

From Classroom to Marketplace: Empowering Business English Students with Cross-Border Product Digital Storytelling

Yanshen Yu¹, Ning Deng², Manting Xu³, Shiyan Liang⁴

^{1,2,3,4}School of Foreign Studies, Lingnan Normal University, Zhanjiang 524048, Guangdong, China
¹yuys@lingnan.edu.cn, ²1379710489@qq.com, ³m3329564782@qq.com, ⁴2990159580@qq.com

Abstract: *Although many studies have examined the potential of digital storytelling in higher education, few have investigated its application in Business English teaching at a micro-level. This study explores how digital storytelling, particularly through cross-border livestream simulations, can enhance Business English teaching by integrating language learning with essential business skills. Qualitative data, derived from in-depth interviews, classroom observations, field notes, students' product stories, reflective journals, teaching logs and teaching documents, were collected and analyzed, revealing some key competences such as live-stream skills, collaboration, critical thinking, digital literacy, and language communication, were developed finely in the course. The findings suggest that digital storytelling, underpinned by ESP and CLIL pedagogies, enriches the learning experience and prepares Business English students for evolving global market by upgrading their skill set.*

Keywords: Digital storytelling, ESP, CLIL, Business English students' competences.

1. Introduction

The global business landscape has seen rapid technological advancements and various forms of digital communication, which have revolutionized how businesses operate and interact. The rise of e-commerce, social media, and digital marketing has shifted the focus from face-to-face interactions to virtual communications. Against this backdrop, Business English educators are continuing to face growing pressures to move away from the traditional teaching modes and are driving to adopt more innovative and tech-based pedagogic approaches that effectively connect theory with practice [1]. One of the approaches, digital storytelling (DST) can allow students to experience high-quality learning, enhancing their employability, developing cognitive skills and promoting their problem-solving and decision-making abilities in the real world [2]. Specifically, digital storytelling, which involves the use of digital tools to create narratives to communicate, offers a promising approach to bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. By integrating digital storytelling into Business English education, educators can provide students with opportunities to practice both their language and business-specific skills in realistic, industry-related contexts. This teaching approach not only enhances language proficiency but also develops students' creativity, critical thinking, and digital literacy-- skills that are increasingly valuable in the global business world. In that light, business education programs worldwide are increasingly incorporating digital storytelling into their curricula to prepare students for the challenges of the modern business environment.

Despite the growing recognition of digital storytelling as an educational tool, its application in Business English education remains underexplored. Most existing studies focus on its use in general language learning or in computer science [3]. Research on its effectiveness in other subject areas of higher education, particularly in Business English programs, does not suffice [4]. Furthermore, while there is a body of literature

on the use of case studies and simulations in Business English teaching, these methods often lack the personal engagement and creative expression that digital storytelling can offer. The present study addresses this research niche by examining how digital storytelling can be specifically used to empower Business English students, helping them develop not only their language skills but also the professional competencies required in the international marketplace.

The primary objective of this study is to explore the effectiveness of digital storytelling as a pedagogical tool in Business English education. Specifically, the study aims to investigate how digital storytelling can be used to enhance students' language proficiency, communication skills, and business expertise. By examining the process and outcomes of integrating digital storytelling into a Business English curriculum, the study seeks to identify best practices and offer practical recommendations for educators. Additionally, the study aims to contribute to the broader field of ESP by providing insights into how digital storytelling can be adapted for use in other language programs. For that purpose, the study is geared towards the following research questions:

- 1) How does the digital storytelling empower Business English students?
- 2) What is Business English students' perception of the integration of digital storytelling into Business English courses?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Fostering Business English Students' Competences

Over the past decade, research on the competences of business English students has focused on identifying and enhancing the specific skills required for effective communication in global business environments. As the Chinese Ministry of Education Foreign Language and Literature Professional Teaching Steering Committee point out, Business English

undergraduates are required to be equipped with linguistic competence, intercultural communication skills, digital literacy, teamwork skills and the integration of business-specific content with language instruction [5].

In the same token, aligning with broader educational frameworks, Business English education is seeking to promote 21st-century skills, including critical thinking, problem-solving, digital literacy, communication, collaboration, creativity, financial and health literacy, and global awareness [6]. Studies have shown that employers are increasingly seeking individuals with complex thinking and communication skills, rather than just basic competencies [7] [8]. Thereby, these frameworks often inform course design and assessment in Business English programs to prepare more market-ready graduates.

Grounded on principles of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), business English teaching focuses on students' competence that are directly applicable to specific business contexts, tailoring language instruction to meet the specific needs of business students, which includes teaching specialized vocabulary, genre-specific writing, and presentation skills [9]. Recent literature has expanded on ESP by integrating business-specific case studies and simulations to provide students with realistic language practice, advocating for integrating language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) with professional competencies such as negotiation, cross-cultural communication, and business analytical skills.

More notably, CLIL (Content Language Integrated Learning) approach is committed to balancing language and content objectives. CLIL champions its 4Cs (Content, Communication, Cognition and Culture) teaching framework to create a fluid and all-rounded mechanism to expose students to the target language business settings, where they can have ample opportunities to practice their skill set related to future career [10][11]. This integrated approach not only enhances language proficiency but also allows learners to acquire subject-specific knowledge in a contextualized manner. Through this framework, students can engage in problem-solving activities, collaborative projects, and case studies that mirror real-world business challenges. By immersing learners in authentic tasks, CLIL fosters both linguistic competence and professional skill set, equipping students with the tools necessary to stay in the race in globalized business environments [12].

The above research indicates that the evolution of Business English education over the past decade emphasizes a shift towards equipping students with a diverse skill sets essential for thriving in global business environments. As required by educational frameworks and employer demands, not only linguistic competence but also critical 21st-century skills such as digital literacy, intercultural communication, and problem-solving should take on importance. Business English teaching underpinned by ESP and CLIL has advanced this objective, ensuring educators' instruction to be practice-based and competency-based. Ultimately, this integrated approach prepares Business English students to meet the complex demands of the global market, positioning them to excel in dynamic and diverse business settings.

2.2 Digital Storytelling

The use of digital storytelling techniques in teaching has been shown to enhance learning outcomes by making materials more meaningful, comprehensible, and recallable, especially effective in helping students contextualize complex subjects such as accounting and STEM subjects [13][14]. In a greater extent, incorporating digital storytelling can connect student with the broader world and addressing the evolving demand of the labor market. It allows learners to acquire academic and professional skills relevant to their specific fields. Some researchers argue that, storytelling projects seem to be perceived as a "different process of learning" that goes "beyond what is taught in the classroom" and it is "motivating" and "fun" [15].

Furthermore, digital storytelling helps students develop essential technological, interpersonal, and communicative skills useful in their future careers since it involves creating short videos or other digital formats, such as blog posts or podcasts, which may include still and moving images, soundtracks, and narration to convey a story. Digital storytelling is also described as "interactive, nonlinear, and flexible," with elements of user participation and co-creation, appealing to those interested in innovative, cross-disciplinary pedagogical methods [16]. From personal narratives to digital posts and marketing stories, digital storytelling engages students with both local issues and global contexts, unlocking their potential to create and innovate. Some educators contend that digital storytelling stands out among pedagogical approaches in Higher Education for its ability to address students' needs and enhance employability skills [17].

Content-driven in its nature, digital storytelling can be well-used in business-related teaching to engage students and enhance their learning experiences. Embedding digital storytelling in business teaching often involves a student-directed, inquiry-based approach that emphasizes the process of storytelling as much as the final digital story. Teachers can guide students through the various stages of digital storytelling, including analyzing audience, drafting scripts, compiling videos, and providing feedback [18]. Particularly, creating authentic product digital storytelling expands beyond business-related theories to workplace-related problem-solving as well as multimedia editing and professional development with the goal of empowering students to evaluate and produce digital content in order to communicate effectively.

In today's global market, brilliant marketers use digital storytelling to communicate product messages and build emotional ties with the audience by visualizing unique experiences. Consequently, product digital storytelling can highlight "business mindset" with a focus on curiosity as students generate questions, locate and evaluate sources, organize and analyze information, and communicate new knowledge. The digital storytelling project builds on this framework, geared towards cultivating students' market and product skills for the digital age.

All things considered, digital storytelling is a powerful tool for enhancing learning, particularly in interdisciplinary subjects like Business English. It equips students with crucial

technological, interpersonal, and communication skills that are vital for their careers. In business education, digital storytelling encourages a student-driven, inquiry-based approach, integrating content with practical skills such as critical thinking, multimedia editing, and professional communication. By steering students through storytelling processes, educators help them contextualize knowledge and develop a “business mindset.” This approach is especially valuable in the global market, where effective digital storytelling is used to build emotional connections and communicate product messages. Ultimately, digital storytelling prepares Business English students to navigate the digital age with creativity, language and market expertise.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Context and Participants

This research was set to investigate how digital storytelling impacted Business English students’ competences in the bilingual course of Intercultural Business Communication, lasting for 16 weeks, where both business knowledge and language use should be addressed. 106 third-year undergraduate students majoring in Business English took this course (95 females and 11 males). They have acquired considerable proficiency in English and have taken bilingual courses regarding international trades, marketing, economics, etc. They had prior CLIL experiences.

3.2 Instructional Design

The course of Intercultural Business Communication aims to build up students’ conceptual understanding of intercultural business culture, country-specific business knowhow and their language-based business communication competence in global business contexts. Cross-border product digital storytelling was blended into the course module to achieve the three-folded purposes: firstly, to foster students’ intercultural and language communication competences as the course itself required; secondly, to allow them to put into practice their business know-how learnt previously; thirdly, to promote creativity, that is, the students were asked to create original stories.

The delivery of the modules followed a process whereby the lectures and the seminars preceded the digital storytelling practice and a conscious effort was made to link the lecture and seminar theoretical topics with corresponding modules to facilitate effective knowledge transfer from theory to practice. The students were asked to create a 5-8-minute video with English subtitles to simulate a live-stream to pitch their selected product in group (3- 4 students maximum). All the students had to participate and appear in the livestream (either adding their voice, acting or both). All the digital stories were eventually presented in class so that all of them could be watched by the students. A peer evaluation was used in this presentation so that the whole class could get some feedback of this activity. The students got the average mark of this task by means of a double evaluation: a peer evaluation and a teacher one. The cross-border product digital storytelling procedure consisted of six steps: 1) study live-streams storytelling on Amazon, 2) research audience, 3) concept design, 4) script the live-stream, 5) digital production and 6)

present in class. Amazon website and a video-editing platform named Jianying are accessible to allow participants to get insights into product and marketing and to facilitate their digital storytelling production.

3.3 Data Collection

Qualitative data were collected from multiple sources: in-depth interviews, classroom observations, field notes, students’ product stories, reflective journals, teaching logs and teaching documents, including course syllabus and instructional manuals.

In-depth interviews were conducted with six voluntary participants, lasting about 40 minutes each, where they were asked about the questions concerning their perception of their competences by participating in cross-border product digital storytelling project. The interview focused on 1) the feelings over the project; 2) supports or gains got from the project; 3) problems or challenges encountered in the project. As such, the interview data were the main sources for exploring the participants’ perception of the digital storytelling and triangulated with the data collected from class observations, reflective journals and documents. To avoid misunderstandings, the language used for the interviews was the native language of the participants: Mandarin. All the interviews were audio-recorded and conducted at places convenient to the participants, and then transcribed and translated by the third and fourth authors.

Fieldwork could be selective and clouded by the researcher’s analytical perspective and positioning. Thus, although observations render part of the data, to nuance the findings and increase transparency by actively using participants’ go-along comments, verified quotes jotted down during observations, reflective journals and interview data. Such data triangulation can be seen as strengthening trustworthiness of findings and conclusion. It also helps compare with the complex nature of competence build-up involved with varied components and factors.

3.4 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis method was employed for qualitative data analysis. Initially, various forms of data were carefully sorted, coded, and categorized based on the research questions. Subsequently, the frequency of each code was counted to determine prominent themes. Thereafter, cross-data analysis was carried out. Consequently, themes emerged from the data without any predetermined theoretical suppositions. In essence, the data received an open-ended and comprehensive treatment to enable the emergence of main features that optimally address the research questions. For ensuring reliability, the two authors independently analyzed the data first and then engaged in a discussion to ensure inter-coder agreement. Subsequently, we integrated our analysis and interpretation within the same procedure to generate a more detailed analysis. Thus, we executed an iterative process centered around our research questions to identify segments representing a priori constructs, themes, or ideas. Additionally, the participants were invited to read and provide comments on the first draft of data analysis since any interpretation of a learning scene will be more accurate and their comments were

taken into consideration to refine the final analysis results.

All the codes were further reviewed, categorized, and integrated within and across different data sources, leading to four major themes of the cross-border product digital storytelling, including 1) live-stream skills, 2) collaboration, 3) critical thinking, 4) digital literacy and 5) language communication, as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Data Analysis Result

Themes	Codes
Live-stream skills (251)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audience analysis(32) • Interactivity(54) • Creativity(42) • On-camera presence(46) • Product demo(77)
Collaboration (169)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task allocation(29) • Commitment to goals(33) • Conflict resolution(25) • Peer support(52) • Knowledge sharing(30)
Critical thinking (147)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective learning(47) • Problem-solving(36) • Multiple perspectives(32) • Comparison and evaluation(32)
Digital literacy (154)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information search(41) • Filming and editing(44) • Audio knowhow and subtitling(36) • Special visual and sound effects(33)
Language communication (223)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluency in writing(40) • Richness of expressions(49) • Fluency in speaking(47) • Translation(25) • Active listening(29) • Intercultural knowledge(33)

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Live-stream Skills

In this course, the digital storytelling was incorporated in the cross-border livestream simulation since storytelling is highly relevant in the crowded global market, where every brand should differentiate itself from others by appealing to emotions and motives of people by personalized or compelling stories. As students worked through course content and assignments and started to conceptualize, research, and create their own product digital stories, they practiced and sharpened a range of live-stream skills.

To produce an effective product digital storytelling, students need to leverage their prior business knowledge and conduct research to identify target audience's needs and preferences. As Participant 102 mentioned in her reflection: "We were asked to select a product to sell globally so I think we should have the awareness of global business trend. We browsed Amazon bestseller list and decided to create an automated pet feeder livestream for time-poor American official workers. I am so happy our product has its own uniqueness. Analyzing consumers' pain points and predicting market trend are not only beneficial for crafting effective digital stories but also for using effective strategies to demonstrate our product. Most importantly, these skills are directly applicable to marketing and business communication." This indicates that students have developed a keen sense of analyzing audience

demographics and spot market niche. This skill allows them to adjust their communication style and content to engage their viewers more effectively, which is a valuable asset in both business presentations and customer interactions.

Students also learned to how to improve the interactivity and creativity in their digital storytelling. Participant 13 expressed that: "A livestream is not a monologue so we asked questions and incorporated live quizzes related to the product features to engage audience. The effect is not bad which I can know from my class' feedback." Besides, creativity of the students was stimulated greatly by the storytelling project, as Participant shared: "Integrating cross-border product digital storytelling has significantly boosted our creativity. Crafting stories that appeal to diverse markets made us to think outside the box and come up with innovative ways to present products. Our team worked on selling clothes and brainstormed to use a mini fashion show to demonstrate our products. We haven't thought we could be so creative. Resourcefulness can grow out of getting things done." This experience encourages students to create engaging narratives that capture the attention of global audiences, not only enhancing their creative skills but also making them more adaptable and versatile, which are essential qualities in the fast-paced world of international business.

What is more excited is that, the course witnessed the enhanced on-camera presence and product demonstration skills on students. Participant 75 supported this idea by saying that: "Initially, I felt nervous and awkward in front of the camera, which made it challenging to present the benefits of the lipstick clearly and confidently. However, through practice and feedback from peers I learned how to maintain eye contact with the camera, use appropriate body language, and modulate my voice to keep the audience engaged. I feel so relieved that I overcame the nervousness!" Regarding to product demo skill, Participant 18 stated: "we rehearsed the storytelling and found that we should think out way to highlight our water-proof feature of the smart-watch in a simple and mind-blowing way. So we dropped watch into a pan of water directly to show that feature. That's fun." The above extracts indicate that digital storytelling allowed students to gain some professional skills, like confidence and professionalism on camera, and effective product presentation, which are essential in marketing, sales, and customer interaction.

4.2 Collaboration

Collaboration was a must in the digital storytelling project since students had to work together to complete a series of complicated tasks. Some voices from the students are consistent with that idea:

"At first, our group faced challenges in dividing tasks effectively, which led to overlapping responsibilities and time waste. However, through discussions and role assignments, we learned to leverage each team member's strengths and expertise. Clear task allocation ensured that everyone knew their responsibilities, which reduced confusion and streamlined our workflow. (Participant 82)"

"...our team has consistently held fast to openness and respect,

creating a tolerant and encouraging work atmosphere to embrace diverse thinking. Whenever we came across different opinion, rather than imposing our own views on others, we had in-depth group discussions to share our viewpoints and insights. To make a fair and well-informed decision-making, we also used an anonymous voting. This not only boosted the team's cohesion but also enabled us to work the optimal solution when tricky problems rose. (Participant 12)”

“At the start, we often found ourselves departing from our main objectives due to the multi-tasks of our project and different opinions. However, by setting clear, measurable goals and regularly revisiting them, we learned to stay focused and pin down our priority. This commitment to our goals helped us prioritize tasks, allocate resources effectively, and stop arguing about some minor details. (Participant 50)”

“As we began to share insights and resources, I realized how much we could learn from each other. This open exchange of knowledge allowed us to combine diverse perspectives and experiences, leading to more innovative storytelling strategies. (Participant 36)”

“When working on the project, I often felt overwhelmed by the complexity of the tasks and the pressure to perform well. However, the encouragement and constructive feedback I received from my peers boosted my confidence and motivated me to push through challenges. Knowing that my classmates were willing to offer support and share their knowhow helped me feel less isolated and more capable of tackling difficult tasks (Participant 24).”

Fortunately, students reaped considerable benefits from this collaborative learning environment, not only yielding quality digital storytelling production, but also fostering a sense of community and mutual respect within the group. They realized the value of knowledge sharing and peer support in an international business context and also learned to how to resolve conflicts in teams by task dividing and goal setting (Participant 3).

4.3 Critical Thinking

In the dynamic and competitive business world, critical thinking enables students to analyze complex business situations accurately. They can evaluate different options, make informed decisions, and identify potential risks and opportunities. Digital storytelling production requires flexible thinking through the practical experience of doing – of creating, revising, rethinking, and revising yet again. This is inherent in the process of story creation and is taught explicitly throughout the semester. The following instances demonstrate this point:

“I would observe other teams’ livestream video carefully in order to figure out how they presented their product features, how they made the storytelling compelling and how they staged their settings. And also think about any aspects where there was room for improvement. In this way, I think our team also can create a better livestream by learning from other teams and minimizing some of their weaknesses. (Participant 27)”

“...live streaming production also honed my problem-solving skills and quick adaptability. In our digital production, we encountered various unexpected situations such as screen lag. I have learned how to quickly identify the problem and take measures to solve it. At the same time, I also pay more attention to the preparation work before the live broadcast, anticipate possible risks and worked out plan B. We learned to fix problems resourcefully and proactively. I now feel more prepared to handle complex situations with confidence and creativity. (Participant 79)”

“The livestream production is an eye-opening experience for me. Working with classmates with diverse ideas taught me the importance of considering various viewpoints when creating content. In our portable makeup mirror feature presentation, I just related it to my outdoor experience. But my peers suggested indoor upon travel when the hotel mirrors were poorly lit. The application scenarios of our product were wider so we were able to create stories that resonated with a broader audience. (Participant 46)”

Apparently, to create a good digital storytelling output, students were required to compare different storytelling techniques, market strategies, and cultural approaches to determine what would work best; they were also should critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each option, so as to make more informed decisions. This process fueled students’ enhancement of critical thinking skills, preparing them to tackle complex business problems with a structured, reflective, and analytical approach. These critical thinking skills are invaluable in any professional setting, particularly in international business, where unexpected challenges are a constant.

4.4 Digital Literacy

In cross-border product digital storytelling, students engaged with business knowledge related to marketing, consumer behavior, cultural knowledge etc., while they learned the craft of digital stories, moving beyond the relatively tactic text-based knowledge. Students filmed livestreams and analyzed diverse array of sources, including video and audio. They incorporated product features into graphics, images, and thought over how to tell their stories visually, communicate their product messages concisely and effectively, and maintain viewer interest through pacing and music. The following examples indicate how digital storytelling promotes awareness of students’ digital research, digital creation, and the capacity to engage with multimodal sources in new ways.

Participant 63 provided a clear idea of this by stating: “I actively searched for a large amount of information online about live streaming techniques, audience psychology, product display, and other aspects. I continuously learn and absorb new knowledge through watching excellent live streaming cases, participating in online seminars, reading professional books and blog articles, and other methods. At the same time, I actively practice and apply the skills I have learned to live streaming, testing and improving through practical operations.”

Likewise, Participant 14 expressed her opinion in the interview: “Through hands-on practice, I learned the

importance of good lighting, camera angles, and framing to create visually appealing content that captures the audience's attention. Editing skills were equally important, as they allowed us to piece together our footage in a way that enhanced the narrative flow and kept viewers engaged. I also learned how to cut out unnecessary content and add transitions that make the story more cohesive and professional. These skills are vital for creating compelling digital stories that stand out in a crowded market."

Participant 17 also supported this idea by saying that: "Initially, I thought special sound and visual effects were just for entertainment, but I soon realized their power in enhancing storytelling and keeping audiences engaged. Visual effects, such as animations and graphics, helped us emphasize key points and make our content more visually appealing, which is especially important when presenting complex ideas or features with considerable information."

Overall, creating content for livestreams often requires researching topics, finding reliable sources, and integrating current trends. This process improves students' research skills, making them adept at gathering and synthesizing information—a key competency in business analysis and reporting. Other digital production skills like filming, video editing and adding special effects are increasingly relevant in a business landscape where video content is a major communication tool.

4.5 Language Communication

Digital storytelling exposed students to a wide range of product-specific vocabulary. As they explored stories about different products and watch livestream resources, they encountered terms related to audience interaction, product features, and more. This built up their vocabulary resources and enabled them to express themselves more precisely in business contexts. Additionally, students also gained insights into different cultural perspectives, business practices, and consumer behaviors. For instance:

"At first, we relied heavily on basic vocabulary, expressions and even literal translation, which made our stories feel flat and hard to understand. The teacher asked us to watch Amazon live and we did so. As we learned to incorporate more varied and native-like language, our stories began to come alive, capturing the attention and imagination of the audience. Using a richer vocabulary allowed us to convey emotions, highlight our key points, and create more dynamic and engaging narratives. (Participant 4)"

Participant 29 also shared his gains in speaking: "Initially, I was nervous about speaking on camera, and this resulted in hesitant and unclear delivery. Through practice and feedback, I learned to speak more confidently and fluently and inject my emotion. Speaking fluently is not just about knowing the right words; it's about delivering them in a way that conveys confidence and your passion."

In the teaching logs, the teacher mentioned students' intercultural awareness and practices: One team tried to sell Chinese traditional style hair pins in the livestream and they managed to tailor their narrative style very direct to better suit

the low-context oriented audience. They carefully explained the craftsmanship and cultural significance behind each hair pin. By doing so, they not only promoted the products but also introduced Chinese traditional culture to a wider international audience, enhancing cross-cultural communication through this unique business approach.

In this case, students not only practiced their language skills in a real-world setting but also learned to adapt their communication style to different audiences. They become more confident in expressing themselves and handling various business scenarios. Moreover, dynamic interaction exposed them to different accents and language varieties, further enriching their language experience.

5. Conclusion

As mentioned earlier, many studies have explored the potential of digital storytelling in higher education [19], but few have elaborated how this approach happens in Business English teaching at a micro-level. Integrating digital storytelling into Business English education, especially through cross-border livestream simulations presented substantial theoretical and practical advantages. The findings from this study suggest that digital storytelling significantly enriches the learning experience by combining language instruction with essential business skills such as marketing, critical thinking, cross-cultural communication, and digital literacy.

Theoretically, the integration of digital storytelling into Business English teaching challenges conventional pedagogical frameworks that have traditionally focused on linguistic competencies alone. This approach aligns with ESP pedagogy and CLIL, which advocate for active, experiential learning where students build knowledge through engagement and reflection.

From a practical perspective, digital storytelling prepares students for real-world business scenarios. By developing live-streaming skills such as on-camera presence, audience engagement, and product demonstration, the students gained practical experience that connects theoretical knowledge to real-world application. The study shows that students learned to think critically and tailor their communication strategies to different demographics and cultures, crucial skills in international marketing and sales. Additionally, proficiency in using multimedia tools to enhance storytelling is a valuable skill in today's digital business environment. Equally important, the collaborative nature of digital storytelling project also promoted teamwork and interpersonal skills. Through digital production, students learned conflict resolution, embraced diverse perspectives, and developed their collaboration skills to work effectively in teams.

Drawing on the results from multi-sources, the study demonstrates the potential of using digital storytelling to aligning students' competences to the constantly changing employment market. The enchantment is perceivable since both the hard skills and soft skills can be boosted in this action-oriented and practice-based Business English teaching. Ultimately, latched on an integrated, creative, and skills-based teaching framework, digital storytelling prepares students

more effectively for the demands of the global business environment.

Funding

This research is supported by Department of Education of Guangdong Province (Project No. Yue Jiao Gao Han [2024] 9) [Project Title: Research on Tech-enhanced CLIL Approach to Fostering Business English Students' Core Competences]; research grants from Lingnan Normal University [Project Title: Research on Applying Gen-AI in Business English Teaching]; and grants from Lingnan Normal University (Project No. Lingnan Jiao Wu [2024] 81).

References

- [1] D. M. Hotzman, E. M. Kraft, "Skills Required of Business Graduates: Evidence from Undergraduate Alumni and Employers," *Business Education & Accreditation*, 2(1), pp. 49-59, 2010.
- [2] D. Sternad, "A Challenge-feedback Learning Approach to Teaching International Business," *Journal of Teaching in International Business*, 26(4), pp.245-257, 2015.
- [3] Y. Tian, and N. M. Suki, "Evaluating Future Trends of Digital Storytelling in Higher Education: A Bibliometric Analysis," *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies*, 17(17), pp. 1-15, 2023.
- [4] A. Lazareva, and G. Cruz-Martinez, "Digital Storytelling Project as a Way to Engage Students in Twenty-First Century Skills Learning," *International Studies Perspectives*, 22(4), pp. 383-406, 2021.
- [5] The People's Republic of China Ministry of Education (Ed.), *Curriculum Guide for English Major (Volume I)*, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, Beijing, 2020.
- [6] A. Tittel, O. Terxidis, "Entrepreneurial Competences Revised: Developing a Consolidated and Categorized List of Entrepreneurial Competences," *Entrepreneurship Education*, 3(1), pp. 1-35, 2020.
- [7] B. Neville, E. Dunne, C. Carre, "Patterns of Core and Generic Skill Provision in Higher Education," *Higher Education*, 37(1), pp. 71-93, 1999.
- [8] N. S. AlKahtani, and A. M. Syed, "Alignment of Undergraduate Business Student's Competencies with Saudi Market Requirements," *International Journal of Management in Education*, 12(3), pp. 252-263, 2018.
- [9] V. C. S. Rao, "English for Business Purposes: An ESP Approach," *Journal for Research Scholars and Professionals of English Language Teaching*, 3(15), pp. 1-8, 2019.
- [10] D. Coyle, P. Hood, D. Marsh, *Content and Language Integrated Learning*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010.
- [11] D. Lasagabaster, J. M. Sierra, "Immersion and CLIL in English: More differences than similarities," 64(4), pp. 367-375, 2010.
- [12] W. Pengnate, "Ways to Develop English Proficiency of Business Students: Implementation of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Approach," *International Journal of Education and Research*, 1(8), pp. 1-12, 2013.
- [13] T. Suwardy, G. Pan, and P. S. Seow, "Using Digital Storytelling to Engage Student Learning," *Accounting Education*, 22(2), pp. 109-124, 2013.
- [14] Y. C. Yang, and W. I. Wu, "Digital Storytelling for Enhancing Student Academic Achievement, Critical Thinking, and Learning Motivation: A Year-Long Experimental Study," *Computers & Education*, 59(2), pp. 339-352, 2012.
- [15] E. Alcalde-Peñalver, and A. Santamaría-Urbieta, "Digital Storytelling in ESP: Towards a New Literacy in Hybrid Language Learning," *Aula Abierta*, 50(2), pp. 567-576, 2021.
- [16] J. F. Barber, and R. Siemens, "Digital Storytelling: New Opportunities for Humanities Scholarship and Pedagogy," *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 3(1), pp. 1-14, 2016.
- [17] E. R. McDougal, H. A. Syrdal, R. Gravois, and A. F. Kemp, "The Power of Story: Using Storytelling to Increase Students' Confidence and Competence in Applying Marketing Concepts," *Marketing Education Review*, 31(2), pp. 119-124, 2021.
- [18] L. Castañeda, and N. Selwyn, "More Than Tools? Making Sense of the Ongoing Digitizations of Higher Education," *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 15(1), pp. 1-10, 2018.
- [19] L. Austen, N. Pickering, and M. Judge, "Student Reflections on the Pedagogy of Transitions into Higher Education, through Digital Storytelling," *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 45(3), pp. 337-348, 2021.

Author Profile

Yanshen Yu received B.S. degree in English from Northeast Normal University in 2002 and M.S. degree in Theoretical Linguistics & Foreign Applied Linguistics from Shanghai University in 2009. She is a lecturer in School of Foreign Studies, Lingnan Normal University, Zhanjiang, PRC. Her research focuses on applied linguistics, intercultural communication, Business English and international business.