерактивні презентації, застосовуючи нові мовні структури в автентичних контекстах. На заняттях з ділової англійської цифровий сторітелінг дає змогу моделювати професійні завдання, такі як презентація біз-нес-ідей, проведення переговорів, створення маркетингових матеріалів та аналіз кейсів, одночасно відпрацьо-вуючи спеціалізовану лексику й стратегії переконливої комунікації. Позиція викладача – ключова, адже він і як фасилітатор, і як наставник, підтримує студентів у процесі планування, написання сценарію, створення муль-тимедійного контенту та взаємооцінювання, а також надає зворотний зв’язок щодо мовного використання й технічного виконання. Цифровий сторітелінг також підвищує мотивацію та залученість здобувачів освіти завдяки персоналізованим і колаборативним завданням, заохочуючи рефлексію та взаємодію між студентами. Хоча існують певні труднощі, зокрема потреба в технічних навичках і раціональному управлінні часом, ретельне планування та чітка структурована підтримка забезпечують ефективність цього методу вивчення мови. Зага-лом цифровий сторітелінг перетворює традиційні аудиторії в динамічне, орієнтоване на студента навчальне середовище, готуючи його до реальної комунікації та вимог цифрового глобалізованого суспільства. Його інте-грація в мовну освіту передбачає як лінгвістичний, так і професійний розвиток, роблячи цифровий сторітелінг універсальною та надзвичайно цінною стратегією навчання.

Ключові слова: *цифровий сторітелінг, вивчення мов, ділова англійська, цифрова грамотність, наративна компетентність, засвоєння лексики, інтерактивне навчання, освітні технології.*

General statement of the problem. In recent years, the rapid development of digital technologies has profoundly transformed the ways people communicate, learn, and create content. These changes have had a particularly significant impact on the field of language education. Traditional classroom-based methods, which rely heavily on textbooks, mechanical exercises, and teacher-centered instruction, are no longer sufficient to meet the needs and expectations of modern learners. Students today grow up in a multimedia environment filled with videos, social platforms, interactive applications, and user-generated content. As a result, language learning requires new approaches that integrate technology, creativity, and meaningful communication. In this context, digital storytelling has emerged as a highly relevant and promising tool.

Digital storytelling combines narrative techniques with multimedia elements such as images, audio recordings, animations, and video clips. This approach allows learners not only to practice vocabulary and grammar but also to express personal ideas, build coherent stories, and use the target language for real communicative purposes. One of the key reasons digital storytelling is so relevant is that it supports the shift from passive consumption of information to

active creation. Instead of simply repeating learned phrases, students produce their own stories, make decisions about structure, choose visual materials, and record their own voices. This active participation increases motivation, strengthens emotional engagement, and creates a memorable learning experience.

Furthermore, digital storytelling supports the development of multiple language skills at once. While preparing a digital story, learners practice writing scripts, reading texts, speaking during narration, and listening to their own or others' recordings. This integrated approach provides a more holistic language-learning experience compared to traditional exercises that isolate skills. Digital storytelling also naturally encourages the use of authentic language, as students often draw from real-life situations, personal experiences, or cultural topics that interest them. This relevance to their own lives makes language practice more meaningful and effective.

Another important aspect is that digital storytelling aligns with global educational trends such as personalized learning, creativity, and the use of digital tools. Modern education increasingly emphasizes the development of 21st-century skills, including critical thinking, media literacy, collaboration, and technological competence. Working on a digital story requires learners to plan, analyze information, evaluate multimedia resources, and use software tools – all of which contribute to these essential competencies. In addition, collaborative digital storytelling projects help students communicate with peers, negotiate ideas, and work in teams, enhancing both social and linguistic skills.

Digital storytelling is also highly relevant due to its accessibility and adaptability. It can be used in classrooms, online environments, and blended learning settings. Most students already have access to smartphones or computers, which makes the creation of digital stories relatively easy and low-cost. Teachers can adapt tasks for different age groups, proficiency levels, and learning goals. Because of this flexibility, digital storytelling can support inclusive education by allowing students with various learning styles – visual, auditory, or kinesthetic – to engage with language learning in ways that suit them best.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Academic interest in digital storytelling (DST) as a pedagogical tool in language education has grown significantly, with numerous international studies emphasizing its multifaceted contributions to language acquisition, learner engagement, and digital competence. A systematic review by E. John and G. Ukpai highlights that digital storytelling has been widely explored in language education literature and is recognized as an effective means of promoting not only language learning but also essential 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, digital literacy, and communication (John & Ukpai, 2025).

P. Mawar has also investigated specific skill development. For example, a literature-based inquiry into the use of digital storytelling for fostering EFL learners' speaking fluency found that DST activities can reduce speaking anxiety, encourage rehearsal and reflection, and foster learner autonomy, thereby facilitating improvements in oral proficiency (Mawar, 2025).

Beyond speaking skills, research of S. Rahmawati, M. Pahlevi and K. Wachyudi has documented the impact of digital storytelling on other language domains. Studies show that DST can enhance reading comprehension and cognitive engagement among EFL secondary students, suggesting that its narrative and multimodal nature supports deeper interaction with texts (Rahmawati, et al., 2023).

B. Yu and W. Wang highlight the role of digital storytelling in preparing pre-service teachers for digital teaching environments. Their study focused on pre-service English teachers demonstrated that DST not only supports language teaching practices but also helps develop digital collaboration and multimodal communication skills among future educators (Yu &Wang, 2025).

Another recent study on teacher education students' DST skills further emphasizes the importance of integrating these competencies into teacher training curricula to ensure educators are equipped to facilitate technology-enhanced language learning effectively (Cariño, et al., 2024).

Ukrainian research has explored the use of storytelling methodologies to build communicative competence in school settings and emphasizes the importance of multimedia narrative approaches to deepen student involvement. Moreover, recent work on immersive technologies, such as augmented and virtual reality combined with digital storytelling, has pointed to innovative directions in foreign language instruction at the higher education level. For example, Y. Karpenko and M. Ajtay-Horváth studied digital storytelling as an educational technology to activate cognitive activity in foreign language lessons, particularly for primary school pupils learning a foreign language (Karpenko & Ajtay-Horváth, 2021). B. Saliuk authored research on digital storytelling in teaching English to higher education applicants, highlighting its role in forming communicative competence, cooperation, creativity, and digital literacy among learners (Salyuk, 2022). S. Fedorenko, I. Voloshchuk, Y. Sharanova, N. Glinka and K. Zhurba investigated multimodality and digital

narrative approaches in teaching foreign languages, demonstrating how digital narratives support multi-modal language instruction (Fedorenko, et al., 2022). Additionally, national publications, such as methodological guides and training courses on digital storytelling for teachers, underscore its relevance in contemporary teaching practices and professional development.

The purpose of the article aims to investigate how the integration of multimedia narratives influences the development of key language skills – including speaking, listening, reading, and writing – and to determine the extent to which digital storytelling supports learner motivation, creativity, and communicative competence.

Methodological foundation of the article is based on an integrative approach that combines theoretical analysis, comparative research, and the synthesis of empirical findings from both international and Ukrainian studies on digital storytelling in language education. The work relies on the principles of communicative language teaching and multimedia learning theory, which together form the basis for understanding how digital storytelling enhances language acquisition. The methodological basis also includes a review and analysis of contemporary pedagogical frameworks such as project-based learning and task-based language teaching. Digital storytelling projects naturally incorporate these approaches through collaborative work, authentic tasks, and real communicative outcomes. Additionally, the research employs methods of content analysis, literature review, and systematization of scientific publications to explore trends, challenges, and best practices in the field.

Presentation of the main research material. One widely cited definition in the literature describes digital storytelling as the practice of using computer-based tools to tell stories or present ideas through multimedia formats, including text, images, sound, and video. Digital storytelling combines the art of telling stories with a mixture of digital media and often involves narratives that are short, reflective, and crafted with specific educational goals in mind (Moradi & Chain, 2019).

A. Sadik offers an educational perspective, defining digital storytelling as a technological approach that encourages authentic learning tasks, deepens understanding of curricular content, and enhances learner engagement. Her empirical work highlights digital storytelling's capacity to integrate new media tools with educational objectives, supporting meaningful student participation in content creation (Sadik, 2008). H. Moradi and H. Chain have articulated the core elements that constitute effective digital storytelling (Moradi & Chain, 2019). According to research synthesized in systematic literature reviews, effective digital stories typically include the following components, *Picture 1*:

According to our experience Point of View defines the storyteller's perspective, expresses the author's intentions and personal voice, and creates narrative focus. Dramatic Question is a central question guiding the story, maintains audience curiosity, and drives narrative progression. Emotional Content builds emotional connection with listeners, enhances empathy and engagement, gives meaning and depth to the narrative. Economy uses only essential details, avoids unnecessary information, and keeps narrative concise and clear. Pacing controls rhythm and flow, balances fast and slow moments, and maintains audience engagement. Voice – personal narration, adds authenticity and individuality, enhances emotional

Pic. 1. Elements of Effective Digital Stories

resonance. Soundtrack – music, sound effects, ambient audio; it supports mood and atmosphere, and strengthens emotional and narrative impact.

In language learning contexts, digital storytelling serves multiple functions:

1 Authentic Language Use – digital storytelling requires learners to produce scripts, narrations, and multimedia elements in the target language, promoting authentic language use. This practice differs significantly from traditional grammar drills or textbook exercises, as learners must contextualize vocabulary and structures within narratives that reflect personal or cultural meaning.

2 Integrated Skill Development – digital storytelling supports the integrated development of all four language skills – speaking, listening, reading, and writing – through its narrative activities. Learners write scripts, record voiceovers, read peer stories, and listen to multimedia productions, fostering a holistic approach to language development.

3 Learner Motivation and Identity – digital storytelling can enhance learner motivation by allowing learners to express personal experiences, cultural stories, or creative ideas. This personal connection to content increases engagement and encourages learners to invest effort in language output. Research indicates that learners engaging in DST projects often demonstrate increased confidence and willingness to communicate in the target language.

Educational researchers have highlighted that digital storytelling engages learners in meaningful communication tasks by combining personal expression with digital literacy, which is crucial for 21st-century education goals. Modern digital storytelling tools support learners to construct language through authentic narrative production rather than passive reception, thus fostering deeper cognitive engagement and interaction with language content (Moradi & Chain, 2019).

There are a lot of tools, but some of them are very popular among the learners:

Storybird is an online platform designed to inspire users to write creative narratives by providing a rich library of artist-created images that can be assembled into picture books, comics, and poetry. The platform's visual emphasis allows language learners to link imagery with words, aiding comprehension and vocabulary retention through dual coding (where visual and verbal information are processed together).

Adobe Spark (now part of Adobe Express) is another powerful tool for digital storytelling that enables the creation of web pages, graphics, and animated videos integrating text, photos, icons, and motion. In the context of language learning, Adobe Spark allows learners to craft rich multimedia narratives where they script dialogues, produce visual storytelling sequences, and record voiceovers.

Powtoon is a platform that enables users to create animated videos and presentations with animated characters, text, and soundtracks. By integrating animation into storytelling activities, Powtoon helps learners produce language content that is both expressive and engaging. This tool is especially useful for projects where learners script dialogues, narrate scenarios, and practice pronunciation.

Canva is widely known as a graphic design tool, but its utility in language education lies in its ability to support the creation of infographics, storyboards, posters, and interactive presentations that combine visual and textual language use. Learners can use Canva's templates to design language-rich projects that require them to summarize information, create visual narratives, and collaboratively edit content.

iMovie, Apple's video editing software, allows learners to film, narrate, and edit their own stories into cohesive video projects. Video storytelling with iMovie supports authentic production of language as learners script dialogues, record narration, and reflect on linguistic choices while editing. The use of video is especially beneficial in language learning because it mirrors real-world communicative practices: learners must plan content, engage in authentic spoken tasks, and negotiate meaning with peers.

It can be defined some stages of digital storytelling work in a language lesson:

I. Preparation Stage

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher introduces students to the concept of digital storytelling and its objectives for language learning. It is important to explain that students will create their own stories using text, images, audio, or video, and that the main goal is to develop communication skills, vocabulary, grammar, and creative thinking. Students discuss the theme or genre of their upcoming story, define characters, plot, and key words or expressions they want to include.

II. Planning and Scriptwriting

Students create the structure of their story – writing a short script or outline: introduction, development, climax, and conclusion. At this stage, it is important to incorporate new vocabulary and grammar structures being studied in class. The teacher can provide ideas, examples, and guidance on how to link text with visual and audio elements effectively.

III. Creating Multimedia Content

Students start working with chosen platforms and tools: Storybird for illustrations and comics, Canva for interactive presentations, Adobe Spark for videos and slides, Powtoon for animations, iMovie for recording and editing video, or Audacity/Anchor for

audio podcasts. It is important for students to select the format that best fits their story and combine text with multimedia elements creatively.

IV. Editing and Refining

After creating the first version of the story, students edit the text, check grammar, pronunciation (for audio), coherence, and the logic of multimedia elements. The teacher provides feedback, suggests improvements, and offers additional words or phrases for more natural language use. This stage also includes peer review, where students share stories and provide comments to classmates.

V. Presentation and Discussion

Students present their finished stories to the class using their multimedia projects. During the presentation, they practice speaking, answer questions, and discuss the plot and characters. The teacher evaluates language use, creativity, and narrative structure, while classmates can give feedback and ask questions. Finally, the class can reflect on the process, discuss challenges, and share insights about digital storytelling as a language learning tool.

There are some examples of digital storytelling in Business English lessons:

1. Presenting Business Ideas – students create short multimedia presentations or videos about a fictional business idea. They include key business vocabulary: marketing strategy, target audience, revenue, competitive advantage. Example task: "*Create a 2-minute video pitch for a new app targeting young professionals.*"

2. Creating Corporate Stories – students tell stories about companies, brands, or startups. They use storytelling to describe the company's mission, history, achievements, and challenges. Example task: "*Produce a 3-slide video presentation about the history of a famous brand like Apple or Starbucks.*"

3. Role Plays and Simulations – students record videos or audio where they conduct a business meeting, negotiation, or product presentation. They use business language: negotiate, proposal, stakeholder, ROI, deadline. Example task: "*Record a 5-minute negotiation roleplay between a client and a supplier.*"

4. Marketing and Advertising Materials – students create promotional videos, ads, or interactive presentations for products or services. They use persuasive language, slogans, and calls to action. Example task: "*Design a 1-minute digital ad for a new beverage, including a slogan and key benefits.*"

5. Case Studies and Problem-Solving Scenarios – students create or analyze business cases using digital storytelling. They present the problem, solution, and results in a video or presentation. Example task: "*Create a video explaining how a company solved a customer service problem using digital tools.*"

In a digital storytelling lesson, the teacher acts as a facilitator, guide, and mentor, supporting students throughout the entire process. They begin by introducing the concept of digital storytelling, explaining objectives, providing examples, and selecting appropriate tools, topics, and linguistic focus. During the lesson, the teacher helps students plan their stories, structure scripts, and choose suitable multimedia elements, scaffolding both language and technical skills. They monitor progress, give feedback on language use, storytelling techniques, and technical execution, while encouraging creativity and critical thinking. Additionally, the teacher organizes peer review and collaborative activities, fostering discussion, reflection, and constructive feedback among students. Finally, the teacher assesses the stories based on criteria such as language accuracy, coherence, creativity, and effective use of digital tools, helping learners improve their language proficiency, digital literacy, and communication skills in an engaging, learner-centered environment.

Conclusions. Digital storytelling has become an increasingly valuable tool in language education, offering a creative and interactive approach to developing communication skills. By integrating text, audio, video, and visuals, it allows learners to produce authentic narratives that combine linguistic knowledge with digital literacy. This approach supports the development of all language skills, including writing, speaking, listening, and reading, while encouraging learners to engage with language in meaningful, real-world contexts. The process of planning, scripting, creating, and presenting stories requires learners to actively use new vocabulary, grammar structures, and idiomatic expressions, which reinforces retention and deepens understanding. Moreover, digital storytelling promotes critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills.

In the context of Business English, digital storytelling offers additional advantages by simulating professional scenarios. Students can create presentations, video pitches, marketing materials, podcasts, or interactive case studies that replicate real-world business communication tasks. Through these activities, learners practice essential business vocabulary, negotiation strategies, persuasive writing, and professional speaking skills. They also gain confidence in expressing ideas clearly, structuring arguments logically, and tailoring messages to a specific audience, which are crucial competencies in the workplace. The combination of creativity, technology, and purposeful language use makes lessons more motivating and engaging, enhancing both linguistic and professional competencies.

Integrating digital storytelling into language and Business English lessons transforms traditional classrooms into dynamic, interactive learning spaces. It bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, helping learners develop critical communication and digital skills in the globalized world.

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