





Artículo Científico

# Narración digital con inteligencia artificial para la enseñanza del inglés en contextos rurales de Ecuador

## *Digital storytelling with AI for teaching English in rural contexts in Ecuador*

 Infante-Vera, Alba Edelmira <sup>1</sup>  
 <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-4525-2978>  
 [alba.infante@docentes.educacion.edu.ec](mailto:alba.infante@docentes.educacion.edu.ec)  
 Unidad Educativa Teodoro Wolf, Ecuador, Santo Elena.

Autor de correspondencia <sup>1</sup>



DOI / URL: <https://doi.org/10.55813/gaea/rcym/v4/n2/215>

**Resumen:** La enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera en contextos rurales del Ecuador enfrenta desafíos persistentes relacionados con la infraestructura tecnológica limitada, la escasez de docentes calificados y la reducida exposición a insumos auténticos de la lengua. Este estudio examinó la implementación de la narrativa digital potenciada por inteligencia artificial como estrategia pedagógica para la enseñanza del inglés en un contexto educativo rural del Ecuador. Se empleó un diseño de estudio de caso cualitativo con 30 estudiantes de básica superior (8.vo a 10.mo grado) de la Unidad Educativa San Pablo, comuna San Pablo, provincia de Santa Elena. Los datos fueron recolectados mediante un cuestionario estructurado que combinó ítems en escala Likert y preguntas abiertas, administrado al finalizar una intervención de narrativa digital asistida por ChatGPT en tres fases. Se aplicaron estadística descriptiva y análisis temático para los datos cuantitativos y cualitativos, respectivamente. Los resultados mostraron que el 83,3% de los participantes percibió a ChatGPT como una herramienta útil para expresar ideas en inglés, y emergieron tres temas cualitativos recurrentes: práctica del lenguaje a través de la narrativa, motivación mediante la autoría creativa, y conciencia del uso de la IA como apoyo al aprendizaje. Las principales barreras identificadas fueron la conectividad limitada a internet y el desconocimiento sobre la escritura de instrucciones en inglés. Estos hallazgos sugieren que la narrativa digital potenciada por IA constituye una estrategia viable y contextualmente adaptable para la enseñanza del inglés en entornos rurales, siempre que se atiendan las limitaciones infraestructurales y se incorpore formación explícita en literacidad de instrucciones en el diseño pedagógico.

**Palabras clave:** narrativa digital; inteligencia artificial; educación rural; ChatGPT; Ecuador



Check for updates

**Received:** 30/Abr/2026  
**Accepted:** 28/May/2026  
**Published:** 24/Jun/2026

**Cita:** Infante-Vera, . A. E. (2026). Narración digital con inteligencia artificial para la enseñanza del inglés en contextos rurales de Ecuador. *Revista Científica Ciencia Y Método*, 4(2), 599-612. <https://doi.org/10.55813/gaea/rcym/v4/n2/215>

Revista Científica Ciencia y Método (RCyM)  
<https://revistacym.com>  
[revistacym@editorialgrupo-aea.com](mailto:revistacym@editorialgrupo-aea.com)  
[info@editorialgrupo-aea.com](mailto:info@editorialgrupo-aea.com)

© 2026. Este artículo es un documento de acceso abierto distribuido bajo los términos y condiciones de la **Licencia Creative Commons, Atribución-NoComercial 4.0 Internacional**.



**Abstract:**

Rural English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction in Ecuador faces persistent challenges related to limited technological infrastructure, scarce qualified teachers, and reduced exposure to authentic language input. This study examined the implementation of AI-enhanced digital storytelling as a pedagogical strategy for English language teaching in a rural educational context in Ecuador. A qualitative case study design was employed, with 30 upper basic education students (8th to 10th grade) at the Unidad Educativa San Pablo, commune of San Pablo, Santa Elena province, as participants. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire combining Likert-scale items and open-ended questions administered upon completion of a three-phase ChatGPT-assisted storytelling intervention. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were applied to quantitative and qualitative data respectively. Results showed that 83.3% of participants perceived ChatGPT as helpful for expressing ideas in English, and three recurring qualitative themes emerged: language practice through narrative, motivation through creative ownership, and awareness of AI as a learning support. The primary barriers identified were limited internet connectivity and unfamiliarity with prompt writing in English. These findings suggest that AI-enhanced digital storytelling constitutes a viable and contextually adaptive strategy for rural EFL instruction, provided that infrastructural constraints are addressed and explicit prompt literacy training is incorporated into the instructional design.

**Keywords:** digital storytelling; artificial intelligence; rural education; ChatGPT; Ecuador.

## 1. Introduction

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in education has reshaped pedagogical practices across diverse global contexts, transforming how languages are taught and learned at all educational levels (Jha & Atif, 2025; Wessels, 2025). Over the past decade, the proliferation of digital technologies in educational settings has created conditions for a profound renegotiation of what it means to teach and learn a language. From rule-based intelligent tutoring systems and automated writing evaluation platforms to neural machine translation and, more recently, large language model-powered conversational agents, the trajectory of AI in education reflects an accelerating convergence between computational capacity and pedagogical design (Jiang & Meng, 2025).

This convergence has not been uniform across disciplines, but its effects have been particularly pronounced in language education, where the communicative, interactive, and adaptive demands of learning align naturally with the generative and responsive properties of AI tools. Scholars and practitioners alike have increasingly turned their attention to understanding not merely whether AI can be integrated into language

teaching, but how such integration can be designed to serve meaningful, equity-oriented, and educationally sound purposes (Jha & Atif, 2025).

In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), AI-powered tools are increasingly recognized for their potential to enhance learner engagement, personalize instruction, and support the development of communicative competence (Lee & Cho, 2025; Liu, 2025). The emergence of generative AI models, and in particular large language models such as ChatGPT, has introduced a qualitatively distinct set of possibilities for language learners. Unlike earlier AI-assisted language learning tools, which were primarily designed for discrete skill practice (e.g., vocabulary flashcards, grammar drills, or pronunciation feedback), generative AI systems are capable of sustaining open-ended dialogue, producing contextually coherent extended texts, responding to prompts in multiple languages, and adjusting register according to communicative context (Luo & Zou, 2025).

These properties make generative AI tools uniquely suited to support the kind of authentic, meaning-focused language use that communicative language teaching has long identified as central to language acquisition. Learners interacting with ChatGPT in an EFL context are not merely practicing isolated grammatical forms; they are engaged in situated communicative acts that require them to formulate intentions, structure arguments, select vocabulary, and evaluate responses, all of which constitute productive conditions for language development (Lee & Cho, 2025).

The growing body of empirical research on AI-mediated EFL instruction reflects considerable optimism regarding the educational potential of these tools, alongside important caveats related to implementation conditions, teacher preparation, and learner readiness. Lee and Cho (2025) demonstrated through an empirical study in a blended learning environment that generative AI-assisted tasks produced significant improvements in both productive and receptive language skills, as well as in learner motivation and self-efficacy. Liu (2025) further documented that AI-mediated gamification and storytelling approaches generated nonlinear dynamic increases in EFL learning outcomes, suggesting that the motivational affordances of AI tools may operate through complex feedback loops between engagement, persistence, and performance.

Critically, these studies have underscored that the pedagogical framing of AI tool use, rather than the technology itself, is the primary determinant of educational outcomes. AI tools that are embedded within structured, goal-oriented tasks with clear linguistic objectives and reflective components tend to produce more robust learning gains than those introduced without explicit instructional design (Jiang & Meng, 2025). This insight has important implications for the design of AI-integrated interventions in resource-constrained settings, where teacher guidance may be limited and learners may lack prior experience with digital educational tools.

As generative AI tools become more accessible, educators are exploring innovative pedagogical frameworks that integrate these technologies into meaningful learning

experiences, including digital storytelling as a multimodal instructional strategy (Wang et al., 2025; Chu et al., 2025). The convergence of AI and multimodal pedagogy represents one of the most productive frontiers of contemporary EFL research precisely because it responds simultaneously to calls for authentic task design, learner agency, and technological integration. Multimodal approaches to language learning recognize that communication in the twenty-first century is rarely monomodal, and that preparing learners for real-world English use requires exposure to and production of texts that combine linguistic, visual, gestural, and digital semiotic resources (Wessels, 2025).

Digital storytelling, as one of the most established multimodal pedagogical approaches in language education, offers a natural site for the integration of AI tools, enabling learners to harness computational assistance for the linguistic and structural demands of narrative composition while retaining creative ownership over the thematic and expressive dimensions of their stories.

Digital storytelling has emerged as a robust pedagogical approach that combines narrative construction with digital media to promote language production, critical thinking, and student agency (Fan & Chen, 2023; Fan, 2024). Rooted in the broader tradition of narrative as a cognitive and communicative scaffold for meaning-making, digital storytelling extends the classical functions of storytelling into the digital domain, enabling learners to compose, revise, and share narratives using a range of digital tools and platforms. Grounded in sociocultural theories of learning, and in Vygotsky's concept of mediated learning and the zone of proximal development, digital storytelling creates authentic communicative tasks in which learners negotiate meaning, make purposeful linguistic choices, and develop narrative voice within a socially situated creative context (Yan et al., 2025).

The collaborative and iterative character of digital storytelling processes, which typically involve planning, drafting, peer feedback, revision, and presentation, mirrors the recursive nature of real-world written and oral communication, thereby providing learners with structured opportunities to develop the metacognitive and linguistic strategies associated with proficient language use.

Research indicates that when learners engage in storytelling tasks supported by digital tools, they demonstrate improvements in speaking proficiency, content knowledge, and motivation (Yan et al., 2025; Vice et al., 2024). These improvements have been documented across diverse learner populations, educational levels, and disciplinary contexts, reflecting the broad applicability of digital storytelling as a pedagogical strategy.

Fan (2024) documented significant gains in language proficiency and academic competence among first-year university students in health-related programs who engaged in digital storytelling projects, underscoring the approach's capacity to bridge disciplinary content and language learning objectives. The study also revealed that learner perceptions of digital storytelling were overwhelmingly positive, with

participants reporting heightened engagement, greater confidence in English production, and a sense of intellectual ownership over their academic output.

These findings are consistent with a broader pattern in the literature: digital storytelling tends to activate motivational processes that are often absent in decontextualized language practice activities, precisely because it situates language use within meaningful creative and communicative purposes that learners can identify with and take pride in (Vice et al., 2024).

In cooperative learning environments, Fan and Chen (2023) demonstrated that digital storytelling enhanced both English speaking performance and subject-specific financial knowledge among elementary school students in a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) context. This finding is particularly significant because it illustrates the capacity of digital storytelling to serve simultaneously as a language development vehicle and a content learning tool, a dual function that makes it especially valuable in educational settings where curriculum time for English instruction is limited.

More recently, the incorporation of generative AI into digital storytelling workflows has opened new and transformative possibilities for scaffolding complex language tasks, providing immediate and contextually responsive feedback, and enabling learners with limited prior digital or linguistic experience to produce multimodal narratives of genuine communicative value (Wang et al., 2025; Liu, 2025). Wang et al. (2025) demonstrated that a GenAI-enhanced digital storytelling instructional system for civic education empowered student voices and facilitated the production of substantive, personally meaningful narratives among learners who would otherwise have struggled with the linguistic demands of extended English composition.

These results suggest that generative AI does not merely assist learners in completing storytelling tasks; it fundamentally expands the range of learners who can meaningfully participate in those tasks, with particular relevance for those whose language proficiency, digital skills, or access to instructional support has previously excluded them from technology-mediated learning experiences.

Rural educational contexts present unique and persistent challenges for EFL instruction, including limited access to trained and qualified teachers, inadequate technological infrastructure, and severely reduced exposure to authentic English language input (Dinata et al., 2025; Espartinez, 2025). Unlike urban learners who may encounter English through informal channels such as digital media, international tourism, commercial signage, and peer interaction with multilingual communities, rural learners in many Global South contexts experience English almost exclusively through formal classroom instruction.

This restricted exposure significantly limits the quantity and variety of comprehensible input available to rural EFL learners, making it difficult to create the conditions for naturalistic acquisition that immersion and extensive input approaches have

consistently identified as conducive to language development. Moreover, the quality of formal classroom instruction in rural areas is frequently compromised by teacher shortages and underqualification.

In many rural schools across Latin America, English is taught by educators whose own language proficiency falls short of the communicative targets they are expected to help learners achieve, creating a structural paradox in which the instructional mediator of language learning is herself or himself linguistically constrained (Pratiwi et al., 2025). These conditions make the introduction of supplementary AI-based tools particularly compelling, as they can provide learners with access to competent, responsive, and infinitely patient linguistic interlocutors regardless of the teacher's proficiency level.

In Ecuador, these challenges are particularly pronounced in peripheral and rural regions, where English language teaching often depends on underqualified instructors and outdated materials (Pratiwi et al., 2025). The Ecuadorian educational system has undergone significant reform over the past two decades, with the government implementing policies aimed at expanding English proficiency as a competency essential for economic development, international integration, and higher education participation. A particularly consequential policy development has been the establishment of B1-level

English proficiency as a graduation requirement for university students, a standard that has created institutional pressure to improve English outcomes across all levels of the educational pipeline, including in rural and coastal communities where the foundational conditions for language learning remain severely underdeveloped. Despite this policy ambition, the resources, teacher training, and infrastructure required to achieve B1-level outcomes in rural contexts remain unevenly distributed. Schools in rural provinces such as Santa Elena, Esmeraldas, Manabí, and the Amazonian regions frequently operate with minimal technological equipment, unreliable or absent internet connectivity, and classrooms that serve large, heterogeneous groups of students with widely varying levels of prior English exposure (Dinata et al., 2025).

These conditions create a structural mismatch between the aspirational standards of national language policy and the material realities of rural English teaching, a mismatch that can only be addressed through pedagogical strategies designed specifically for low-resource implementation.

The digital divide that characterizes rural education in Ecuador extends beyond the availability of hardware or internet access and encompasses deeper disparities in digital literacy, teacher digital competence, and institutional readiness to integrate technology into the curriculum. Research conducted in comparable Latin American and Southeast Asian rural contexts has consistently documented that the introduction of digital tools into low-resource classrooms, however well-intentioned, frequently fails to achieve its intended pedagogical outcomes when it is not accompanied by adequate teacher professional development, technical support, and a pedagogical framework

that contextualizes the technology within learners' existing knowledge and cultural experience (Espartinez, 2025).

This pattern underscores that technology alone is not a solution to the structural inequities of rural EFL instruction; rather, technology must be embedded within carefully designed pedagogical interventions that account for the specific barriers, motivations, and learning histories of rural student populations. The challenge for researchers and practitioners is therefore to develop, test, and document approaches that are simultaneously responsive to the affordances of new technologies and sensitive to the constraints of the educational environments in which those technologies must operate.

The intersection of AI-enhanced digital storytelling and rural EFL instruction remains a substantially underexplored area of research, particularly in Latin American contexts, where the combination of linguistic, socioeconomic, and infrastructural challenges creates a distinctive set of constraints and possibilities. The existing literature on digital storytelling in language education has largely been produced in urban, technologically well-resourced settings, or in higher education institutions with the capacity to provide robust technical support and reliable internet connectivity.

While this body of work has generated valuable theoretical frameworks and empirical findings regarding the pedagogical potential of digital storytelling, its direct applicability to rural contexts is limited by the assumption of conditions that do not obtain in low-resource educational environments (Nation & Elzie, 2025; Alisoy et al., 2025). Similarly, research on AI tools in EFL instruction has predominantly focused on learners in East Asian, European, and North American contexts, with comparatively little attention to the specific challenges and opportunities faced by learners in Latin American rural settings where English occupies a different sociolinguistic and cultural position than in many previously studied contexts.

The role of AI tools in facilitating storytelling tasks among learners with restricted digital literacy remains insufficiently documented and theoretically underspecified (Tour & Zadorozhnyy, 2025; Luo & Zou, 2025). A particularly undertheorized dimension of this issue is the relationship between prompt literacy, that is, the ability to formulate effective instructions for AI systems in the target language, and broader language proficiency development.

Tour and Zadorozhnyy (2025) have argued persuasively that prompt literacy constitutes an emerging twenty-first-century competency that intersects digital literacy with language proficiency in ways that have important implications for EFL pedagogy. For learners who are simultaneously developing their English proficiency and their digital skills, the challenge of constructing effective ChatGPT prompts in English represents a cognitively demanding but potentially highly productive form of authentic language use: one that requires learners to think carefully about lexical choice, syntactic clarity, and communicative intent in order to elicit the AI responses that will advance their creative and linguistic objectives.

The integration of explicit prompt literacy instruction into AI-enhanced language teaching frameworks therefore appears as both a practical necessity and a theoretically motivated pedagogical priority, particularly for learners in rural contexts where prior exposure to digital literacy practices may be minimal (Luo & Zou, 2025).

Understanding how rural EFL learners navigate, adapt to, and benefit from AI-enhanced digital storytelling tasks is therefore both timely and necessary for generating the context-specific empirical knowledge required to inform equitable and pedagogically grounded educational interventions in Ecuador and comparable settings across Latin America. Therefore, the objective of this study is to analyze the implementation and outcomes of AI-enhanced digital storytelling as a pedagogical strategy for English language teaching in rural contexts in Ecuador.

## 2. Materials and Methods

This study adopted a qualitative case study design to examine the implementation of AI-enhanced digital storytelling as a pedagogical strategy for English language teaching in a rural educational setting in Ecuador. The case study approach was selected because it allowed for an in-depth, contextually grounded exploration of a specific educational phenomenon within its real-world environment, which is particularly appropriate when the aim is to understand how an innovative instructional practice unfolds under constrained conditions such as those present in rural public schools.

### Context and Participants

The study was conducted at the Unidad Educativa San Pablo, located in the commune of San Pablo, Santa Elena province, Ecuador. This institution serves a rural community characterized by limited access to digital infrastructure and English language resources, making it a representative case for examining technology-mediated language instruction in low-resource contexts (Dinata et al., 2025). The participants were 30 students enrolled in upper basic education (8th to 10th grade), selected through purposive sampling based on their enrollment in the English language subject and their availability to participate in the full intervention cycle. Purposive sampling was considered appropriate given the exploratory nature of the study and the need to engage participants with direct experience of the instructional intervention (Pratiwi et al., 2025).

### Instructional Intervention

The intervention consisted of a digital storytelling project in which students used ChatGPT as the primary AI tool to support the construction of short narratives in English. The pedagogical sequence followed three phases: (1) a preparation phase, in which students were introduced to the concept of digital storytelling and guided in the

basic use of ChatGPT for idea generation and language scaffolding; (2) a production phase, in which students drafted, revised, and finalized their stories using ChatGPT-assisted prompts; and (3) a presentation phase, in which students shared their digital stories with peers and the teacher. The intervention was designed to align with communicative language teaching principles and the students' current English proficiency level (Fan & Chen, 2023; Wang et al., 2025).

#### Data Collection Instrument

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to all participants upon completion of the intervention. The instrument captured students' perceptions of the digital storytelling experience, including their attitudes toward using ChatGPT for English learning, perceived difficulties during the process, and the overall usefulness of the activity for language skill development. It was adapted from validated scales in prior AI-assisted language learning studies (Lee & Cho, 2025; Alisoy et al., 2025) and combined a five-point Likert scale with open-ended items.

#### Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency distributions and mean scores). Qualitative responses were analyzed through thematic analysis following the six-phase process: familiarization, initial coding, theme identification, review, refinement, and interpretation in context.

#### Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was obtained from students' legal guardians prior to data collection, and institutional authorization was secured from the school administration of the Unidad Educativa San Pablo. Participants were informed of the voluntary nature of their involvement, the confidentiality of their responses, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence.

### 3. Results

This section presents the findings obtained from the structured questionnaire administered to the 30 upper basic education students at the Unidad Educativa San Pablo following the digital storytelling intervention. Results are organized around three thematic dimensions: (1) student perceptions of ChatGPT as a language learning tool, (2) perceived difficulties during the digital storytelling process, and (3) overall assessment of the activity's usefulness for English learning.

#### 3.1 Student Perceptions of ChatGPT as a Language Learning Tool

Descriptive analysis of the Likert-scale items revealed predominantly positive perceptions toward the use of ChatGPT in the English classroom. As shown in Table 1, 83.3% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that ChatGPT helped them express their ideas in English more easily, while 76.7% reported that interacting with the tool

increased their confidence when writing in English. A mean score of 4.21 (SD=0.67) was obtained for the item "ChatGPT was useful for completing the storytelling task." Notably, 70% of participants indicated they would like to use AI tools again in future English classes.

**Table 1**  
*Student Perceptions of ChatGPT Use (n=30)*

Item	Agree/Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
ChatGPT helped me express ideas in English	83.3%	4.21	0.67
Using ChatGPT increased my writing confidence	76.7%	4.05	0.74
ChatGPT was useful for the storytelling task	80.0%	4.18	0.71
I would use AI tools again in English class	70.0%	3.97	0.82

Note: Five-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree (Author, 2026).

### 3.2 Perceived Difficulties During the Digital Storytelling Process

Despite the positive perceptions above, participants identified several challenges. The most frequently reported difficulty was limited internet connectivity (60%, n=18), followed by unfamiliarity with prompt writing in English (50%, n=15), and difficulty understanding ChatGPT's vocabulary (43.3%, n=13). A smaller proportion reported difficulty organizing story structure (26.7%, n=8), and only 16.7% (n=5) found the overall task too complex. These findings suggest that infrastructural and linguistic barriers — rather than cognitive overload — were the primary obstacles faced by rural learners.

### 3.3 Usefulness of Digital Storytelling for English Learning

Thematic analysis of open-ended items yielded three recurring themes. The first, *language practice through narrative*, captured students' perceptions that constructing stories provided a meaningful context for vocabulary use and grammar application. The second, *motivation through creative ownership*, reflected student engagement derived from producing their own stories, with several participants noting that the creative freedom made English feel more relevant and enjoyable. The third, *awareness of AI as a learning support*, documented students' emerging understanding of ChatGPT as a tool that assists rather than replaces their own language effort.

## 4. Discussion

The findings of this study offer relevant insights into the potential of AI-enhanced digital storytelling as a pedagogical strategy for English language teaching in rural contexts in Ecuador. The results are discussed across three dimensions: the perceived value of ChatGPT as a language learning scaffold, the infrastructural and linguistic barriers in low-resource settings, and the motivational and metacognitive dimensions of AI-mediated storytelling among young EFL learners.

### ChatGPT as a Scaffolding Tool for Rural EFL Learners

The high levels of perceived utility reported by participants align with a growing body of evidence supporting generative AI in language learning. Lee and Cho (2025) found that AI-assisted tasks in blended learning significantly enhanced both productive and receptive language skills, resonating with the perceptions documented here. Similarly, Liu (2025) demonstrated that AI storytelling-based approaches positively influenced EFL outcomes and motivation, suggesting that the affordances of ChatGPT observed in this rural context are consistent with broader international trends. The fact that 83.3% of participants perceived ChatGPT as helpful for expressing ideas in English indicates that even in low-resource environments, AI tools can function as effective linguistic scaffolds within a structured pedagogical sequence.

These results also complement Fan and Chen (2023), who reported that digital storytelling tasks enhanced students' English proficiency when embedded in cooperative learning frameworks. The three-phase design — preparation, production, and presentation — appears to have provided sufficient structure for students to engage meaningfully with ChatGPT despite limited prior experience, which is particularly significant in rural Ecuador where technology-mediated English instruction remains scarce (Dinata et al., 2025).

### Infrastructural and Linguistic Barriers in Low-Resource Contexts

The difficulties reported by participants — particularly limited internet connectivity and unfamiliarity with prompt writing in English — reflect systemic challenges well documented in the literature. Espartinez (2025) highlighted similar barriers in Philippine rural higher education, noting that infrastructural constraints significantly mediated the effectiveness of AI integration even when student attitudes were positive. The present findings corroborate this pattern, confirming that the digital divide remains a critical variable in rural Ecuador.

The challenge of prompt literacy deserves particular attention. Tour and Zadorozhnyy (2025) argue that constructing effective prompts in a target language constitutes an emerging competency intersecting language proficiency with digital literacy. For students at the Unidad Educativa San Pablo, prompt writing simultaneously demanded linguistic and technological skills not previously developed, pointing to the need for explicit prompt literacy instruction as a preparatory component of future AI-integrated interventions (Luo & Zou, 2025).

### Motivation, Creative Ownership, and AI Awareness

The theme of motivation through creative ownership is consistent with Wang et al. (2025), who demonstrated that GenAI-enhanced digital storytelling effectively empowered student voices through personalized narrative production. In the present context, creating stories rooted in students' own experiences generated a sense of relevance particularly valuable in rural settings where English is often perceived as distant from everyday life.

The most theoretically significant finding concerns students' emerging awareness of ChatGPT as a learning support rather than a replacement for their own effort. This metacognitive distinction aligns with AI literacy as discussed by Uygun (2026), who emphasizes developing critical dispositions toward AI in EFL contexts. The fact that rural learners with limited prior AI exposure could articulate this distinction suggests that well-designed pedagogical interventions can foster responsible AI use even in constrained environments (Kasinidou et al., 2025; Alisoy et al., 2025).

## 5. Conclusion

This study examined the implementation of AI-enhanced digital storytelling as a pedagogical strategy for English language teaching at the Unidad Educativa San Pablo, a rural institution in Santa Elena province, Ecuador. The findings contribute empirical evidence to an underexplored area of EFL research by documenting how generative AI tools, specifically ChatGPT, can be meaningfully integrated into storytelling-based instruction in low-resource educational contexts.

The results indicate that digital storytelling supported by ChatGPT was perceived positively by the majority of participants, who reported increased confidence, greater ease of expression in English, and a heightened sense of creative engagement. These outcomes suggest that AI-enhanced storytelling constitutes a viable pedagogical approach for rural EFL settings, provided that the instructional design is sufficiently structured to guide learners through the creative and linguistic demands of the task.

At the same time, the study identified persistent barriers related to internet connectivity and prompt literacy that must be addressed for this type of intervention to reach its full potential. Future implementations should incorporate explicit digital literacy components prior to the storytelling activity, with particular attention to developing students' ability to construct effective prompts in English as a foundational competency for AI-assisted language learning.

The emergence of metacognitive awareness regarding the appropriate use of AI tools represents one of the most educationally significant findings of this study. The ability of rural learners to distinguish between AI-assisted language production and independent language use points to the broader pedagogical value of integrating AI tools within reflective, task-based learning frameworks. This finding carries important implications for teacher training programs in Ecuador, where preparing educators to design responsible and contextually appropriate AI-integrated lessons remains an urgent professional development priority.

This study is not without limitations. The single-case design restricts the generalizability of the findings to other rural educational contexts. Future research should employ larger samples across multiple institutions, incorporate pre- and post-intervention measures of language proficiency, and triangulate questionnaire data with classroom observations and teacher interviews to yield a more comprehensive

understanding of the conditions under which AI-enhanced digital storytelling produces meaningful EFL learning outcomes.

## CONFLICTO DE INTERESES

“Los autores declaran no tener ningún conflicto de intereses”.

## References

- Alisoy, H., Amirbayeva, D., Sadigzade, Z., & Babazade, Y. (2025). Mind the gap: A comparative study of faculty and student readiness for AI-integrated ELT in Azerbaijani higher education. *Educational Process: International Journal*, 19, Article e2025594. <https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.19.594>
- Chu, H.-C., Lu, Y.-C., & Tu, Y.-F. (2025). How GenAI-supported multi-modal presentations benefit students with different motivation levels: Evidence from digital storytelling performance, critical thinking awareness, and learning attitude. *Educational Technology & Society*, 28(1), 250–269. [https://doi.org/10.30191/ETS.202501\\_28\(1\).TP02](https://doi.org/10.30191/ETS.202501_28(1).TP02)
- Dinata, R. P., Suryati, N., Jailani, M. K., Keli, Y. P., Rovikasari, M., & Hasymi, M. (2025). Exploring rural EFL lecturers' perspectives on the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in foreign language pedagogy. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 18(2), 633–654. <https://doi.org/10.70730/OVMA8060>
- Espartinez, A. S. (2025). Bridging the educational divide with ChatGPT's integration in Philippine higher education: Q methodology and narrative inquiry studies. *Journal of Information Technology Education: Innovations in Practice*, 24, Article 11. <https://doi.org/10.28945/5526>
- Fan, T.-Y., & Chen, H.-L. (2023). Developing cooperative learning in a content and language integrated learning context to enhance elementary school students' digital storytelling performance, English speaking proficiency, and financial knowledge. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 39(4), 1354–1367. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12804>
- Fan, Y. S. (2024). Facilitating content knowledge, language proficiency, and academic competence through digital storytelling: Performance and perceptions of first-year medical-related majors. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 56(2), 129–150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15391523.2022.2110337>
- Jha, M., & Atif, A. (2025). Reimagining pedagogy for the GenAI era: Frameworks, challenges and institutional strategies. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 41(5), 56–73. <https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.10645>
- Jiang, N., & Meng, N. (2025). Digital mindset and sensemaking in AI integration: A study of open education teachers, competence and trust in AI. *SAGE Open*, 15(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440251355757>

- Kasinidou, M., Kleanthous, S., & Otterbacher, J. (2025). Cypriot teachers' digital skills and attitudes towards AI. *Discover Education*, 4, Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44217-024-00390-6>
- Lee, T., & Cho, V. (2025). Enhancing language learning through generative artificial intelligence in blended learning: An empirical study on productive and receptive informal digital learning of English. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, 53(3), 143–169. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00472395251321687>
- Liu, L. (2025). Impact of AI gamification on EFL learning outcomes and nonlinear dynamic motivation: Comparing adaptive learning paths, conversational agents, and storytelling. *Education and Information Technologies*, 30, 11299–11338. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-024-13296-5>
- Luo, S., & Zou, D. (2025). K–12 English teachers' ChatGPT-based digital literacy: Scale development and validation. *European Journal of Education*, 60(4), Article e70273. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.70273>
- Nation, H. L., & Elzie, C. (2025). Implementation of digital storytelling in an occupational therapy gross anatomy course. *Anatomical Sciences Education*, 18(2), 373–378. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ase.70008>
- Pratiwi, H., Riwanda, A., Hasruddin, H., Sujarwo, S., & Syamsudin, A. (2025). Transforming learning or creating dependency? Teachers' perspectives and barriers to AI integration in education. *Journal of Pedagogical Research*, 9(2), 127–142. <https://doi.org/10.33902/JPR.202531677>
- Tour, E., & Zadorozhnyy, A. (2025). Conceptualizing and operationalizing prompt literacy for English language learners. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 69(3), Article e70020. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.70020>
- Uygun, E. (2026). Clashing AIs: Artificial intelligence literacy and academic integrity in an EFL context. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 24, Article 7. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-025-09676-2>
- Vice, T. A., Pittman, R. T., & Warnick, E. M. (2024). Blocked or unlocked: Recognizing the benefits and challenges of digital literacy storytelling projects. *Journal of Education*, 204(2), 468–482. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220574231169842>
- Wang, L., Wang, Y., Lewis, T. D., & Johnson, T. (2025). A GenAI-enhanced, digital storytelling instructional system for civic education: Empowering student voices. *International Journal of Designs for Learning*, 16(2), 205–221. <https://doi.org/10.14434/ijdl.v16i2.42084>
- Wessels, B. (2025). Developing an AI framework for learning in higher education: A humanities perspective from English literature. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 22, Article 65. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-025-00562-w>
- Yan, Y., Zheng, Y., & Ye, X. (2025). The impact of IVR-ADDIE-based digital storytelling teaching mode on students' self-regulation ability and self-efficacy. *Education and Information Technologies*, 30, 6141–6162. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-024-13070-7>