



TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES IN UTILIZING DIGITAL STORYTELLING IN ENGLISH INSTRUCTION: PERCEIVED INFLUENCE ON GRADE 5 PUPILS' READING COMPREHENSION AND VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative phenomenological study explored teachers' lived experiences in utilizing digital storytelling in English instruction and its perceived influence on Grade 5 pupils' reading comprehension and vocabulary development. Specifically, the study examined teachers' instructional practices, learner engagement, implementation challenges, and perceived literacy outcomes associated with digital storytelling integration in English classes. Data were gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews with twelve purposively selected Grade 5 English teachers from public elementary schools. Thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's framework was utilized in analyzing the data. Findings revealed that digital storytelling enhanced learner engagement, comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and classroom participation through interactive multimedia experiences and contextualized storytelling activities. Teachers observed that audiovisual elements, animations, narration, and interactive content helped learners understand unfamiliar vocabulary and improve reading comprehension. Participants also identified challenges related to technological limitations, internet connectivity, limited digital resources, and varying learner digital competencies. Despite these concerns, teachers demonstrated instructional adaptability through contextualized digital materials, scaffolded instruction, collaborative learning, and differentiated literacy activities. Teachers further emphasized that digital storytelling improved learners' confidence, motivation, oral participation, and retention of lesson content. The findings underscore the importance of technology-enhanced and learner-centered literacy instruction in strengthening reading comprehension and vocabulary development among elementary learners.

Keywords: digital storytelling, English instruction, reading comprehension, vocabulary development, literacy instruction, educational technology, qualitative research

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I. INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension and vocabulary development are essential literacy competencies that significantly influence learners' academic performance, communication skills, and language proficiency. In elementary education, English instruction plays a critical role in strengthening learners' comprehension abilities, vocabulary knowledge, oral communication, and engagement with texts. Consequently, teachers continuously seek innovative instructional approaches that improve learners' literacy experiences and participation in English learning environments.

Digital storytelling has emerged as an important technology-enhanced instructional strategy that combines narration, images, animation, audio, video, and multimedia elements to support meaningful learning experiences. In English instruction, digital storytelling provides learners with interactive and contextualized opportunities to engage with language, interpret stories, and develop vocabulary and comprehension skills through multimodal learning experiences.

Research suggests that multimedia-supported literacy instruction improves learners' motivation, comprehension, and language retention. Through visual and auditory supports, digital storytelling helps learners understand unfamiliar vocabulary, connect story events, and engage more actively during classroom discussions and literacy activities. Digital storytelling also promotes learner participation, creativity, and collaborative interaction within classroom settings.

Despite its instructional advantages, integrating digital storytelling in public elementary school contexts presents challenges related to technological accessibility, internet connectivity, digital literacy, and limited instructional resources. Teachers are therefore expected to demonstrate adaptability and creativity in utilizing digital storytelling while addressing learners' diverse literacy needs and technological limitations.

Although digital storytelling continues to gain attention in literacy instruction, limited qualitative studies explore teachers' lived experiences and perceptions regarding its influence on reading comprehension and vocabulary development among Grade 5 pupils. Understanding teachers' experiences is essential in identifying

instructional realities, pedagogical practices, and literacy outcomes associated with technology-enhanced English instruction.

This study explored teachers' lived experiences in utilizing digital storytelling in English instruction and its perceived influence on Grade 5 pupils' reading comprehension and vocabulary development. Specifically, it examined teachers' instructional practices, implementation challenges, learner engagement, and perceived literacy outcomes related to digital storytelling integration.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to:

1. Explore teachers' lived experiences in utilizing digital storytelling in English instruction;
2. Examine instructional challenges encountered in digital storytelling integration; and
3. Identify perceived influences of digital storytelling on Grade 5 pupils' reading comprehension and vocabulary development.

Review of Related Literature

Digital storytelling significantly influences learner engagement, literacy development, and language acquisition in English instruction. According to Robin (2018), digital storytelling enhances creativity, comprehension, and communication skills through multimedia-supported learning experiences. Interactive storytelling environments improve learners' ability to interpret texts, understand narratives, and develop language proficiency.

Research by Mayer (2021) emphasized that multimedia learning strengthens comprehension and retention by combining visual, auditory, and textual information. Learners demonstrate improved understanding when instructional materials integrate multiple forms of representation and interactive content.

Vocabulary development and reading comprehension are also strengthened through contextualized and meaningful literacy experiences. Graves (2020) explained that learners acquire vocabulary more effectively when words are presented within engaging and context-rich instructional environments. Collaborative and technology-enhanced literacy activities further improve learner participation and



motivation.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (2021), which explains that learners understand concepts more effectively when information is presented through integrated visual and auditory channels. The theory guided the exploration of digital storytelling as a multimedia-supported literacy strategy.

The study also utilized Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory (1978), which emphasizes collaborative interaction, guided participation, and social engagement in literacy and language development.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore teachers' lived experiences in utilizing digital storytelling in English instruction and its perceived influence on Grade 5 pupils' reading comprehension and vocabulary development. Phenomenology was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to understand teachers' instructional experiences, perceptions, and classroom realities regarding technology-enhanced literacy instruction.

The participants consisted of twelve purposively selected Grade 5 English teachers from public elementary schools. Inclusion criteria required participants to: (1) currently teach Grade 5 English; (2) utilize digital storytelling in classroom instruction; and (3) be willing to share their instructional experiences and perceptions regarding literacy development and digital storytelling integration. Data were gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews focusing on instructional practices, learner engagement, literacy experiences, implementation challenges, and perceived reading comprehension and vocabulary outcomes. Ethical considerations including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation were strictly observed throughout the study.

The gathered data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework. Interview transcripts were transcribed, coded, and categorized to identify recurring meanings, patterns, and themes related to digital storytelling and literacy development.

Trustworthiness was established through member checking, triangulation, audit trails, and thick description.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 1: Enhancing Learner Engagement Through Interactive and Multimedia Storytelling Experiences

Participants consistently described digital storytelling as highly engaging, interactive, and motivating for Grade 5 learners during English instruction. Teachers observed that multimedia elements such as animations, sound effects, narration, videos, background music, and visual presentations significantly increased learners' attention, classroom participation, and interest in reading activities. Participants explained that digital storytelling transformed traditional reading lessons into more enjoyable and dynamic learning experiences.

One participant shared:

“Mas interesado ang learners kapag may videos, sounds, at animations sa storytelling.”

Another teacher explained:

“Mas active ang participation nila kapag digital storytelling ang ginagamit.”

Participants further observed that learners became more attentive and responsive during storytelling sessions because multimedia-supported lessons captured their curiosity and sustained classroom interest. Teachers explained that visual and auditory stimuli encouraged learners to focus on story details and participate actively during discussions.

One participant remarked:

“Mas nagiging excited sila kapag may multimedia presentation at storytelling activities.”

Another teacher stated:

“Kapag digital storytelling ang gamit, mas nakikinig at nakikipag-interact ang learners.”

Teachers also emphasized that digital storytelling improved classroom interaction by encouraging learners to ask questions, share opinions, and participate in collaborative discussions about story events and characters. Participants



observed that shy or less participative learners became more willing to engage during multimedia storytelling sessions.

One participant explained:

“Mas nagiging confident silang sumagot at mag-share ng ideas kapag engaging ang storytelling.”

Participants further described that digital storytelling reduced boredom and increased learner motivation because learners perceived the lessons as entertaining while still educational.

The findings suggest that digital storytelling significantly strengthens learner engagement, classroom interaction, and participation in English instruction. These findings support Mayer’s Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which explains that learners understand and process information more effectively when presented through combined visual and auditory channels. Similarly, Robin (2018) emphasized that digital storytelling promotes learner motivation, active participation, and meaningful classroom interaction through multimedia-supported instruction.

Theme 2: Strengthening Reading Comprehension Through Visual and Contextual Supports

Teachers emphasized that visual aids, narration, animations, and contextualized digital stories significantly improved learners’ understanding of story events, character actions, vocabulary meaning, and lesson content. Participants explained that multimedia storytelling supported struggling readers by simplifying difficult passages and providing visual representations that clarified story details and concepts.

One participant remarked:

“Mas naiintindihan nila ang story kapag may visuals at narration.”

Another teacher stated:

“Nakakatulong ang digital storytelling sa comprehension lalo na sa struggling readers.”

Participants observed that learners became more capable of identifying main ideas, sequencing events, understanding character emotions, and answering comprehension

questions after participating in digital storytelling activities. Teachers explained that learners retained information more effectively because visual and auditory supports reinforced understanding and memory retention.

One participant explained:

“Mas natatandaan nila ang details ng story kapag may pictures at narration.”

Another teacher shared:

“Mas nakakasagot sila nang tama sa comprehension questions pagkatapos ng storytelling activities.”

Participants further described that digital storytelling strengthened learners’ ability to retell stories, summarize events, and connect lesson content to personal experiences. Teachers observed that learners demonstrated deeper understanding when they actively interacted with multimedia-supported stories.

One participant remarked:

“Mas nakakapagkwentong sila ng maayos kapag naiintindihan nila ang story through visuals and sounds.”

Participants also emphasized that contextualized digital stories made reading materials more relatable and meaningful for learners, which improved comprehension and classroom participation.

The findings indicate that digital storytelling positively supports reading comprehension development among Grade 5 learners through contextualized and multimedia-assisted instruction. These findings align with Mayer (2021), who explained that multimedia learning strengthens comprehension by integrating visual and verbal information. Similarly, Vygotsky’s Social Constructivist Theory highlights the importance of guided interaction and contextualized learning experiences in improving comprehension and literacy development.

Theme 3: Improving Vocabulary Development Through Contextualized and Repetitive Exposure

Participants described digital storytelling as highly effective in introducing unfamiliar vocabulary through contextualized, repetitive, and visually supported exposure. Teachers explained that learners acquired new words more



easily when vocabulary terms were presented within stories accompanied by visuals, narration, and meaningful contexts.

One participant shared:

“Mas madaling matutunan ng learners ang bagong vocabulary kapag nakikita at naririnig nila ito sa story.”

Another teacher explained:

“Kapag paulit-ulit na ginagamit ang words sa digital story, mas natatandaan nila.”

Participants observed that learners became more familiar with vocabulary meanings when words were connected to story actions, character experiences, and visual representations. Teachers explained that repetitive exposure to vocabulary within digital stories strengthened word retention and understanding.

One participant remarked:

“Mas mabilis nilang natatandaan ang vocabulary kapag ginagamit sa story at may visuals.”

Another teacher stated:

“Nakakatulong ang narration kasi naririnig nila nang tama ang pronunciation ng words.”

Participants further observed that learners demonstrated improved confidence in using newly learned vocabulary during classroom discussions, oral participation, and storytelling activities. Teachers explained that learners became more willing to use English words when they understood their meanings through contextualized storytelling experiences.

One participant explained:

“Mas confident silang magsalita gamit ang bagong vocabulary kapag familiar sila sa meaning.”

Participants also emphasized that digital storytelling strengthened pronunciation, listening comprehension, and contextual understanding of vocabulary through repeated multimedia exposure.

The findings highlight the importance of multimedia-supported and contextualized vocabulary instruction in English learning. These findings support Graves (2020), who emphasized that vocabulary acquisition becomes more effective when learners encounter words repeatedly within

meaningful and context-rich learning environments. Similarly, multimedia-supported literacy instruction strengthens vocabulary retention, pronunciation, and contextual understanding among language learners.

Theme 4: Navigating Technological and Instructional Challenges in Digital Storytelling Integration

Despite the instructional advantages of digital storytelling, participants identified challenges related to unstable internet connectivity, limited digital devices, insufficient technological resources, and varying learner digital competencies. Teachers explained that these technological limitations sometimes disrupted lesson continuity and affected the effectiveness of multimedia instruction.

One participant remarked:

“Minsan mahirap gamitin ang digital storytelling kapag mahina ang internet.”

Another teacher stated:

“Hindi lahat ng learners ay sanay sa paggamit ng digital tools kaya kailangan pa rin ng guidance.”

Participants observed that some learners experienced difficulty navigating digital platforms, following multimedia instructions, or accessing online materials. Teachers explained that technological limitations occasionally reduced classroom efficiency and required additional instructional adjustments.

One participant shared:

“May times na natatagalan ang lesson dahil sa technical problems.”

Another teacher explained:

“Hindi rin lahat ng classrooms ay may sapat na gadgets at equipment.”

Participants addressed these challenges through downloaded videos, offline storytelling materials, printed backup resources, collaborative activities, and flexible classroom strategies. Teachers demonstrated instructional adaptability by modifying lessons according to available technological resources and learners' digital readiness.

One participant remarked:

“Nagda-download na lang kami ng materials para magamit



kahit walang internet.”

Another teacher stated:

“Kailangan talagang maging flexible at resourceful sa paggamit ng digital storytelling.”

Participants further emphasized the importance of school support, technological infrastructure, teacher training, and accessible digital resources in strengthening the implementation of multimedia-supported instruction.

The findings suggest that successful digital storytelling integration requires technological accessibility, institutional support, instructional adaptability, and continuous teacher readiness. These findings align with Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2020), who emphasized that technological integration in education depends on teacher adaptability, institutional support, and resource accessibility. Similarly, research on educational technology integration highlights the importance of digital infrastructure and teacher preparedness in sustaining effective multimedia-assisted instruction.

Discussion

The findings revealed that digital storytelling significantly improves learner engagement, reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and classroom participation among Grade 5 pupils. Multimedia-supported literacy instruction promoted active participation, curiosity, and contextual understanding of English lesson content.

Teachers also observed that digital storytelling strengthened vocabulary acquisition through repetitive exposure, visual support, and contextualized language use. Learners became more confident in participating during discussions and comprehension activities due to improved understanding and engagement.

Despite technological challenges related to internet connectivity and digital accessibility, teachers demonstrated instructional adaptability through contextualized digital resources, scaffolded instruction, and collaborative learning activities. The study further highlights the importance of technology-enhanced and learner-centered literacy instruction in improving reading

comprehension and vocabulary development.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that teachers perceive digital storytelling as an effective instructional strategy that enhances learner engagement, reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and classroom participation in Grade 5 English instruction. Multimedia-supported storytelling experiences significantly improve learners' understanding of texts and contextual vocabulary learning.

Despite challenges related to technological accessibility, internet connectivity, and digital readiness, teachers demonstrated adaptability through flexible instructional practices and contextualized literacy activities. Learners also demonstrated improved confidence, participation, and comprehension during digital storytelling sessions.

The findings underscore the importance of strengthening technology-enhanced literacy instruction, digital learning resources, and teacher training programs related to multimedia-supported English instruction in elementary education.

Implications of the Study

The findings may guide school administrators, English teachers, and curriculum developers in strengthening digital storytelling integration, literacy intervention programs, and multimedia-supported instructional practices in English education. Schools may also improve access to digital infrastructure, instructional technologies, and professional development programs related to educational technology integration.

The study further highlights the importance of learner-centered and multimedia-supported literacy instruction in improving reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and learner participation among elementary pupils.

Future studies may further examine the long-term effects of digital storytelling on literacy achievement, oral communication skills, and learner motivation across diverse educational contexts.



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