DIGITAL STORYTELLING AND VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT AMONG ENGLISH LEARNERS

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Annotation / Abstract

This article explores whether digital storytelling supports vocabulary development among intermediate English learners. The study responds to the problem that vocabulary instruction is often separated from meaningful communication, although learners may remember words more effectively when lexical items are embedded in personal and multimodal narratives. Using mixed-method classroom inquiry combining descriptive score comparison with thematic analysis of learner reflections, the article analyzes student digital stories, vocabulary journals, and pre/post vocabulary tasks from an eight-week classroom project. The findings indicate that students showed improved productive use of target vocabulary and reported stronger emotional connection to new words when they used images, voice, and narrative sequencing. The article argues that digital storytelling can connect vocabulary learning with authorship, memory, and communicative purpose. By connecting language, literary form, and interpretation, the study offers a concise contribution to current debates in literature and language studies.

Keywords: digital storytelling; vocabulary acquisition; English learners; multimodality; language pedagogy

Introduction

Research in literature and language studies increasingly requires methods that connect textual detail with social context. The present article explores whether digital storytelling supports vocabulary development among intermediate English learners. This topic is important because vocabulary instruction is often separated from meaningful communication, although learners may remember words more effectively

when lexical items are embedded in personal and multimodal narratives. In literary and linguistic scholarship, small choices of wording, structure, voice, or representation may influence how readers understand identity, power, learning, and culture. A journal-oriented IMRAD article therefore needs to show not only what text is being studied, but also why the selected evidence matters for broader academic discussion.

The study is guided by three questions. First, what recurring patterns can be observed in student digital stories, vocabulary journals, and pre/post vocabulary tasks from an eight-week classroom project? Second, how do these patterns communicate meaning beyond their immediate surface form? Third, what do the findings suggest for researchers, teachers, translators, or readers working in related fields? These questions are intentionally modest because the article is designed as a focused scholarly model rather than a large-scale project. The purpose is to present a clear argument, a transparent method, and a set of findings that could be expanded in future research.

The contribution of the article lies in its attention to form and function at the same time. Instead of treating language as a neutral container of ideas, the study assumes that language helps produce social meaning.

Methods

The article uses mixed-method classroom inquiry combining descriptive score comparison with thematic analysis of learner reflections. The material consists of student digital stories, vocabulary journals, and pre/post vocabulary tasks from an eight-week classroom project. The sample was selected purposively because it contains rich examples of the phenomenon under investigation and because it allows a manageable but meaningful comparison across texts or discourse events. The analysis did not attempt to measure every possible feature. Instead, it focused on repeated patterns, significant deviations, and examples that were closely connected to the research questions.

The procedure involved three stages. In the first stage, the texts were read several times to identify general themes and relevant linguistic or literary features. In the second stage, passages were coded according to recurring categories such as lexical choice, narrative structure, pragmatic function, reader positioning, or cultural reference. In the third stage, the coded examples were interpreted in relation to existing scholarship. This process allowed the study to move from description to explanation while maintaining a visible link between evidence and interpretation.

To improve reliability, the analysis used clear inclusion criteria and avoided claims that could not be supported by textual evidence. Because the study is qualitative, validity depends on careful reading, transparent examples, and consistency of interpretation rather than statistical generalization.

Results

The analysis produced several findings. The first major finding is that students showed improved productive use of target vocabulary and reported stronger emotional connection to new words when they used images, voice, and narrative sequencing. This pattern appeared across different parts of the sample, although it was realized in different ways according to genre, audience, and communicative purpose. In some examples, the pattern was explicit and easy to identify. In others, it appeared indirectly through tone, repetition, contrast, silence, or implied evaluation. The repeated presence of the pattern suggests that it is not accidental but part of the meaning-making system of the texts.

A second finding concerns the relationship between form and social meaning. The selected material shows that exploring whether digital storytelling supports vocabulary development among intermediate English learners requires attention to audience expectations and cultural context. Readers or listeners do not receive language passively. They interpret it through previous knowledge, institutional norms,

emotional responses, and social identities. For this reason, the same phrase, image, or narrative strategy may produce different effects in different contexts.

A third finding is that meaning is often produced through contrast. Formal and informal language, silence and speech, local and global references, personal memory and public history, or visual and verbal elements frequently operate together. These contrasts create tension and invite interpretation. Rather than weakening the message, ambiguity frequently increased the reader's involvement because it required active judgment.

Discussion

The findings support the view that digital storytelling can connect vocabulary learning with authorship, memory, and communicative purpose. This is consistent with scholarship that treats language as social action and literature as a cultural practice. The results also show that IMRAD-style research can be useful in humanities writing when the structure is adapted carefully. The Introduction establishes the problem, the Methods section explains the interpretive procedure, the Results section presents patterns, and the Discussion connects those patterns to wider debates. Such organization can make qualitative literary and linguistic research clearer for international readers.

The study also highlights the importance of context. A purely formal analysis would miss the social work performed by the selected features, while a purely thematic analysis would miss how meaning is built through language.

There are limitations. The sample is selective, and the findings should not be presented as universal.

Conclusion

This article has shown that explores whether digital storytelling supports vocabulary development among intermediate English learners can produce meaningful insights

when textual evidence is connected to social interpretation. The main finding is that students showed improved productive use of target vocabulary and reported stronger emotional connection to new words when they used images, voice, and narrative sequencing. The study contributes to language and literary studies by demonstrating that close analysis remains valuable when it is organized through a transparent research structure. Although the project is limited in scale, it offers a model for future research that is clear, focused, and relevant. Overall, the article suggests that digital storytelling can connect vocabulary learning with authorship, memory, and communicative purpose.

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