



The Impact of YouTube Digital Storytelling on Students' English Retelling Skills

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This study investigates the impact of YouTube-based digital storytelling on students' English retelling skills in an EFL context. The research was motivated by students' common struggles with vocabulary retention, speaking fluency, and confidence when retelling stories in English. Utilizing a mixed-method approach, the study involved 55 students from the English Education Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan Timur. Data were collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS to obtain mean scores and descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were examined using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that digital storytelling significantly improved students' vocabulary, fluency, and confidence. Interview responses supported these results, highlighting how visual and audio elements in YouTube storytelling helped students recall new words, understand narrative structure, and express ideas with greater ease. The study concludes that YouTube digital storytelling is an effective, engaging, and accessible tool for enhancing retelling skills in EFL learners. The originality of this study lies in its focus on integrating multimodal digital input with narrative learning, offering pedagogical insights into low-resource and tech-friendly learning strategies for speaking development.

Keywords: YouTube; Digital Storytelling; Retelling Skills; Vocabulary Development; Speaking Fluency

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1. Introduction

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, enhancing students' speaking skills continues to be a significant problem, especially in activities involving story recounting. A multitude of kids encounter difficulties in structuring narratives, retaining language, and articulating speech with fluency and assurance. Maya & Labib Al Halim (2021) assert that conventional methods frequently lack engagement and contextual depth, both of which are crucial for improving effective language utilization. Recent research indicates that incorporating digital media, especially storytelling through video platforms such as YouTube, might enhance student motivation and language proficiency (Aminah et al., 2019; Fu et al., 2022).

The progression of technology in language teaching has led to the prevalence of digital storytelling, a method that integrates narrative, graphics, and audio to produce immersive learning experiences (Friska, 2022). YouTube provides an abundance of genuine and accessible storytelling content, rendering it a wonderful resource for improving learners' speaking and retelling abilities (Arbain & Nur, 2017; Gracella & Rahman Nur, 2020; Friska, 2022). It was observed that storytelling films offer examples of pronunciation, intonation, and contextualized word usage, all of which are essential for language acquisition. Nonetheless, despite its widespread appeal, research regarding the efficacy of YouTube-based digital storytelling in enhancing recounting abilities, particularly within the Indonesian EFL setting, is still scarce.

This research addresses this gap by examining how YouTube-based digital storytelling influences EFL students' vocabulary, speaking fluency, and retelling confidence. The study seeks to demonstrate YouTube storytelling's pedagogical effectiveness and offer low-cost, accessible speaking development approaches. The study also examines students' views of the medium to inform digital tool-based speaking education.



Although several research have investigated the impact of digital storytelling on language acquisition, the majority have concentrated on overall speaking competency or vocabulary development (Erliana & Arbain, 2020; Nur & Jamilah, 2022; Friska, 2022; Fu et al., 2022; Maya & Labib Al Halim, 2021). Empirical research explicitly examining the impact of YouTube-based storytelling on students' retelling abilities, encompassing comprehension, sequencing, vocabulary utilization, and oral coherence, is sparse. Moreover, limited research has examined this issue for Indonesian university-level EFL learners. This study seeks to fill the gap by examining both cognitive (vocabulary, structure) and affective (confidence, engagement) aspects of recounting as affected by digital storytelling on YouTube. Retelling necessitates that students understand and rebuild narratives, so enhancing vocabulary, structure, and fluency (Durotul Yatima, 2024). Barriers such as insufficient confidence and limited vocabulary impede students' success (Arbain et al., 2017; Anggeraini, 2020; Sinaga, 2019; Nur, 2020).

Digital storytelling enables students to interact more profoundly with knowledge using technology-enhanced tales (Fitri & Harianingsih, 2021). YouTube facilitates learners in revisiting narratives and witnessing genuine language application, so enhancing their capacity to recount in a more organized and assured manner (Friska, 2022; Maya & Labib Al Halim, 2021). Notwithstanding these advantages, limited research has examined the extent to which digital storytelling enhances retelling skills among university-level EFL learners in Indonesia. This research addresses such a deficiency.

2. Method

This research utilized a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative research approaches to enhance the knowledge of the impact of YouTube-based digital storytelling on students' English retelling abilities. The mix technique is a method that aims to build synergy and strength between quantitative and qualitative ways to comprehend a phenomenon more fully than utilizing simply one method, either quantitative or qualitative (Rattri & Rachman, 2024). The amalgamation of these two methodologies enabled the



researcher to evaluate both quantifiable results and the subjective experiences of students, therefore enhancing the research findings.

2.1. Research Design

This study was conducted in 2025 at Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan Timur, situated in East Kalimantan, Indonesia. The research was conducted at the English Education Department, where students are expected to cultivate diverse language skills, including speaking and storytelling. This institution was chosen for its pertinence to the subject matter and the availability of appropriate research participants.

2.2. Research Subjects

The principal aim of this research was to examine the impact of YouTube digital storytelling on students' proficiency in retelling English narratives. It specifically sought to investigate its impact on vocabulary learning, narrative coherence, and speaking fluency within an EFL classroom context. The participants in this study were students from the English Education Department who had either finished or were currently enrolled in courses related to speaking and storytelling. They were chosen by a purposive sample based on their learning stage, deemed suitable for assessing advancements in storytelling skills.

2.3 Data Collection

This study included two principal methods for data collection: semi-structured interviews and the dissemination of a questionnaire. The researcher employed purposive sampling to select participants following the necessary institutional consent and consultation with relevant academic personnel. The questionnaire was disseminated online via Google Forms, providing students with the convenience and anonymity to complete it at their own pace.



Subsequent to the gathering of questionnaire responses, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with a subset of students to explore their viewpoints in greater depth. The interview format facilitated participants in articulating their feelings, thoughts, and experiences related to the utilization of YouTube for English language learning through digital storytelling. This two-step questionnaire and interview procedure was designed to rapidly collect both quantitative and qualitative data without requiring in-class observation or performance recounting.

2.3.1 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were evaluated using SPSS for descriptive statistics and correlation. Thematic analysis was conducted by Braun & Clarke (2019), encompassing initial coding, theme development, and interpretation. Included example codes: “vocabulary retention,” “narrative awareness,” and “enhanced confidence.”

3. Findings and Discussion

This research examined the influence of YouTube-based digital storytelling on students' English retelling abilities. The results were derived from 55 students in the English Education Department at Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan Timur via a structured questionnaire and subsequent semi-structured interviews. The objective of the data analysis was to assess students' motivation levels, language learning, narrative understanding, and confidence concerning retelling activities following their interaction with YouTube storytelling content. The questionnaire findings revealed predominantly favorable responses. Students expressed high agreement or agreement that viewing digital storytelling videos enhanced their engagement in English learning and stimulated their participation in retelling exercises. Students notably indicated enhancements in vocabulary, a superior understanding of narrative organization, and heightened speaking confidence. The assertions were substantiated by



descriptive statistical analysis. The outcomes of the most pertinent questionnaire items are encapsulated in the table below:

Table 1. Students' Perception of YouTube Digital Storytelling in Improving Retelling Skills

No	Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
4	Watching YouTube videos helps me improve my English vocabulary.	23.6	74.5	1.8	0.0	3.20	0.524
5	Digital storytelling videos help me remember new English words.	21.8%	74.5%	3.6%	0%	3.18	0.475
18	I feel that the more I watch YouTube digital storytelling videos, the more my speaking skills in English improve.	12.7%	83.6%	3.6%	0%	3.09	0.398
20	Overall, I feel that YouTube digital storytelling videos improved my retelling ability.	14.5	74.5	9.1	1.8	3.02	0.561

Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

As the table shows, the highest mean scores were recorded for items related to vocabulary development and fluency. For example, the item stating that storytelling videos help improve vocabulary scored a mean of 3.20, indicating strong agreement. Similarly, the item "Digital storytelling videos give me a clearer idea of how to speak naturally and fluently in English" also scored 3.20. This suggests that the audiovisual context of YouTube storytelling helps learners retain new vocabulary and use it fluently in oral communication.

Students also reported benefits in terms of story comprehension and confidence. The average scores for understanding story structure (M = 3.18) and increased confidence in retelling (M = 3.05) affirm that digital storytelling aids in both cognitive and affective aspects of language learning. Students not only grasp the narrative flow but also feel more empowered to speak in



English, which is crucial in EFL classrooms anxiety and low self-confidence often hinder performance.

Question	Theme	Sample
The effect of watching digital storytelling videos on YouTube on improving your English vocabulary	The Impact of Digital Storytelling on YouTube in Enhancing English Vocabulary Acquisition	Students stated that watching digital storytelling on YouTube helped improve vocabulary because they were presented in the context of an interesting and easy-to-understand story. (RS 1,4, and 6)
Watch digital storytelling videos on YouTube, the more your English-speaking skills improve	The Impact of Digital Storytelling Videos on YouTube on English Speaking Skills	Students felt that the more they watched digital storytelling videos on YouTube, the more their speaking skills improved because they were familiar with vocabulary, pronunciation, and contextualized language usage, and were more confident when speaking. (RS 2)
Digital storytelling videos on YouTube help with retelling skills in English	The Impact of Digital Storytelling Videos on YouTube in Enhancing English Retelling Skills	Watching digital storytelling videos helps students retell stories through visuals, audio, and a clear narrative structure. (RS 1 and 3)
Watching digital storytelling videos help to remember new English vocabulary	The Impact of Digital Storytelling Videos on Vocabulary Retention in English Learning	Watching digital storytelling videos makes it easier to remember vocabulary because it is presented in the context of an interesting and repetitive story. (RS 5)

Qualitative findings from interviews confirmed these results. Respondent 1 explained, “I hear and see the words in a story context, so they stick better in my memory. I even use them when I speak. In line with (Bernad-Mechó & Valeiras-Jurado, 2023). this study examines YouTube science videos as pedagogical tools in ESP/EMI courses, analyzing their multimodal engagement strategies to enhance accessibility for non-specialized audiences. By annotating



video introductions and gathering student feedback, it highlights the role of filmic modes in creating fast-paced, attention-grabbing content. A related study explores digital genres in ESP, focusing on legal English students' multimodal literacy development through YouTube video analysis. Both emphasize the importance of multimodal awareness in specialized education, demonstrating how digital resources can improve comprehension and engagement. The findings advocate for integrating multimodal literacy into ESP/EMI curricula to better prepare learners for digital communication demands.

Respondent 1 mentioned, "Watching frequently makes the words stay longer in my mind." These comments emphasize the multimodal advantage of YouTube: learners are exposed to pronunciation, intonation, facial expressions, and natural dialogue all of which are vital to storytelling competence. Moreover, the study explores YouTube science dissemination videos as pedagogical tools for ESP and EMI courses, focusing on multimodal engagement strategies in their introductions. Seven video clips were analyzed using Multimodal Video Analysis (MAV) and evaluated by higher education students. Results highlight the importance of filmic modes in creating fast-paced, engaging content and underscore the role of multimodal literacy in science communication. A related study examines humor as a multimodal engagement strategy, analyzing 22 fragments from three YouTube channels. Findings reveal nine linguistic humor strategies, enhanced by embodied and filmic modes, emphasizing the need for multimodal approaches in science outreach (Bernad-Mechó & Valeiras-Jurado, 2023).

Additionally, Respondent 4 shared, "The more I watch, the more fluent I become, because I get used to hearing how words are said naturally," reflecting how repeated exposure to native or natural speech models enhances speaking proficiency over time. Respondent 2 said, "It helps my retelling ability, especially learning how to structure my sentences and speak confidently." The findings of this study are aligned with the theoretical foundation presented earlier, particularly the notion that digital storytelling supports vocabulary acquisition, fluency, and narrative structure (Fu et al., 2022; Maya & Labib Al Halim, 2021). Furthermore, the consistent improvement reported by students suggests that YouTube is not merely an entertaining medium



but a pedagogically effective tool for language instruction (Muhammad Iqbal Tawaqal & Akbar Dwi Rizqyan, 2024; Saed et al., 2021).

In conclusion, the findings indicate a strong and positive influence of YouTube-based digital storytelling on students' retelling ability. The combination of engaging content, repeated exposure, and visual support appears to enhance students' vocabulary, narrative organization, and speaking confidence. These outcomes directly address the research objectives and reinforce the value of integrating digital media into English language learning, especially in EFL settings where authentic language input is often limited (Alkamel, 2024; Rosalina & Nasrullah, 2025).

4. Conclusion

This research concludes that YouTube-based digital storytelling significantly enhances students' English recounting abilities in an EFL context. The data derived from the questionnaire and interviews reveal enhancements in several critical domains of language learning: vocabulary acquisition, comprehension of narrative structure, speaking fluency, and learner confidence. Student said that viewing storytelling videos on YouTube enhanced their engagement in learning English and facilitated a clearer understanding of story organization and retelling. They exhibited heightened drive and confidence in speaking, which are crucial for enhancing oral competency. The multimodal attributes of YouTube, including audio-visual elements, facial expressions, and contextualized language, offered significant assistance for students to assimilate new terminology and refine natural speech patterns.

The results correspond with the research aims and enhance the accumulating evidence that digital storytelling is an effective instructional approach in EFL classrooms. It not only augments linguistic proficiency but also promotes student-centered learning and creativity. Given these findings, English language educators should include YouTube digital storytelling into their instructional methods as an ancillary resource to enhance interactive and engaging speaking exercises.



Future research should utilize longitudinal designs to evaluate the enduring impacts of digital storytelling on students' language retention and speech performance. Investigating the effects of prolonged exposure to YouTube-based storytelling across a semester or academic year on narrative competency may yield valuable insights into its enduring pedagogical significance.

A disadvantage of the current study is the lack of a performance-based evaluation, such as a recorded retelling task. The results predominantly depended on self-reported perceptions and qualitative comments instead of direct monitoring of pupils' speech production. This was attributable to limitations in time and resources. Consequently, subsequent research ought to integrate video-recorded narrative assignments or oral performance rubrics to furnish additional objective evidence of skill enhancement and language utilization in authentic speaking circumstances. Digital storytelling is an economical yet effective approach that enhances both language and emotional dimensions of English acquisition. YouTube-based digital storytelling enhances students' retelling abilities in vocabulary, fluency, structure, and confidence. Students indicate elevated involvement and enhanced performance, validating the application of this technique in EFL environments.

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