TRANSFORMING LITERARY TEXTS: A MULTILITERACIES APPROACH TO ENGAGING DIGITAL NARRATIVES

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**Abstract:** Combining technology with literary texts may help solve the obstacles faced in modern education. Digital storytelling (DST) is an engaging approach that involves students with literature, developing creativity, cultural knowledge, and character development while creating a dynamic classroom atmosphere. This research investigated how the lecturer facilitates students in transforming literary text into a DST by applying multiliteracies pedagogy stages and how their responses to this activity. The researchers performed a qualitative case study to get detailed insights into integrating literature and technology within multiliteracies practices. The selected participants were 25 students of Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo who had completed the Literature course of ELT. They demonstrated their ability to transform literary texts into valuable video storytelling. Findings showed that the DST task promotes students’ active involvement with texts. They scrutinised the narrative components and converted the text into a digital story. The stages of multiliteracies pedagogy positively influenced students’ learning experiences, improved their comprehension of literary content, and encouraged them to combine literature and technology. It also proves that DST can foster students’ creativity, cultural proficiency, and multimodal literacy abilities.

**Keywords:** digital storytelling; literature; multiliteracies pedagogy.

**INTRODUCTION**

Since 2011, the global landscape has witnessed the onset of the fourth industrial revolution, marked by rapid technological advancements, automation, and the pervasive transfer of information (Prayogo, 2022). In response to this era’s evolving demands, university teacher training programs must incorporate courses designed to equip students with pedagogical and technological competencies essential for effective teaching (Mali et al., 2023). Numerous studies have demonstrated the benefits of integrating technology, particularly digital storytelling (DST), into educational settings to enhance students’ learning experiences (Çetin, 2020; Eisazadeh & Rajendram, 2020; Gürsoy, 2021; Hava, 2021; Pavlou, 2020; Yang et al., 2022). DST has emerged as a particularly impactful tool in language education, offering educators innovative ways to engage students and facilitate language acquisition (Hava, 2021).

Storytelling (ST) has been a main component of curriculum development in early childhood education. It provides young learners with a wide range of stories to engage with, improving their ability to organise events, experiences, and facts and cultivating their auditory and verbal communication skills (Beaver & Wyatt, 2022), and it can foster creativity, imagination, and critical thinking skills among young learners, contributing to developing their cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Halimah et al., 2020). Milana (2021) discovered that children exhibited greater proficiency in verbal expression when learning through a narrative approach combined with a talking stick model and a picture-and-picture method. It shows that the process of ST can give insights into the transformative power of modern media and its capacity to shape our understanding of reality (Mesa & Alejandro, 2020). It assisted to engage in meaningful dialogue with others through storytelling.

Digital Storytelling (DST), a fusion of traditional storytelling with digital media, offers a dynamic platform for creating multimedia texts
that blend conventional and modern literacy approaches (Tanrikulu, 2020). Implementing DST has numerous benefits, including fostering creativity, developing multimodal literacy skills (Çetin, 2020), and promoting a positive learning environment to encourage English speaking skills (Nair & Md Yunus, 2022). It enhances High Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) (Fauziah, 2022; Pabriana, 2022) in students’ judgment, information analysis, and story interpretation. DST also improves language literacy skills, allowing students to form personal connections with characters and themes and fostering deeper emotional engagement (Anggraini et al., 2021; Fitri, 2024; Sudarmaji et al., 2020; Tanrikulu, 2020). This approach supports teachers’ reflective practice and professional identity (Shinas & Wen, 2022).

Upon reviewing the literature, it is obvious that none of the studies had addressed digital storytelling and multiliteracies pedagogy in foreign language education. Therefore, this article investigates how students of the Literature course at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo transform the literary text into a DST through multiliteracies pedagogy stages and how their responses to this activity. The focus distinguishes it from previous research that primarily explored the benefits of DST and the process of generating DST.

Key components of DST applications in education include establishing trust, conveying ideas and valuable information, and fostering commitment. Listeners believe the narrator and the story due to effective storytelling, which conveys the essential concepts and values to the listener, fostering a strong connection between the listener and the story (Çetin, 2020).

In English Language Teaching (ELT), literature serves as a means of language practice and a vehicle for exploring cultural nuances and linguistic complexities. Integrating literary texts within the reading curriculum allows learners to engage with authentic material, facilitating a deeper familiarity with the target language and its culture. It is crucial when learning another language, as it allows students to learn the language in its natural context (Barzani, 2020). In this research, students select any genre of literature text and then transform the story into digital storytelling. The DST methodology alters passive engagement with text into active involvement so that students deliver stories without forgetting the main ideas and characters. It is done through multiliteracies pedagogy.

Multiliteracies pedagogy focuses on cognitive learning and understanding cultural and social contexts. The students can explore and reflect on socio-culturally driven knowledge collaboratively. This process allows the students to construct meaning and to make sense of the language they are learning (Garcés, 2021). The learning process involves the application of Multiliteracies, which consist of Situated Practice, Overt Instruction, Critical Framing, and Transformed Practice (New London Group, 2000). Hence, multiliteracies pedagogy acknowledges the diverse forms of literacy prevalent in today’s digital age, emphasizing the importance of teaching students to navigate and critically evaluate a wide range of texts and media.

Therefore, the researchers are interested in understanding the advantages of integrating DST and multiliteracies pedagogy, which requires careful planning and consideration of instructional objectives. Educators must provide students with the necessary tools and resources to create digital stories while scaffolding their learning and providing guidance and support. They must also create dynamic and engaging learning experiences that promote critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration by aligning DST activities with multiliteracies pedagogy stages. According to Saripudin et al. (2021), valuable DST media in social studies has a significant and positive impact on the development of student characters. DST can transform passive readers into active creators of meaning, fostering deeper connections with literary texts and promoting critical literacy skills. By obtaining the perspectives and insights of students, educators can gain valuable information on the effectiveness of these activities in promoting critical thinking, empathy, and linguistic proficiency. Thus, proficient English teachers are better equipped to navigate the challenges and adaptations of the 21st century (Prayogo, 2022).

Additionally, understanding students’ responses to DST can inform instructional design and pedagogical decision-making, ensuring that literature education remains relevant and impactful in the classroom. The following research questions frame this work: (1) How do students transform their literary text into digital video storytelling through multiliteracies pedagogy? (2) How do students respond to digital storytelling tasks?

**METHOD**

This article employed qualitative case research. Small and Calarco (2022) discussed exploring linguistic phenomena, social identity, digital and spatial analysis, and multimodal texts using creative literacy practices. A case study was chosen...
to explore a literature class that converted a literary text into a DST through multiliteracies pedagogy.

A purposive sample of 25 seventh-semesters students was selected for this article. All participants had completed the Literature course on English Language Teaching at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo. They were able to transform literary texts into video storytelling.

The researchers collected data through observation and unstructured in-depth interviews. The researchers recorded the activities at each stage of multiliteracies pedagogy by taking field notes during observation.

The multiliteracies pedagogy was executed in four stages: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice. Students were required to select texts and analyse literary elements such as characters, plot, and setting. They then created a DST based on the selected literary text.

After that, interviews were conducted to know the students’ responses to the DST preparation process. The interview results were transcribed and classified into four points: the digital stories’ category and theme, themes background, challenges while generating digital stories, and benefits of digital storytelling. Data analysis was done qualitatively to investigate the efficacy of multiliteracies pedagogy in facilitating digital storytelling among ELT students, particularly in transforming narratives from literary texts into engaging digital stories.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

*Transforming literary text into digital storytelling through multiliteracies pedagogy*

Digital storytelling has gained great popularity in many disciplines and at many class levels, including higher education. The findings here reveal that multiliteracies pedagogy is crucial in helping students transform literary text into DST. Read Table 1 below, which consists of the teacher-student activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MP Stages</th>
<th>Teacher activities</th>
<th>Students’ activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Situated Practice</td>
<td>The lecturer introduced literary texts and immersed them in the context of storytelling through</td>
<td>Students identified and discussed the background of literary works to be transformed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1. Learning process using multiliteracies pedagogy stages**

The researchers revealed that students are familiar with literary texts presented in storytelling form.

The lecturer guided students to discuss the narrative’s main points and the storytelling techniques. The conversation posed in the overt instruction stage was:

Lecturer: Please, friends, choose a work, then find the story’s main idea of how the main character will appear in storytelling, using puppets, digital images, or something else.
During the discussion, the lecturer instructed the students to focus on comprehending the story’s main idea. The students listened attentively and asked challenging questions, to which the lecturer provided clear examples of the primary characters that needed to be revealed. The students also showed interest in the tools and materials used in storytelling.

During the critical framing stage, students were encouraged to analyse the story and discuss the moral values that should be present in the text. The question posed was:

Lecturer : What is the role of the main character in conveying the moral value of the literary story you have chosen?

At this stage, students are encouraged to analyse the work, including its themes and elements, to determine what they want to convey in their storytelling.

Students were given one week to complete their project during the transformed practice stage. In case of any difficulties encountered while creating their story, a consultation forum is readily available. The instructions posed were:

Lecturer : “You can start creating storytelling from literary works from the initial reading process, analysing it, and preparing materials and tools.”

Multiliteracies pedagogy stages assisted students in engaging with the story, stimulated their critical thinking, and improved their cultural competence. Hence, they can convert the text into digital storytelling easily. It is aligned with the research by Azis and Husnawadi (2020), Chen and Chuang (2021), and Mirza (2020).

Examples of students’ digital storytelling outcomes are complemented by using puppetry to reinforce characters. As in Figure 1, the students used puppets to deliver the characters of the ‘Magical Running Shoes’ story. The text remains objective and does not give subjective evaluations even though it has transformed into a digital version.

Figure 1. Using puppet to present the Magical Running Shoes’ characters

Figure 1 showed that multiliteracies pedagogy encouraged students to empathise with the story’s characters and situations, fostering a deeper understanding of diverse experiences and perspectives. The students expressed a heightened sense of social responsibility and a desire to enact positive change in their communities.

Integrating digital storytelling within multiliteracies pedagogy has significant implications for literature education. Educators can use digital storytelling to engage students in meaningful learning experiences, promote critical literacy skills, and foster a deeper appreciation for literature texts. Moreover, the collaborative digital storytelling approach proved to be an effective methodology for structuring the writing process, as evidenced by the student perspectives. It was found that the digital storytelling approach, with its multimedia elements, facilitated the writing process while fostering a harmonious relationship between technology and writing (Tannkulu, 2020).

Students’ responses to the digital storytelling task
During the ELT course, twenty-five students were interviewed about creating digital stories. The responses were then categorized into four areas: 1) categories and themes of digital stories, 2) selection of digital story themes, 3) challenges encountered during the development and recording of digital stories, and 4) benefits of digital storytelling (Mirza, 2020).

Categories and themes of digital stories
The storytelling themes can be categorised into 6 (six), as follows:

Table 2. Student’s storytelling theme(s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. of students</th>
<th>Theme(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fable</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>• Helping each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Fraud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>• School activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hero</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>A hero who saves the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love story</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>The story of the king and princess</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Children adventure | 8 | • Space Adventure  
• Fairy Adventure  
• Adventures of the Four Friends |
| Parent-child relationship | 3 | Teaching good things |
| Total | 25 | |

According to Table 2 above, many students prefer children’s adventure stories that revolve around themes such as space, fairies, and groups of friends.

Selection of digital story themes
There are specific reasons why students consider the story’s background for digital storytelling. The following is a student’s explanation for selecting the picture book ‘Amazing Grace’:

“I chose Amazing Grace because the story is very interesting. It raises a school theme, and the story’s moral value is very deep: discrimination.”

The results of the storytelling of ‘Amazing Grace’ are presented in Figure 2 below:

Figure 1. Digital Storytelling of Amazing Grace

Pinocchio, which explores the themes of parent-child relations, offers inspirational moral values for storytelling. See the image below for the ‘Pinocchio’ story below:

Figure 3. Pinocchio’s storytelling
Students can choose their preferred literary text based on their interests, enabling them to engage with the material that intrigues them the most.

Challenges in developing and recording the digital story
Adapting the story into a DST may seem challenging, but it can be accomplished in four stages of multiliteracies pedagogy.

While simplifying a long and detailed novel without compromising its values can be difficult, it is not impossible. As a student has pointed out, this is the most challenging process. Read the following response:

“I have difficulty simplifying the story, which in the novel is long and detailed, whereas, in storytelling, it has to be conveyed verbally and understood by the audience. This challenge is the hard one.”

Furthermore, the storyteller must create visual aids to portray the story’s characters effectively. As in Figure 4, the student prepared digital animation to ensure the audience comprehends the story. This step can be challenging, as demonstrated in Figure 4, where a student adapted the ‘The Little Prince’ novel into a 64-page digital storytelling format.

Figure 4. Example of DST display presentation

On the other hand, a student also used puppets as an alternative to digital illustrations, as shown in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5. Using puppet as DST media
In Figure 5, the student adapted a story titled ‘Sunny Meadows Woodland School’ without using
Digital animation. Instead, she confidently explored the story using self-made puppets to represent characters in her storytelling. Her response was:

“I still use puppets because they are more comfortable to convey to the characters.”

**Benefits of digital storytelling**

Creating digital stories from literary texts is an effective way to enhance readers’ understanding of the works and to develop engaging learning materials. A student stated as follows:

“This project can make me understand the types of literary texts and elements of literary texts so that I can understand the elements of the text that I choose to make digital storytelling.”

This task also enhances students’ learning ability and motivates them to use technology. A student’s response posed was:

“I am very motivated to complete my digital storytelling as interestingly as possible with the help of digital technology.”

As learners of English, they also said that presenting literary works in the form of storytelling made them more confident in speaking English. The response was:

“Through storytelling, I become more confident in my speaking skills.”

This response represented that students gain experience editing animations while making videos, providing a strong understanding of technology that will benefit them in their future careers as teachers. They are also triggered to simplify the story to ensure the audience’s understanding of the plot.

It aligns with the research by Mirza (2020), who analysed EFL students at the Lebanese University creating digital storytelling, and it gained students’ self-confidence and improved their pronunciation, organisational, technical research, and presentation skills. The social aspect of DST led to enjoyable learning where students could share their work online with their friends and other English speakers worldwide. Thus, educators can create dynamic and inclusive learning environments that empower students to participate actively in their education by embracing innovative pedagogical approaches.

These students’ responses to digital storytelling in the Literature course have been overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing enthusiasm for the opportunity to engage with literature texts in new and creative ways. As mentioned by several scholars, using collaborative DST tasks greatly enhanced students’ development of English language skills, engagement with technology and diversity topics, motivation, and interpersonal relationships (Azis & Husnawadi, 2020). DST encouraged them to share their stories with a broader audience, improving students’ critical thinking, communication, problem-solving, and media literacy abilities (Chen & Chuang, 2021). The integration of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) into the course syllabus and teaching methods in higher education enables the faculty to raise students’ cultural consciousness, assist those from marginalised backgrounds in feeling welcomed, and assist those with more privilege in increasing their own awareness and intercultural competence (Fuentes et al., 2021).

**CONCLUSION**

Integrating literary texts with technology aligns with the requirements of the modern digital age. Transforming text into digital storytelling using multiliteracies pedagogy provides an innovative educational method. Practicing DST in multiliteracies pedagogy may successfully equip teacher candidates to involve students in learning. The multiliteracies pedagogy stages positively impacted students’ learning experiences, enhanced their understanding of literary material, and motivated them to integrate literature and technology. It shifts passive learning to active involvement and enhances students’ creativity, cultural competency, and multimodal literacy skills. DST also offers chances to enhance literary instruction and enable students to become storytellers while teaching important moral principles.

The students’ responses show similar perspectives. They can overcome difficulties while creating DST but still need teacher guidance. They mostly selected adventure stories for children because it is easier to be transformed. Future researchers are expected to gain an in-depth exploration of the integration of DST, multiliteracies pedagogy, and other subjects. It is to track the development of this potential teaching method in developing interactive learning settings that equip students for success in the digital world as education progresses.

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