

Linguistic Strategies in Students' Digital Story Telling on the Threads/x Platform: A Contemporary sociolinguistic study

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ABSTRAK

This study employs a contemporary sociolinguistic approach to examine the language strategies of students' digital storytelling activities on the Threads/X platform. Storytelling, as a multimodal and participatory practice, is affected by sociocultural dynamics and platform affordances in the age of digital communication. The study employs content analysis and qualitative descriptive method to examine students' use of language resources in constructing identities and narratives. To collect data, we examined posts by students on the Threads/X platform that were related to digital storytelling techniques. Next, linguistic features including code-switching, hashtags, emoticons, informal language and other multimodal features that support meaning-making were extracted from the data. Moreover, the analysis explores the ways in which students engage with audiences and strategically use language to negotiate their identities in online groups. By analyzing these linguistic patterns, the study aims to illuminate the role of digital storytelling as a site of social interaction and self-expression. The findings are also expected to contribute to sociolinguistics research on digital communication and pedagogical insights on using digital storytelling in language learning contexts. Also, the importance of knowing students' language habits on the emerging social media platforms is highlighted in this study, besides drawing attention to the dynamic relationship between language, identity and technology in modern communication. Multimodality, student narratives, digital communication, sociolinguistics, linguistic strategies, Threads/X, digital storytelling.

Keywords: *Multimodality, Student Stories, Digital Communication, Sociolinguistics, Linguistic Strategies, Threads/X, Digital Storytelling.*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of digital technology has changed communication habits dramatically, especially when it comes to social media. Users are now creating and sharing stories on platforms like Threads/X and other social media, marking broader shifts in language and society. Interactive, visual and textual elements are included in digital storytelling, a form of mediated communication, which allows users to create complex and dynamic meanings. This change challenges the existing understanding of language use and calls for a further sociolinguistic exploration of how meaning is constructed in digital contexts. In contemporary digital contexts, communication is not limited to linear text-based engagement but contains layered meanings created by numerous semiotic modalities that interact simultaneously. Social media has also changed the way people engage in public conversation. Beyond consuming information, users are also active producers who curate their identities and viewpoints through narrative building. People can digitally, instantly and interactively add their personal experiences, thoughts and social comments. Thus, social media narratives are often not merely about individual expression but also about cultural values, beliefs, and social norms at a broader level. These narratives are often shaped by platform affordances that determine how users organize and present their messages, including character limitations, algorithmic visibility, and interactive affordances. Thus, the study of digital storytelling requires consideration of both linguistic choices and the technological environment within which communication takes place.

Sociolinguistics sees language not as a mere system of signals but as a social practice, embedded in context, identity and power. Users actively build their identities in digital spaces with their language choices, positioning themselves with the use of a variety of semiotic tools in online communities. As a negotiation, this uses slang, code-switching, informal language, abbreviations, and creative orthography, all of which contribute to the production of meaning and identity. Across social media, the boundary between spoken and written language is often blurred, resulting in hybrid forms that emulate the dynamics of conversation. These linguistic features reveal the impact of social interaction and technical mediation on the evolution of digital communication.

Previous research has pointed out the informality, interactivity and multimodality of social media discourse that have a bearing on the construction and interpretation of narratives (Zappavigna, 2014). Multimodality is important in digital storytelling because it allows users to combine text with photos, videos, hashtags, emoticons and hyperlinks to convey complex meanings. Similarly, emojis provide emotive cues that add to the meaning of text, allowing users to express emotion, sarcasm or emphasis that might be otherwise difficult to convey using only words. The integration of these multimodal components enhances the expressive potential of language, allowing users to express indexical and affective meanings beyond standard text (Reinders, 2024).

Digital storytelling is characterized not only by its multimodality but also by its interactivity. Unlike traditional narratives, social media stories are often co-constructed through audience participation, reposts and answers. This interactive feature, then, makes storytelling collaborative and dialogic, as stories evolve over time as people respond to each other. The audience's likes, comments and shares constitute a way for users to build their stories and select their language. Thus, digital storytelling can be understood as a fluid process, shaped by social interaction and personal expression.

However, little is known about how students specifically deploy language strategies on new platforms like Threads/X, despite the growing body of research on digital communication. Much of the previous research has focused on sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter and newer platforms have been under studied. With its emphasis on minimalist text-based interaction and multimedia affordances, Threads/X provides a unique context to study contemporary digital storytelling practices. The platform encourages users to craft brief, but meaningful narratives, often requiring creative manipulation of language to convey complex ideas in limited space.

To address this gap, this study examines students' use of digital storytelling, focusing on the use of language in making narratives, negotiating identities and engaging audiences. Building on the Threads/X platform, this study aims to investigate language use, multimodal integration, and interactional strategies that affect digital narratives by examining student contributions on Threads/X. Moreover the study seeks to explore the ways in which students adapt their language to the communicative norms of the platform, and how they negotiate between audience awareness and self-expression.

The present study aims to contribute to theoretical and pedagogical debates on digital language use, by situating the analysis in a contemporary sociolinguistic perspective. The findings are expected to contribute to sociolinguistic perspectives of digital communication, especially in terms of identity construction and multimodal discourse. Furthermore, the study can have pedagogical implications for teachers, by suggesting ways to use digital storytelling in language teaching to improve students' communicative competencies in online spaces. As digital communication continues to evolve, it is important to understand how students use language on new platforms in research and educational settings. This study investigates the ways in which students construct digital storytelling narratives, the linguistic devices employed, the negotiation of identities and the potential of multimodal elements to create meaning on the Threads/X platform.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study used a qualitative descriptive approach based on the sociolinguistic theory in order to analyze the digital storytelling of the students. A qualitative methodology is used to allow an exploration of language as a socially situated practice emphasizing interpretation and contextual understanding. The data are naturally occurring texts taken from the students' posts in the Threads/X platform, specifically those with narrative characteristics.

Documentation is the main instrument for data collection, which is the systematic collection of students' digital posts in the form of screenshots and the archiving of text. This instrument is supported by an analytical framework which aims at identifying key linguistic features such as lexical choices, discourse markers, code-switching patterns, stance expressions and multimodal features. Interactional dynamics including audience responses and engagement patterns, which are integral to digital storytelling, were also captured in observational notes. Observational notes were also used to capture interactional variables that are relevant to digital storytelling, such as audience reactions and engagement patterns.

The data were analyzed by qualitative content analysis which included coding, classifying and interpreting language features. The analysis uses theories of digital discourse and sociolinguistic concepts such as indexicality, stance-taking and identity building. This scientific perspective enables a profound analysis of the impact of social and technological factors on linguistic strategies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results indicate students' digital storytelling practices on the Threads/X platform show a high degree of linguistic flexibility and inventiveness. One of the most notable features is the extensive use of colloquial English, reflecting the conversational nature of social media communication. Students often use non-standard grammatical forms, acronyms, and colloquial idioms to create a sense of intimacy and immediacy with their audience. This aligns with the idea of "synthetic personalization" where language is used to create the simulation of interpersonal contact in mass communication contexts (Fairclough, 2001).

Another important finding is the purposeful use of code-switching, which has a variety of sociolinguistic purposes. In addition to conveying meaning, students use language-switching to index social identities and cultural affiliations. For example, one kid wrote: "Today was really exhausting, tapi seru banget bareng temen-temen. In this context, code-switching is an identity marker that enables students to navigate local and global discourses. Multilingual practices in digital spaces reflect the fluidity and hybridity of contemporary identities, as previous research suggests (Themistocleous, 2014).

Furthermore, the data underlines the importance of stance-taking to digital storytelling. Students position themselves in their stories through the use of affective expressions, first person pronouns and evaluative language. Stance-taking enables people to express attitudes, feelings and opinions and to construct a subjective voice that engages the listener. This process is directly related to identity creation, since language choices are a mirror of how people see themselves and how they want to be seen by others (Du Bois, 2007).

Multimodality is an important part of students' storytelling techniques. The inclusion of emojis, pictures and hashtags enhances the communicative potential of the narrative, adding visual and affective elements. While emojis are paralinguistic cues that contribute to the meaning of the text, hashtags are indexing devices that link specific postings to general discursive contexts. For example, "Group presentation done! 🌟 #studentlife #collegejourney." This multimodal approach (Zappavigna, 2014,1) reflects the hybrid nature of digital communication where meaning is made by the interplay of a number of semiotic elements.

Students also use techniques of persuasive language to get more audience participation. Attention-grabbing and stimulating discussion is provided by repetition, expressive language and rhetorical questions. Such tactics are particularly effective in algorithm-driven environments where content visibility is dependent on user interaction. Language choices are therefore strategic and communicative, seeking to maximise impact and reach (Stepaniuk & Jarosz, 2021).

Moreover, the results show that linguistic tactics are strongly affected by platform affordances. Features such as character restrictions, threading systems and interactive tools influence the narrative structure and presentation. Students adapt their language to these constraints, often preferring clarity and conciseness, while still maintaining a coherent narrative. Digital storytelling is both a digitally mediated practice and a language action (Gurung & Agarwal, 2025).

The dialogue, In sum, exemplifies the dynamic interaction of language, identity, and technology in digital storytelling. The language techniques students employ generate a complex and dynamic form of discourse, shaped by their communicative purposes, sociocultural conditions, and the affordances of the platform.

CONCLUSION

The present study finds that students employ sophisticated and context-sensitive linguistic strategies for digital storytelling on the Threads/X platform. These strategies encompass informal language, code-switching, stance-taking, persuasive techniques and multimodal integration, all of which contribute to effective narrative construction and audience engagement. The results highlight the need to approach language as a fluid and socially embedded practice, particularly in the digital context.

The study also points to the 'pedagogic' potential of digital storytelling as a tool for the development of students' linguistic and digital competencies. Students learn to use language strategically and adaptively in diverse contexts by engaging in storytelling practices on social media.

SUGGESTIONS

It is recommended that the educators implement the digital storytelling to the language learning in order to enhance students' engagement and communicative competence. Future research should explore cross-platform comparisons and employ mixed-methods approaches to afford a more holistic view of

digital linguistic practices. In addition, the influence of algorithmic factors on language use and storytelling techniques in the context of social media could be examined in future research.

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