RESEARCH ARTICLE

Developing Written Speech Competence in English Philology Students Based on Digital Storytelling

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Abstract

This article examines the development of written speech competence in English philology students on the basis of digital storytelling. The relevance of the topic is connected with the growing role of multimodal literacy, project-based writing, and digitally mediated composition in higher language education. Recent research shows that digital storytelling is no longer viewed only as a motivational classroom technique; it is increasingly treated as a structured pedagogical approach that can improve writing performance, learner engagement, vocabulary development, autonomy, and creative language use in second-language contexts. The purpose of the study is to substantiate the pedagogical potential of digital storytelling in developing the written speech competence of English philology students and to identify the main methodological conditions that ensure its effectiveness. The findings show that digital storytelling contributes to written speech competence by strengthening idea generation, textual organization, lexical enrichment, audience awareness, revision, motivation, and reflective authorship. It is argued that the value of digital storytelling lies in its ability to integrate narrative thinking, language practice, multimodal design, and communicative purpose within a single pedagogical framework. The article concludes that digital storytelling can serve as an effective means of developing written speech competence in English philology students when it is implemented through carefully structured writing tasks, guided feedback, and academically relevant genres.

KEYWORDS

Digital storytelling, written speech competence, English philology students, second-language writing, digital multimodal composing, academic writing, narrative competence, learner autonomy, writing pedagogy, educational technology.

INTRODUCTION

Written speech competence occupies an important place in the preparation of English philology students because it supports academic communication, literary interpretation, linguistic analysis, and professional self-expression. In philology programs, students are expected not only to produce grammatically correct sentences, but also to create coherent, purposeful, stylistically appropriate, and intellectually grounded texts. For this reason, the development of written speech competence requires pedagogical approaches that combine language accuracy, textual organization, rhetorical awareness, and learner creativity.

One of the most promising approaches in this context is digital storytelling. Foundational work on digital storytelling defines it as the creation of short stories through digital tools that combine narrative, image, sound, and other media resources in support of learning and communication. Robin's overview of the educational uses of digital storytelling has been especially

influential in showing that this approach can support student engagement, reflection, communication, and multimodal literacy across subject areas. In language education, digital storytelling has gradually moved from being treated as an auxiliary activity to being recognized as a pedagogical form that can shape both language learning and composition skills. Recent studies show that digital storytelling can improve writing performance in EFL contexts, including gains in complexity, accuracy, lexical diversity, and fluency, while also increasing cognitive and emotional engagement with writing tasks.

This shift is especially important for English philology students. Their writing tasks often involve interpretive essays, summaries, reflections, reviews, and analytical responses. Such tasks require not only formal correctness, but also authorial voice, textual cohesion, and sensitivity to audience and genre. Digital storytelling is relevant here because it turns writing into an intentional act of meaning-making rather than a purely reproductive exercise. Research on digital multimodal composing in higher education suggests that authentic digital composition tasks can promote second-language writing autonomy by increasing learners' willingness to engage, ability to compose, and freedom to experiment in writing.

The purpose of this article is to analyze how digital storytelling can be used to develop the written speech competence of English philology students and to identify the pedagogical principles through which this approach becomes academically meaningful and methodologically effective.

The study is based on qualitative theoretical methodology. It uses analysis, synthesis, comparison, and interpretation of research in digital storytelling, second-language writing, digital multimodal composing, and educational technology. The theoretical framework combines writing pedagogy with multimodal and narrative approaches to language development.

The analysis focused on several core dimensions of written speech competence: idea generation, planning, lexical and grammatical expression, textual cohesion, audience awareness, revision, autonomy, and creativity. These dimensions were then examined through the lens of digital storytelling as a pedagogical process. For the purposes of this article, digital storytelling is understood as a staged learning activity in which students create narrative-based digital products through the interaction of written script, visual design, voice, and other multimodal resources. This

interpretation is consistent with educational accounts of digital storytelling and with more recent research on digital multimodal composing.

The article does not present a new empirical experiment. Instead, it synthesizes recent research findings to produce a coherent pedagogical interpretation of how digital storytelling can support the development of written speech competence in English philology students.

The analysis shows that digital storytelling contributes to the development of written speech competence because it transforms writing from a static product into a staged, meaningful, and audience-oriented process. One of its main pedagogical strengths lies in the fact that it begins with narrative intention. Before students create a digital story, they usually need to select a theme, define a point of view, sequence events or ideas, and decide how to present meaning to an audience. This pre-compositional work strengthens planning and conceptual organization, which are key components of written speech competence.

A major finding in recent research is that digital storytelling can improve measurable aspects of second-language writing. A 2024 mixed-methods study on EFL learners found that digital storytelling had a positive effect on writing performance in terms of complexity, accuracy, lexical diversity, and fluency, while also promoting behavioral, cognitive, affective, and agentive engagement. This result is especially relevant to English philology students, since their writing development depends not only on correctness but also on expressive and structural maturity. Digital storytelling appears to support this development by making students write with stronger purpose and by requiring repeated interaction with their own texts during scripting, editing, and final presentation.

Another important result concerns learner autonomy. Recent research on second-language writing autonomy through digital multimodal composing shows that authentic multimodal writing projects promote learners' willingness to engage, ability to compose, and freedom to experiment with form and meaning. For English philology students, this is important because writing competence is closely connected with independence of thought and control over textual form. In digital storytelling tasks, students often become more responsible for choices of wording, sequencing, tone, and narrative effect because the text they produce is part of a visible and shareable digital artifact. This increases ownership of writing and moves students away from purely teacher-

directed composition.

The findings also show that digital storytelling supports vocabulary development and lexical precision. A 2024 mixed-methods study on collaborative learner-generated digital stories reported positive effects on vocabulary knowledge development and favorable student attitudes toward digital-story-based language learning. In written speech development, this matters because a richer and more accurately selected vocabulary improves expressiveness, coherence, and stylistic range. For philology students, whose academic tasks often require nuanced expression, digital storytelling can create a meaningful context for vocabulary expansion because words are selected not in isolation but in relation to character, mood, theme, or argument.

A further result is that digital storytelling increases motivation and engagement, which indirectly strengthens writing performance. Review-based and empirical studies report that digital storytelling enhances students' cognitive, motivational, emotional, and behavioral regulation, while also increasing satisfaction and sustained involvement in language tasks. Motivation is especially significant in writing pedagogy because weak motivation often leads to minimal drafting, shallow revision, and formulaic expression. Digital storytelling appears to counter this problem by giving students a visible purpose, a creative framework, and an authentic audience.

The analysis additionally shows that digital storytelling improves revision habits. Because the digital story usually depends on a script that must later align with images, sound, timing, and presentation, students are naturally pushed to reread and refine their written text. They revise not only for grammar, but also for clarity, rhythm, sequence, and emotional or rhetorical effect. This is pedagogically valuable because revision is one of the central components of mature written speech competence. In traditional writing instruction, students often treat the first draft as the final product. In digital storytelling, however, the movement from idea to script to digital presentation makes revision practically unavoidable.

Another significant result is that digital storytelling strengthens audience awareness. In ordinary classroom writing, students often write only for the teacher. In contrast, digital storytelling encourages students to imagine a broader and more concrete audience because the story is designed to be viewed, heard, and interpreted by others. This awareness improves textual choices. Students begin to think about how clearly the script communicates, whether transitions are understandable,

whether the tone matches the content, and whether the message is likely to produce the intended effect. Such audience sensitivity is central to written speech competence at the university level.

The analysis also indicates that digital storytelling promotes multimodal literacy without weakening the role of writing. Some educators fear that the inclusion of images and audio may reduce the importance of verbal text. However, research on digital multimodal composing shows that multimodal work can actually deepen writing by requiring students to coordinate script, image, and narrative purpose more consciously. Studies comparing monomodal writing and digital multimodal composing suggest that digital composition changes how learners approach language production and textual development over time rather than simply replacing writing with design. For English philology students, this means that digital storytelling can broaden rather than narrow their understanding of of text. It teaches them that writing is not only the production of sentences, but also the orchestration of meaning in context.

A further result concerns creativity and voice. Digital storytelling creates space for personal stance, interpretive expression, and stylistic experimentation. Recent studies show that students involved in digital storytelling often report gains in creative thinking, voice, and meaningful participation. This is particularly valuable in philology, where students are expected to engage critically and interpretively with texts, not merely reproduce information. Through digital storytelling, they can connect linguistic expression with personal and academic perspective, which strengthens the expressive dimension of written competence.

The results confirm that digital storytelling can serve as an effective framework for developing written speech competence in English philology students, but its effectiveness depends on pedagogical design. The main educational value of this approach lies not in the digital format itself, but in the way it restructures the writing process. Digital storytelling requires students to move through a sequence of idea generation, planning, scripting, revising, and presenting. This sequence gives writing a meaningful trajectory and supports process-oriented pedagogy.

One of the most important implications is that digital storytelling connects narrative thinking with academic writing development. Although philology students often need to write analytical and scholarly texts rather than fictional stories,

narrative competence remains relevant because it supports sequencing, coherence, perspective, and voice. These same qualities are important in reflective essays, interpretive responses, literary commentaries, and even research-based introductions. The narrative dimension of digital storytelling therefore should not be seen as opposed to academic writing. Instead, it can function as a bridge to more advanced written forms.

The discussion also suggests that digital storytelling is especially useful when writing competence is understood broadly. If writing is defined only as grammatical correctness, then digital storytelling may appear secondary. But if written speech competence includes coherence, audience awareness, lexical richness, rhetorical purpose, revision, and authorship, then digital storytelling becomes highly relevant. Recent research on digital storytelling and digital multimodal composing repeatedly emphasizes that these approaches support not only language output but also learner agency, reflection, and communicative intentionality.

Another important point concerns collaboration. Many digital storytelling projects involve peer discussion, shared planning, script exchange, or collaborative production. Research on digital-story-based language learning and technology-enhanced composition suggests that this social dimension supports idea development and vocabulary learning. For philology students, collaboration can enrich writing because it exposes them to alternative interpretations, stylistic options, and reader reactions before the text is finalized.

At the same time, the approach has limitations. Digital storytelling can become superficial if it is reduced to technical decoration. Attractive visuals and audio effects do not automatically produce strong writing. The pedagogical center must remain the script and its relation to communicative purpose. Teachers therefore need to guide students in balancing digital creativity with textual quality. They also need to choose topics and genres that are appropriate for philology students, such as literary reflection, language biography, cultural commentary, character reinterpretation, thematic micro-essay, or digital critical response.

The discussion further indicates that assessment should be adapted to this methodology. If evaluation focuses only on technical polish, then the writing-development potential of digital storytelling may be lost. Assessment should take into account textual coherence, lexical choice, narrative or rhetorical structure, relevance of content, revision quality, and

the relationship between verbal and multimodal elements. Research on genre-based assessment of digital multimodal composition supports the view that digital texts should be evaluated as purposeful social actions rather than as mere technical products.

Finally, the findings imply that digital storytelling is particularly appropriate for contemporary higher education because it aligns with current demands for digital literacy, creative communication, and learner-centered pedagogy. It also corresponds to the broader movement in language education toward multimodal composition and authentic production. For English philology students, this makes digital storytelling not a peripheral innovation, but a potentially productive component of writing instruction.

The study demonstrates that digital storytelling has substantial potential for developing written speech competence in English philology students. Its effectiveness is grounded in its ability to combine narrative planning, lexical development, textual organization, revision, audience awareness, multimodal design, and learner autonomy within a single pedagogical process. Recent research supports the view that digital storytelling and related digital multimodal composing approaches can improve writing performance, increase engagement, strengthen vocabulary development, and promote autonomy in second-language writing.

At the same time, the educational value of digital storytelling depends on guided implementation. It becomes most effective when the script remains central, when revision is built into the task, when feedback is structured, and when the chosen digital genres are connected with philological learning goals. Under such conditions, digital storytelling can help students move from mechanically produced text toward purposeful, expressive, and competent written speech.

Thus, developing written speech competence in English philology students based on digital storytelling should be regarded as a перспективный methodological direction in higher language education. It supports not only writing as a linguistic skill, but also writing as a creative, reflective, and communicative form of academic growth.

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