KOREAN JOURNAL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS

Improving Output Ability Through Transmedia Storytelling: Based on Formulaic Sequences*

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ABSTRACT

Lee, Jihyun. 2023. Improving output ability through transmedia storytelling: Based on formulaic sequences. *Korean Journal of English Language and Linguistics* 23, 254-268.

Transmedia storytelling involves distributing fictional information across multiple media to create a unified entertainment experience that requires active user participation. This approach aligns with the idea that learners should be at the center of the learning process. From a linguistic perspective, language learners encounter a multitude of formulaic sequences that are critical to their learning, and transmedia storytelling can be an effective way to expose them to these sequences. The aim of this study is to explore the potential impact of transmedia storytelling on English output ability in an English-as-a-foreign language (EFL) setting. The case study was conducted over 15 weeks with 15 university students in Seoul, Korea. Divided into three groups according to their preferences, each group studied English using various media based on Marvel, Harry Potter, and Twilight franchises, including comics, movies, novels, pop-up books, fan fictions, and online bulletin boards. The experimental procedure involved understanding the franchise content, finding information, identifying language (formulaic sequences), and writing to expand the worldview of the franchises. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test results showed a statistically significant improvement in content, organization, and language. The findings also suggest that explicit instruction on language is necessary. The participants showed varying levels of participation in transmedia storytelling, and interviews revealed mixed attitudes toward its use.

KEYWORDS

transmedia storytelling, language learning, output ability, formulaic sequences, media franchises

1. Introduction

In today's era of pervasive digital communication, the ability to communicate effectively through speaking and writing is crucial. Developing these skills requires frequent practice of output activities. Many teachers have reported that their students are unresponsive during class, show minimal interest in learning, and lack the ability to engage fully. However, even seemingly passive students can become active online by expressing their opinions, engaging in discussions with others, and even revealing their true characteristics.

Currently, college students are those born in the late 90s, and they are a generation that quickly adapts to digital machines. These students, Generation Z, have grown up using computers, games, mobile phones, tablets, and various digital devices from elementary school to college. They are digital natives (Prensky 2001) who speak the digital language of computers, video games, and the Internet; they are developing and consuming these stories to suit their nature. Approaching these native students only in a traditional text-based way makes it difficult to expect positive learning results. In the digital age, teachers face complex problems such as changes in the media environment, disconnection from traditional teaching methods, the rapid development of mobile technology, and the inherent impact of educational contexts (Munaro and Vieria 2016). Therefore, finding a way to connect the digital environment and a traditional teaching approach based on textbooks is critical. This study proposes a method to apply a transmedia storytelling approach to improve the English output ability of Generation Z students.

Transmedia storytelling systematically spreads information across multiple media for entertainment (Jenkins 2007). Generation Z expands their learning engagement through transmedia storytelling that understands and weaves stories across platforms (Rodrigues and Bidarra 2014). Transmedia storytelling started in the entertainment industry as strategies to engage audiences in story arcs (Schiller 2018). Now audiences are transmedia storytellers, and one can easily find audience-created fanfiction and memes on pop culture franchises such as Star Wars, Marvel, and Harry Potter online. Phil Coulson of Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) is a good example of transmedia storytelling (Lee 2019). Coulson, a character not in the original Marvel comics, first appeared as an agent of SHIELD in the movie Iron Man. With a prominent role binding the Avengers, Phil Coulson has become a favorite character among his fanbase. Because of his popularity, writers behind Marvel comics featured Coulson in the Marvel universe and even the TV series Agents of SHIELD starring Phil Coulson. Audiences could interact and engage online, consuming and changing the content of the media, creating a coherent, independent story within the larger story. Enthusiastic fans have become critical, picky, self-study consumers online, taking on the role of "hunters" (Jenkins 2006).

From the point of view of language education, transmedia storytelling could be a language learning that allows learners to understand various formulaic sequences, produce language output, and share the results with others. This study investigates the effect of the application of transmedia storytelling on output ability through a case study. In the linguistic aspect, this study focuses on learning formulaic sequences and using them in output activities to improve English ability. The research questions of this study are as follows.

1. What impact does transmedia storytelling have on learners' output ability?
2. What types of media do learners use in transmedia storytelling?
3. How do learners respond to participating in transmedia storytelling activities?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Transmedia Storytelling

Kinder (1991) coined the term "transmedia," and Jenkins (2006) extended the concept to "transmedia storytelling." Jenkins (2007) defined transmedia storytelling as "a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. Ideally, each medium makes its own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story" (n. p.). Thus, transmedia storytelling extends across multiple media platforms, each contributing a different experience to the overall story. In addition, various media allow the audience to experience new stories that lead to other entertainment experiences. Weaver (2012) said that transmedia storytelling involves "Crafting stories that unfold across multiple media platforms, in which each piece interacts with others to deepen the whole—but is capable of standing on its own—giving the audience the choice as to how deep into the experience they go."

In addition, Scolari (2009) referred to transmedia storytelling as a specific story structure that expands through various languages and media and argued that story expansion is an essential complexity factor in modern popular culture. Scolari (2009) used the following terms to describe transmedia storytelling: cross media (Bechmann 2006), multiple platforms (Jeffery-Poulter, 2003), intertextual commodity (Marshall, 2004), transmedial worlds (Klastrup and Tosca 2004), transmedial interactions (Bardzell et al. 2007), and multimodality (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001). Moreover, Schiller (2018) argued that the new practice of storytelling between media originated from the commercial efforts of the entertainment industry to promote franchises. However, audiences' aspirations for transmedia experiences developed the storytelling. Rodrigues and Bidarra (2014) stated that storytelling is an innate ability essential for human communication and creating meaning—scholars contend that this promotes personal development and indicates cultural identity.

Transmedia storytelling started as a commercial strategy but has evolved into a combination of innate human ability to tell, share, and produce stories. For instance, Weaver (2012) said transmedia storytelling creates a story through multiple media platforms. Each media interacts with others to form an independent story or deepen it into one big story. This interaction allows the audience to decide how much they will experience/enjoy the story. Gambarato (2013) said that transmedia storytelling draws the public's attention with a wide-ranging story, enabling a new experience of the world's construction through the contents of various media. Through this experience, the story unfolds further, and the possibility of developing the story with new content increases.

For Raybourn (2014), transmedia storytelling design needs character development (interaction and personas), story (narrative and scenarios), worldbuilding (place), and audience (participation and emergent culture). In addition, Sánchez (2013) stated that transmedia storytelling brought about major changes in the traditional conception of audiovisual users. He said the following four characteristics created these changes. First, traditional cultural products target specific audiences, but transmedia audiences share experiences, expand the content of the main story, and redefine the audience. Second, transmedia products promote interaction and induce audience participation rather than traditional storytelling. Third, transmedia storytelling engages the audience as a typical producer. Fourth, transmedia storytelling uses new business models, such as crowdfunding, where the community conducts its activities.

2.2 Transmedia Storytelling and Education

Jenkins (2009) regarded transmedia storytelling learners as hunters and collectors who collect various

information and create new synthetic products. In addition, Kalantzis and Cope (2012) argued that transmedia education builds a collaborative knowledge culture by blending and broadening how students express knowledge. Moreover, Raybourn (2014) said that transmedia storytelling allows learners to immerse themselves emotionally in learning and connect the story personally. Through transmedia storytelling, learners relate stories to personal experiences, and through this, they become emotionally engaged. For instance, Kalogeras (2013a, 2013b) used the term "transmedia storytelling edutainment" (TmSE) by applying transmedia storytelling to edutainment. The researcher also said that TmSE is about "using stories from popular entertainment to create educational components around a discipline" (2013a, p. 2). TmSE includes popular entertainment as an educational element according to the subject's characteristics. Ultimately, Kalogeras applied this concept to history education, with the result that students were able to see the subject creatively.

Rodrigues and Bidarra (2014) stated that the digital age is breaking the traditional educational method; the rapidly growing mobile technology and its characteristics have provided unprecedented learning opportunities and diverse learning experiences in education. In addition, Munaro and Vieira (2016) stated that education is applying transmedia storytelling as a new pedagogical form. They said that through the participatory culture of transmedia storytelling, students express and share their opinions through various media. The characteristics of this participatory culture of transmedia storytelling align with the educational goal of conducting learner-centered education. Thus, transmedia education is compatible with constructivism, which emphasizes the learner's initiative, or connectionism, which insists on interaction through the connection of learned information (Fleming, 2013).

Rodrigues and Bidarra (2016) said that transmedia storytelling is an opportunity to write new scenarios, which can lead to a learner-centered environment and the development of cooperative strategies necessary for learners in the twenty-first century. As passive viewers become active users and participants, transmedia provides tools and technologies to reach and engage younger viewers, often through multiple interfaces, platforms, and devices. Rodrigues and Bidarra conducted the project Connecting Cat with secondary school students in Portugal in an Educating English Learners (ELS) environment. In this project, the protagonist's challenge is to find the piece connecting the portal and the human race with the alien race. The protagonist meets his comrades, pets, and alien races. The webisode provided various clues to connect the stories. Then the researchers placed the students in a diverse language-speaking environment in this mission. The students critically evaluated the story and further developed communication skills. This project demonstrates the potential of transmedia storytelling as a practical approach to enhancing language learning and promoting the development of essential skills for twenty-first-century learners.

Further, Ryu (2018) investigated the impact of different media forms on college students' ability to recognize chunks and their learning attitudes. These media included the Robinson Crusoe novel, the Robinson Crusoe movie based on the book, and the Robinson Crusoe animation. Ryu engaged participants in discussions by reading Robinson Crusoe in various media forms. During the test, subjects selected chunks from the novel Robinson Crusoe they thought were worth memorizing. The results showed an increase in the number of pieces chosen during the second evaluation compared to the first evaluation, indicating the method's effectiveness. Additionally, the subjects exhibited a positive attitude toward this approach. Ryu's study highlights the potential benefits of utilizing various media forms to enhance the learning experience and improve students' attitudes toward learning.

Lee's (2019) study proposed a transmedia-based English class activity using the Harry Potter worldview. The exercise involved watching the original Harry Potter movie, reading the script, and solving quizzes created by the teacher. The teacher then asked each group to choose a theme based on Harry Potter and produce and present a video. The student videos included introducing the Hogwarts wand through a puppet show, explaining how to receive a Hogwarts admission letter with cosplay, studying Harry Potter as a YouTuber, and discussing the reasons

for the franchise's success. The results of the presentations indicated that students organized their work related to their respective majors. For example, design majors presented their content about Harry Potter by making puppet shows and cosplaying. On the other hand, humanities students explored perspectives outside the Harry Potter universe, such as studying English for Harry Potter and examining the reasons for the franchise's success. Lee's study found that incorporating transmedia elements into English language instruction using popular cultural media can effectively motivate students and promote cross-disciplinary learning.

The educational field is increasingly applying transmedia storytelling, but educators must avoid placing excessive expectations on its positive aspects. According to Simons (2014), most viewers enjoy only marketing-driven cross-media extensions and not searching for a strong engagement with transmedia extensions. Using a mixed-method approach involving TV diaries and in-depth interviews, Simons contended that while TV producers anticipate audiences' full investment in multiplatform narrative storytelling, viewers are primarily interested in entertainment through TV drama. And most of all, the use of transmedia storytelling is ultimately to promote the improvement of language skills. Lee (2022) contends that while the utilization of transmedia resources or videos may offer learners an enjoyable experience, it is still crucial to prioritize the acquisition of language skills. As such, it is unwise to blindly assume that applying transmedia storytelling in the classroom will lead to increased learner interest or spontaneous learning. While transmedia storytelling presents significant opportunities for enhancing learning experiences, it is crucial to consider its limitations and tailor its implementation to the learners' needs and interests.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

15 college students from a university in Seoul, Korea, voluntarily participated in a case study. After obtaining signed consent forms from the participants, per the requirements of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the researcher interviewed the students individually. The interview included exploring the students' preferences regarding their choice of a franchise, their level of interest, and the types of media they typically engage in for leisure and educational purposes. The participants were between the ages of 20 to 24, with 13 females and 2 males. Their TOEIC scores ranged from 500 to 650. The students chose between Marvel, Harry Potter, and Twilight franchises for their study, and then the researcher divided the students into three groups of five according to their choices. Group Marvel (GM) consisted of students from the School of Performing Arts, while Group Harry Potter (GH) participants were from the School of Music. Group Twilight (GT) participants were from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Since the members of GM were film majors with experience collaborating on projects together, they already had a strong bond with each other.

3.2 Material

This study used different media as materials: comics, movies, novels, pop-up guides, fanfictions, YouTube clips, and discussion boards across the Internet. The extracted parts from these media were as follows: movies for GM were *Captain America: The First Avenger*, *Avengers: Infinity War*, *and Avengers: Endgame*. The experiment used novel versions of Avengers and Marvel Comics. Materials for GH were the first book of the series, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, and its movie version. The experiment also included pop-up guides of Hogwarts and

Dragon Alley. Finally, the GT participants used the first book of the series, *Twilight* and its movie version and three fanfictions. In addition, all three groups used online discussion boards. Table 1 summarizes the materials used in this study.

Table 1. Materials

Group	Materials
Marvel	comics, movie, novel, online discussion board
Harry Potter	novel, movie, pop-up guide, online discussion board
Twilight	novel, movie, fanfiction, online discussion board

3.3 Procedures

The study was conducted weekly over 15 weeks with each group. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the case study used the Zoom video conferencing platform in real time. The experiment considered the participants' activities, including the input process, search activity, sharing information, and creation, as elements of transmedia storytelling.

Step 1: Understanding the Story
Participants read and interpreted designated sections of the material individually, with the researcher assisting with interpretation when needed.

Step 2: Researching and Sharing information
The participants researched and shared information related to the topic. In addition, the researcher shared information through YouTube clips to aid in understanding the content and showed her original Marvel comic book to the GM group and Harry Potter pop-up book to the GH group, which prompted a discussion about Hogwarts houses. One participant shared their experience visiting Universal Studio and showed a Harry Potter wand and cape. One GT participant was a fan of the actor who played the main character, Edward, and shared information about him, including a teaser of Edward's subsequent work, *Batman*.

Step 3: Hunting Language
After sharing information, the participants chose expressions they liked from the studied materials and explained the word clusters for memorization. Instead of using the term "formulaic sequences," which may not be familiar, the researcher used the term "expressions." The participants then individually created a list of formulaic sequences with their Korean meanings.

Step 4: Transmedia Storytelling Individually
The participants created characters and stories based on their personal writing preferences, using the language they learned in Steps 2 and 3. They were asked to write within 10 sentences. Once they finished writing, they shared their works with each other, and they also provided feedback on others' works.

Step 5: Transmedia Storytelling Optionally
In this step, the three groups engaged in transmedia storytelling beyond the experiment hours, using the language they had learned through the experiment. This step was optional for the participants, and they could work on it individually or in groups, using any medium for their transmedia storytelling. The researcher encouraged them to

create prequels, sequels, new settings, or new characters in various forms, such as cartoons, blogs, vlogs, and videos. The aim was to apply their learned language and demonstrate their creativity through storytelling.

3.4 Data Collection and Data Analysis

First, there were two extensive writing tests to verify the effects of transmedia storytelling on output ability, including a pre-test before and a post-test after the experiment. The writing subject was to broaden the worldview of the franchise the participants were studying. For example, creating a new character, creating a new episode, or expanding the worldview by connecting existing worldviews to create a unique background can be the subject of writing. The study used the Wilcoxon signed-rank test to examine whether there were significant changes in each group. The researcher tailored and used analytic scoring suggested by Brown and Abeywickrama (2010) and Hyland (2010) to evaluate writing. The analytical scoring profile consisted of three categories: content, organization, and language (formulaic sequences) based on idiomaticity. The scores of each area ranged from one to five points.

Second, to examine the participants' level of engagement in transmedia storytelling, the researcher asked each group to create a new story (Step 5). Only participants who wished to participate did so in this non-compulsory group activity. From an educational point of view, the essence of transmedia storytelling is the learners' voluntary participation. The value of transmedia storytelling in the academic environment is that learners are immersed in the story together, not alone, and expand it into a new story.

Lastly, the participants' attitudes toward transmedia storytelling were determined through group interviews conducted by the researcher after the experiment. Each group of participants was interviewed in Korean and asked a series of questions about the core components of transmedia storytelling in a learning environment, such as the materials utilized, media usage processes, and levels of participation.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 The Effects of Transmedia Storytelling Activities on Output Ability

The participants practiced understanding various stories of a given material through different media types and expanding the contents. From the input viewpoint, the participants obtained rich background knowledge of the franchise in terms of content and frequently encountered authentic formulaic sequences in terms of language. Tables 2 and 3 confirm the effect of these transmedia storytelling activities on output ability, showing the descriptive statistics and results of Wilcoxon signed-rank tests of pre and post-test. The mean scores from the pre- to post-tests increased from 5.93 to 9.53. According to the Wilcoxon signed-rank tests, the z-value was -3.422, and the change was significant ($p < .001$). All participants showed significant improvement in scores in the post-test compared to the pre-test. This result shows that the activities based on transmedia storytelling positively affect output ability. But it is essential to determine the precise effects of the intervention on each element, namely content, organization, and language.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Pre-Test and Post-Test on Writing

	N	M	Std	Min	Max
Pre-Test	15	5.93	.46	5	7
Post-Test	15	9.53	1.64	7	13

Table 3. The Results of Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Tests

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	z
Post-Test → Pre-Test	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	-3.422*
	Positive Ranks	15	8	120	
	Ties	0			
	Total	15			

Tables 4 and 5 illustrate the impact of transmedia storytelling on several sub-areas of output ability. The mean scores for content areas in the pre and post-test were 2.00 and 3.40, respectively. A Wilcoxon signed-rank test revealed a significant improvement ($z = -3.250$, $p = .001$). The mean score for the organization area also improved from 1.87 to 3.20, which was significant ($z = -3.133$, $p = .002$). Finally, the language area score increased from 2.07 to 2.93. The z value -2.565 ($p = .009$) score deemed this change significant.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Pre-Test and Post-Test on Writing by Sub-Categories

	N	M	Std	Min	Max
Pre Content	15	2.00	.38	1	3
Post Content	15	3.40	.91	2	5
Pre Organization	15	1.87	.52	1	3
Post Organization	15	3.20	1.08	1	5
Pre Language	15	2.07	.59	1	3
Post Language	15	2.93	1.03	1	4

Table 5. The Results of Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Tests by Sub-Categories

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	z
Post Content → Pre Content	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	-3.250*
	Positive Ranks	13	7	91	
	Ties	2			
	Total	15			
Post Organization → Pre Organization	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	-3.133*
	Positive Ranks	12	6.5	78	
	Ties	3			
	Total	15			
Post Language → Pre Language	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	-2.565*
	Positive Ranks	8	4.5	36	
	Ties	7			
	Total	15			

Table 5 shows the specific changes of the participants. Compared to the pre-test, no participant's score decreased in the post-test, but not all participants showed a significantly improved score. In the post-test compared to the pre-test, 13 participants improved in the content part. The participants delved into the story and gathered information, leading to an expanded world. Participant A dreamed up a new Hogwarts in Busan, located underwater,

with characters possessing magical powers to guard the ocean's ecosystem. Participant H imagined herself a reporter and had an interview with Bella and Edward. Participant J penned a sequel to *Avengers: Endgame*, where Happy, a co-creator of Javis, assembles a fresh set of avengers for the galaxy. 13 students brought the original work to life in exciting new ways, but two participants fell short of creating a new story or expanded world. The two only explored the traits and backgrounds of existing characters or summarized the story's highlights. In the organization area, 12 participants organized texts well and had a flow of expositions, events, and resolutions. However, the other three did not significantly improve their writing organization in the post-test compared to the pre-test. The results of the Wilcoxon signed-rank tests in the language area indicated a significant improvement, consistent with the findings in the content and organization areas. However, the number of participants who showed improvement was lower in the language area compared to the other two areas. Among the participants, 8 showed a marked improvement in their post-test compared to their pre-test. They reflected this improvement in their composed texts, which contained formulaic sequences learned through practice, such as "as night fell," "sat bolt upright," "walked in a lumbering way," and "kept consciousness." On the other hand, the remaining seven writings did not improve the language area.

13 participants exhibited enhanced skills in the content area, 12 in the organization area, and 8 in the language area. These results indicate that transmedia storytelling positively affects the participants' output abilities. However, 7 out of 15 participants did not show significant improvement specifically in the post-test compared to the pre-test: 2 in the content area, 3 in the organization area, and 7 in the language area. This outcome indicates that simply providing instruction on using language in learners' activities is insufficient for promoting progress in language area. The researcher encouraged participants to actively search for and utilize formulaic sequences in their work. In Step 1, the participants experienced various information through different media such as comics, novels, movies, pop-up books, etc., thus encountering language input and content information. In Step 2, they had to research and share information, pushing them to be active learners, and in Step 3, the participants focused on language, i.e., formulaic sequences. Finally, in Steps 4 and 5, participants reproduced the contents of the franchise they studied as their stories with rich content and language input. The researcher expected that these activities based on transmedia storytelling would improve learners' ability to produce language, meaning that they could express their idea in English, rich in content, strong in organization, and linguistically idiomatic with the input they encountered during the experiment. However, despite this guidance, some participants encountered challenges incorporating these sequences into their output activities. The provision of diverse input alone does not have a direct impact on their recognition and implementation of formulaic sequences. These results demonstrate the necessity of explicit instruction in formulaic sequences for learners. Therefore, to address the challenges that some participants faced in incorporating formulaic sequences into their output activities, teachers should provide explicit instruction on formulaic sequences, including clear explanations and activities to facilitate memorization. One effective approach is to include formulaic sequence acquisition processes in the instructions, such as translation activities (Lee, 2016). The results indicate that while applying transmedia storytelling in the EFL classroom allows learners to take responsibility for the content information component and promotes self-directed learning, the language input aspect may require teacher intervention.

4.2 Types of Transmedia Storytelling the Participants Created

Transmedia storytelling is predicated on user engagement across multiple media platforms, reflecting a voluntary and participatory approach. As such, this study investigates the degree of voluntary participation by individuals in learning through transmedia storytelling and the specific media channels employed in such

involvement. Step 5 is optional, necessitating time outside of regular study hours. Only GM carried out the transmedia storytelling project as a group, GH did the transmedia storytelling individually, and GT did not do the transmedia storytelling beyond the experimental time.

GM utilized transmedia storytelling techniques for the sequel to *Avengers: Endgame*. Using iPads, they created digital images with captions and produced a five-minute animated video with their voice-over and background music. GM wrote the script, incorporating the formulaic sequences they had learned during the experiment. The title of the work was *The New Project: An Immense Journey*. In *Avengers: Endgame*, the avengers beat Thanos and made peace on earth, but the leading heroes, Iron Man and Captain America do not exist anymore. Pepper Potts, the wife of Iron Man, worries about peace on earth without the original Avengers, the guardians of the planet. She has comprehensive knowledge of all the events related to the Avengers and Thanos forces' invasion and decides to assemble a new superhero team. As the leader, she gathers female superheroes: Scarlet Witch, Gamora, Captain Marvel, Valkyrie, and Wasp. They successfully defeat an android named Adam Warlock, a relative to Thanos. Figure 1 shows some scenes from *The New Project: An Immense Journey*.
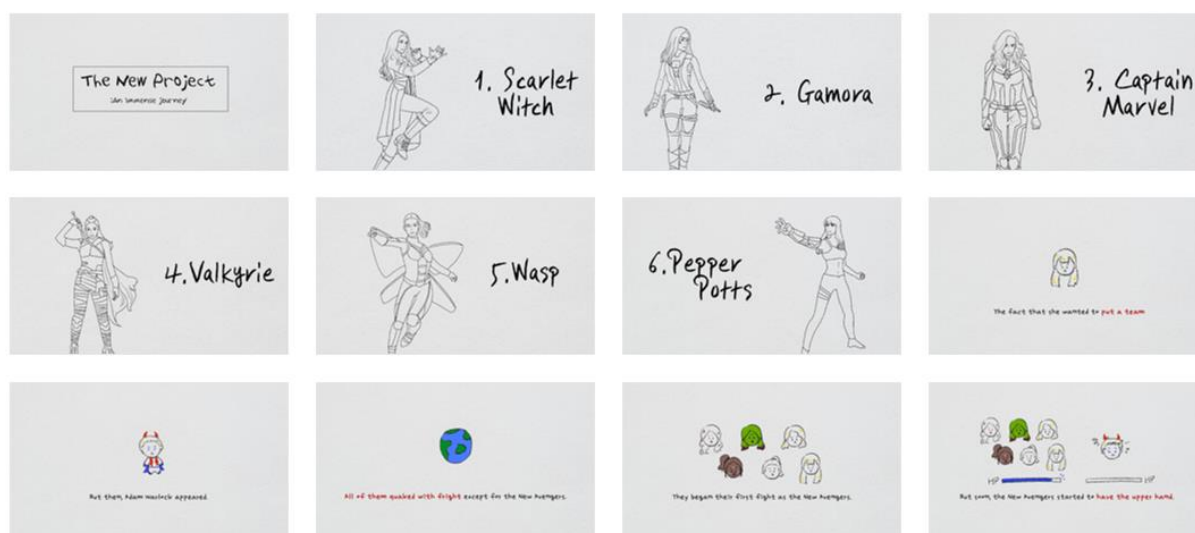

Figure 1. *The New Project: An Immense Journey*

GM volunteered additional hours beyond the experiment hours to complete this project. They created an expanded version of the original Marvel Cinematic Universe and told the story using the new media. The captions they used in the animation were not very idiomatic, but they tried to use the language as well as they could. Outside of experiment hours, the GM members requested the researcher's comments on their work. In addition, they convened in real-time Zoom meetings to share ideas and discuss how to organize the story effectively, exploring different mediums to make it compelling. During the experiment, GM members participated enthusiastically, with three members even reading the material in advance without being asked. Even though their English proficiency was low, GM members did not hesitate to read, interpret, and research information and share their opinions.

Dobby, who was free but had nowhere to go, asked Harry and Ginny to become house fairy of thier house. Then he become a family.

Dobby Would you care for a glass of wine?

Ginny Lovely!

Harry Do you want a hand?

Dobby No thanks.

Ron Dobby! There's nothing they can do because of you.

Hermione That's right dobby! Why don't you come to our house?!

Ginny&Harry You know it's never gonna work, right? He is our family!!

They hadn't realized how loudly they had been talking. But they're happy. Dobby's heart gave a leap and he thought it was ture happiness.

Figure 2. *The Return of Dobby*

Only one member of GH engaged in transmedia storytelling. Figure 2 is a movie script she posted in her blog. Dobby dies in the Harry Potter series while trying to help Harry Potter and his friends, but in her version, Dobby is still alive and lives with Harry and Ginny as their house elf. The GH members also participated eagerly during the experiment hours. They read the textbook in advance and asked questions actively about the story's content. If a team member encountered difficulties during interpretation, the researcher encouraged the participation of other team members rather than immediately offering help. Like GM, the GH members actively shared their knowledge. However, while GM participated in transmedia storytelling as a group, only one member of GH engaged in transmedia storytelling.

GT members also showed a willingness to learn English enough to participate in the experiment but did not set aside time for transmedia storytelling outside the study. Compared to the other two teams, GT did not show up actively seeking information or sharing opinions during the experiment.

In Step 5, each group presented different results. While GM and GH engaged in transmedia storytelling with forms of group and individual beyond the experiment hours, GT focused only on regular study hours. Kalantzis and Cope (2012) argued that transmedia practices allow one to "broaden the mix of representational modes in which students express their knowledge and to build collaborative knowledge cultures" (p. 84). From their perspectives, GM exemplified the ideal application of transmedia storytelling in the EFL setting, while GT demonstrated its real-life application in the classroom. It is important to recognize that GM's performance was exceptional and the group's members were film majors and had a strong working relationship. Teachers should not assume that the application of transmedia storytelling will always work, as this would be akin to the belief that new teaching methods were a cure-all for educational challenges in the past.

4.3 Learners' Responses to Transmedia Storytelling Activities

In interviews after the experiment, the participants provided feedback about the materials used, the learning process, and the transmedia storytelling beyond the study period. Here are some significant comments shared by the participants.

Using various materials was enjoyable and more interesting than studying with a textbook. It was particularly fun to see pop-up books and items brought by other friends. Even though I initially participated in the study to improve my English, I feel like I learned so much more by discovering the world of geeks, which was completely new to me. (Comment from GH)

It was great to learn more about the story of my favorite novel in detail. I also found the concept of studying through comic books to be novel. Studying was enjoyable, but creating a video with my friends was even more so. I suggested having female heroes, and other friends immediately brought it to life by drawing them with iPads. I was happy and amazed by the results. (Comment from GM)

These comments demonstrate that the participants recognize the benefits of transmedia storytelling. In addition, the participants had a great time sharing their experiences and creating new stories. The second comment illustrates how GM developed a new story using new media. Most participants responded positively to this study but also mentioned the difficult part.

During the study period, the professor suggested we choose expressions we liked, but I wasn't sure which ones to pick. However, as we discussed the expressions that the professor and study members had chosen, I could select expressions in my way. (Comment from GM)

I enjoyed learning about the MCU and sharing information with my friends. At first, writing stories on different topics in English for each study was challenging, but now it's less stressful. However, I still lack confidence in my writing ability. (Comment from GM)

I had a great time searching for information and sharing it with others during the study period. However, I found creating a new story with a different format overwhelming, as it required significant time and effort. I think it is better to focus on language. (Comment from GT)

While the participants received instruction to choose an expression they liked, they found the guidance unclear. Therefore, a more detailed explanation of language is necessary, providing a clear description of formulaic sequences. Additionally, teachers should be mindful that overly emphasizing transmedia elements outside of language learning can burden students and there are students who prefer focusing on language learning to focusing on stories and activities related with them.

Based on the experimental results of this study, the following are critical points about applying transmedia storytelling in the EFL classroom. First, students need sufficient language explanation. In terms of content, students can understand it while investigating, but the linguistic part eventually requires an explanation from the teacher. Transmedia storytelling gives participants autonomy, but teachers must explicitly guide the linguistic part. Second, after providing content and language information through various media, there must be output activities focusing on language. Before providing students with opportunities to produce their own language output, teachers should start with writing and speaking simple sentences as part of an exercise.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to improve the output ability of learners through transmedia storytelling. The biggest strength of transmedia storytelling in EFL instruction is that it provides an environment that can induce learners' participation. Transmedia storytelling can provide learners with a series of processes that involve understanding, searching, and sharing practice. Through the experiment, the participants understood their favorite franchise through various media and searched for information and language. Writing improved in all parts of the content, organization, and language between the pre and post-writing test. However, 7 out of 15 participants did not show significant language improvement in individual scores. In transmedia storytelling other than the experimental time, different groups showed different results. In GM, all members collaborated to create animations; in GH, only one student wrote a personal blog; in GT, no students conducted transmedia storytelling outside of the designated experimental time. In interviews, students reported a positive aspect that it was good to learn new information, and there was joy in cooperating. However, it turned out that the linguistic part requires an explanation from the teacher. These findings are consistent with the research of Lee (2022), who contends that the transmedia approach to language learning enhances the learner's enjoyment of TV series, but emphasizes the importance of language acquisition above all else. To achieve the dual goals of enhancing learners' participation and improving their language skills, explicit teacher intervention is necessary for the language aspect. It is challenging to expect learners to both enjoy transmedia storytelling and effectively recognize and utilize formulaic sequences. While enjoying transmedia resources and activities using them may provide an engaging experience to learners, teachers should keep in mind the goal is developing language proficiency.

The limitation of this study is the small sample size and a lack of diversity in the participants' majors. In addition, the correlation between students' test scores and the level of transmedia storytelling also requires exploration in the future. This study proposed transmedia storytelling as an English instruction method suitable for Generation Z college students. The role of teachers is to introduce and facilitate the enjoyment of transmedia storytelling in class, provide language input by using multiple media to capture learners' attention, and engage in various activities that help connect language input to output. For this, teachers must be well-prepared to use transmedia storytelling in the EFL classroom and should act as catalysts to engage students by showing enthusiasm for the topic. Although this approach can be burdensome for some teachers, it is essential in a rapidly changing world where students are increasingly showing new characteristics (Kalantzis and Cope 2012; Lee 2019). Future research should address this study's limitations by experimenting with a large group of various majors.

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Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Level: Tertiary