



EXPLORING MULTIMODAL APPROACHES IN STORYTELLING FOR LITERACY DEVELOPMENT: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract: Improving students' literacy has drawn various scholars' attention as technology advances. This systematic literature review aims at investigating and synthesizing how multimodal approach is applied in the teaching of storytelling to improving students' literacy. This study focuses on several aspects of multimodal applied in storytelling, such as components, media, objectives, skills improved, linguistic theories, and the complexity of the applied approach across different level of education. There are 71 articles collected to make a synthesis of storytelling which are published in range of 2017 to 2023. The selected articles are then compressed to 33 for articles based on the criteria of inclusion and exclusion. The study finds that the use of multimodal literacies in different level of study vary in the modes and media. In early educations, multimodal storytelling approach uses simpler components like audio and visual components but less digital tools. In the primary to secondary education, the combination of audio, visual and digital tool is balanced, while in higher to university education, multimodal approach is more complex with the combination of digital storytelling with linguistic theories such as MDA, social semiotics, and structural semiotics. This study is expected to provide other researchers or teachers a guideline of designing multimodal approach in storytelling classroom more deeply. By categorizing multimodal storytelling practices across educational level, this study offers practical guidance for educators to tailor their approaches to students' developmental needs in literacy skills through storytelling and the selection of appropriate tools and techniques for diverse educational needs.

Keywords: *multimodal, literacy, storytelling, teaching, systematic literature review*

INTRODUCTION

Improving students' literacy has become one of main attentions of educational institution worldwide. In line with the educational objective in literacy, there are various strategies done to enhance students' ability, like peer-assisted sharing of online English news to improve L2 learners' literacy and global competence (Gong (2023) and developing student champion scheme (SCS) in National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to deliver digital literacy among midwifery students (Terry, Davies,

Williams, Tait & Condon, 2019). As technology advances, literacy is no longer confined to traditional textual forms, but to breakthrough in digitalization. Students are exposed to more advanced, multiple, and multimodal literacy landscapes by digital tools like computer, laptop, television, and other smart digital devices. The students are expected to be able to use a wide variety of innovative, digital, and technological world surrounded by a variety of semiotic resources. Therefore, a lot of efforts have been done by educational institutions to improve

students' literacy with technology advancement in classroom setting (Debreli, & Altıntuğ, 2017).

In the digital era, students develop literacy by understanding the organization and display of information through multiple modes of communication and the ways these different modes cooperate in the creation of meanings (Petit, E. (2020). Besides considering the tools and media, improving literacy can also be done through some techniques, one of them is storytelling. Storytelling is an activity to tell a story or information from one generation to the next generation (McDrury & Alterio in Satriani, 2019). Storytelling develops from oral to digital form due to technology with different and various modes. But do the sophistications of technology also impact on the students across level of education? Are the same technology tools also applied in early education and higher educations?

This study aims to investigate the use of storytelling multimodal approach in education and how multimodal literacy differs across the educational level in classroom setting. This systematic literature review (SLR) is conducted to see the perspectives of various scholar towards an issue in order to find synthesis research of specific issue (Du (2021; Lim, Toh, & Nguyen, 2022; Nair & Yunus, 2021 and Linnenluecke, Marrone, & Singh, 2020). This study then focuses on the use multimodality in storytelling which highlights the objective, the mode, the aspects the procedure, the benefits, and the skilled targeted in educational setting.

Several previous studies have been conducted to synthesize the use of multimodality in storytelling. The first study is conducted by Du (2021) which examined the modalities, pedagogies, benefits, and the implications of storytelling in early childhood education classroom. This study highlighted the potential advantages of storytelling in early education. Wu & Chen (2020) explored digital storytelling across different level of educations which identified eight outcomes; appropriate, cognitive, conceptual, academic, technological, linguistics, ontological, and social. From her study, Satriani (2019) found that storytelling can enhance students' literacy skill, including reading, writing, and vocabulary development. Other relevant studies also focused more on digital storytelling (Quah & Ng, 2022; Urbietta, & Peñalver, 2021; Nair & Yunus, 2021). While past studies have identified benefits and outcomes, there has been limited exploration of the degree of complexity of multimodal application and linguistic theories used in different

educational level and. To address the gap, this study seeks to investigate how multimodal approach are used at classroom setting though these three research problems (1) What multimodal approach is employed in the teaching of storytelling across level of education? (2) What linguistic theories of multimodality are applied? (3) How is the degree of complexity of multimodal approach in the teaching of storytelling across level of education? By focusing on these three research questions, the study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the use of multimodality in storytelling, both conventional and digital tools, and its implication for literacy educations.

Technology plays a big role in the development of multimodality. Multimodality is the use of various modes in communication in a text, such as verbal and visual modes, to produce meaning. Multimodality is the application of multiple semiotic modes which trigger interactions in a sociocultural field, resulting in semiotic artifacts and events (Kress and van Leeuwen (2001). Multimodal literacy is about the way people or students are able to entice well with text with various modes by being able to grasp the meanings, understand the message critically and being able to create multimodal artefact. In students' case, to engage righteously with multimodal texts which means that they have to be involve the comprehension of text meaning cohesively and the affordances of the different meaning-making resources (Lim, Toh, & Nguyen, 2022). Multimodality in storytelling can be said to be multimodal because storytellers use various modes including verbal and non-verbal modes like vocal features as their main means of communication. During storytelling, there must be active interaction Therefore, multimodality and multisensory discourse resources (sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch will be important aspects of co-participatory multimodal storytelling (Boivin, N. (2021; Shelton, Sheffield, & Chisholm, 2020).

As technology advance, storytelling also changes to the mode and aspect given. Storytelling is one of ways to improve students' literacy. Hamilton & Weiss (2005) stated that storytelling is a powerful way to inherit cultural histories, conventions, linguistic legacies and social values to children. McCabe and Bliss (2003) stated storytelling is a strong way to naturally expose characters and values to stimulate their imagination from the real world. Storytelling develops in line with the sophistication of technology. Digital storytelling or DST is

nowadays sporadically used in classroom education. Shen, X., Shen, X., & Peng, J. E. (2023) stated that DST refers to 'a distinct nonlinear narrative genre that exploit the advance of technology with its sophistication to produce multiple modes text consisting visual and verbal codes (in Vinogradova et al., 2011: 175). DST involves social hones of basically locks in meaning with multimodal and multisemiotic assets (e.g. printed, visual, spatial, and aural) encouraged by computerized innovations grounded on a social semiotic viewpoint (Gee, 2012).

Research keeps advancing to accommodate and to align with the rapid development of education. To facilitate the education improvement, research methodologies effort to balance with the need of the students and institutions in accordance to the era of technology development. This study focuses on a systematic literature review on the use multimodal approach in the teaching of storytelling across level of education. Systematic literature review is a research method that is conducted to investigate scientific literature of completed and published research to gather existing knowledge and research finding to reform potential new research. This systematic literature study also aims at finding new gaps for further research to develop and innovate.

There are some previous studies that have been conducted related to systematic literature review in educational setting. The first study was conducted by Lim, Toh, & Nguyen (2022) In their study, they investigated articles published from 2010 to 2021 which focused on the education for primary and secondary English classroom. This objective of the study was to investigate and synthesize scholars' views on the use of multimodality in classroom setting or the study found that there are five thematic of discussion, engagement with multimodal writings from student's lifeworld, 2) basic, inventive, and socially responsive multimodal pedagogies, 3) express instructing of multimodal education, 4) consideration on influence in multimodal learning, and 5) concerns over multimodal appraisal.

The second previous SLR was conducted in the classroom by Du (2021) which aimed to investigate and synthesize several aspects of storytelling in the reviewed research articles to prove syntheses and potential insights for early childhood teachers. The other objective of this research is to find out different forms of storytelling in early childhood educators, types of

pedagogies in the storytelling, the benefit of storytelling to children, and the implication of storytelling that can be adopted by educators or teachers in teaching storytelling to their students. This research found that storytelling improves students' engagement and interest in narrative, reading, and purposive writing. This study also emphasized that storytelling potentially improves students' literacy skills.

The third study was conducted by Nair & Yunus (2021) which focused on how DST (digital story telling) improves speaking skills through the use of technological development. They analyzed 45 articles from google scholar and ERICT. This study discovered that teachers at all educational levels, from primary to higher education, can benefit from using digital storytelling as a helpful technique to help students' speaking abilities.

The three previous research have shown the benefits of storytelling in education started from early ages to primary and secondary education, but not higher level of education. The previous study conducted by Nair & Yunus (2021) has also proven storytelling improves specific skill that is speaking skills. The three previous studies would be used as the guidance for the current systematic literature review as well as the direction of the research gap of the current study. This study would focus to three objectives; the first place is to investigate how multimodal approach applied in storytelling across level of education started from early, primary, secondary, higher, and university level. These levels are then categorized into three scopes; early education, primary to secondary level, and higher to university level of education. This categorization induces by the specification of participants of the selected articles that categorize the participants based on ages. In the second place, the current study is to find out linguistic theories of multimodality used in the teaching of storytelling across level of education. In this phase, theories in teaching story

telling would be elaborated to find the most used

theories. And in the third objective, this research would map the complexity of multimodal approach in the implementation of teaching storytelling including the theories, the modes, and also the research procedures.

METHOD

This study applies systematic literature review which focuses on the application of multimodal approach in the teaching of storytelling in classroom including the objective, the

components, tools, and theories of multimodality in storytelling. The following procedures show how the data were collected to accomplish the objective of the study.

Phase 1: Identification Phase. In this phase, relevant articles were identified and categorized to meet the criteria of conducted systematic literature review. Previous terms of exclusion and inclusion have been set before the selection. The database used to gain the data was Google scholar. The range of article publication was 2017 to 2023 which was about five year-publication. To find relevant articles, some keywords were used.

Phase 2: Screening Phase. This phase included steps to filter the relevance of articles requirement. From identification to screening took place about 6 weeks. Screening is used to make sure that the articles meet the inclusion criteria with four keywords; multimodal approach in storytelling, multimodality in Storytelling across level of education, multimodal approach in storytelling in early, primary, secondary, higher, and university education from google scholar with 71 articles selected.

Phase 3: Eligibility Phase. Eligibility phase is applied to review the articles quality and objectivity.

the following chart.

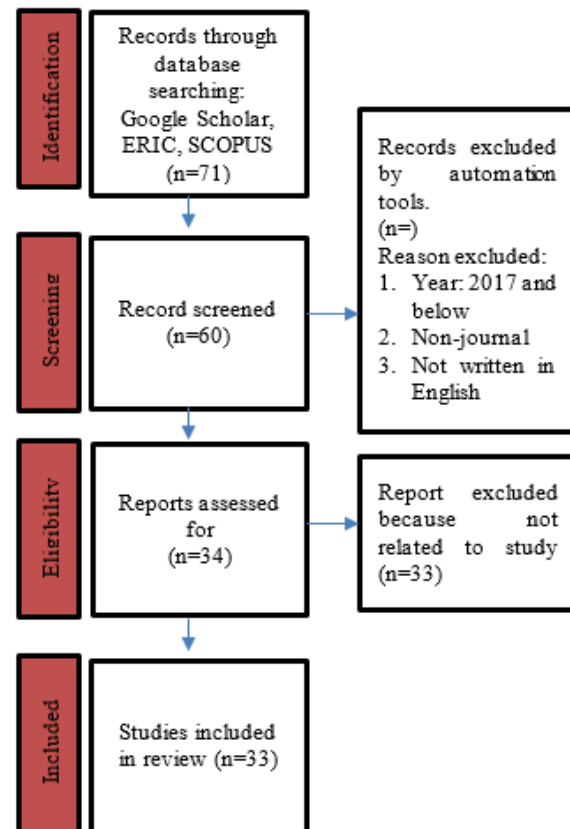


Figure 1: PRISMA diagram flow

The diagram flow shows the procedure of finding the data. From the chart, it can be seen that the final total of the articles selected is 33 data which varies from early education to university education. The data would then be elaborated to answer the objective of the research.

Table 1: Inclusion and exclusion article criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion criteria
Multimodality in Storytelling	Book, inaccessible articles, articles with systematic literature review
Multimodal literacy through storytelling in classroom setting	Multimodal literacy which is not used in storytelling
Multimodal literacy across level of education	Year publication prior to 2017

The exclusion of books and inaccessible articles is due to the unretrievable for analysis that impacts on transparency and replicability. Furthermore, this study focused on multimodal approach in teaching storytelling which means that including studies that are not related to multimodal storytelling would broaden the score beyond the intended focus resulting on the difficulty to generate targeted insights about how storytelling is taught using multimodal approach. To ensure that the research is based on the recent and relevant findings, articles before 2017 are not included as some might not captured the latest trends or tools.

The phase of doing the research can be seen in

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section focuses on to find out the application of multimodal literacy is used in storytelling across level of education. The application can mean the components, media, benefits, skills improved, theories and other relevant components used in improving students' literacy.

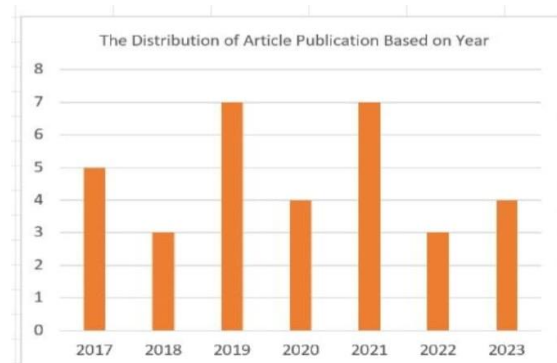


Figure 2. The distribution of multimodal approach

in storytelling based on year of article publication

Based on the chart, it can be seen that the most frequent publication is in 2021 with 7 publicized articles similar to 2019 with 7 articles. This might be due to the pandemic that required students to study at home-classroom setting. This condition motivated the teachers or educators to use more modalities while giving materials to the students. Other possible high use of multimodal approach in storytelling in 2019 is due to technology improvement that need students to be connected to more modalities rather than monomodality in classroom teaching. Reyes, Portalés, and Torres (2021) stated that the Covid-19 pandemic has forced education to become more monolingual, top-down hegemony, or a vision of diversity and inclusion that does not foster communication, multiliteracies, and multilingualism. This is also supported by Meletiadiou (2022) that to increase students and teachers' interaction, there is an increasing need to support all students especially in providing training and technical support. While lower studies in 2023 than those in 2019 and 2023 is because 2023 has only been in few months, and seeing the tendency, the studies might get more frequent.

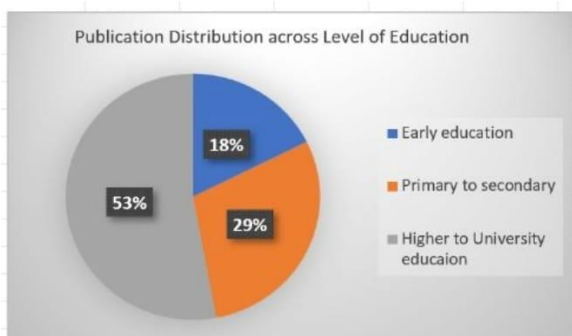


Figure 3. *The publication distribution of multimodal approach in storytelling across education level*

The publicized articles also differ in total based on the level of education. There are 6 or 18% articles found to discuss in early education, 10 or 29% articles in primary to secondary articles, and 18 articles discussed about storytelling in higher to university level of education. The diagram showed that the lowest rate of multimodal approach publications is in early education. This can be because that in this level, the students have to be accompanied by the elder due to the limitation of their ability in reading and writing. In their research, early learners are accompanied by older people like teacher, parents and elder people (BoiviN (2021), Powell (2021) BoiviN (2021)).

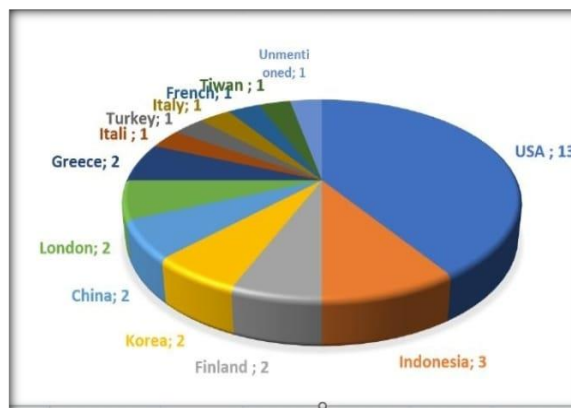


Figure 4. *Research distribution based on countries*

As seen in the above chart that the country distribution for the three level of education is different. The most dominant publication is found in USA with 13 papers or 41% publications are found from USA with the distribution 3 in early education, 6 for primary to secondary, and 4 for higher to university level. In the second place, Indonesia is 10% with 3 publications taking place in higher to university level. Two papers or about 2,6% publication is equally found in Finland, Korea, London, and Greece. In Italy, Turkey, French, and Taiwan is found one publication or 1,3% publication in each country. One paper didn't clearly mention where the research was conducted. Seeing from the continents of Asia, Africa, America, Antarctica, Europe, and Australia, the paper publications aren't found from Africa, Antarctica, and Australia.

Multimodal approach in the teaching of storytelling across level of education

Early education is conducted from early ages of kids. In their study, Cekaite and Willen (2018) investigated young children of early ages in their preschool for 1- to 3.5-year-olds or in preschool years of education. There are seven articles analyzed here to find out the modes, media, benefits, skills improved, and other relevant components used in improving students' literacy. The participants of the research ranging from preschool students and kindergarten students aged 3-7 years old. The skill targeted for early ages are narrative writing skill and literacy improvement. The other facts found that storytelling can be used to transmigrant children to overcome the complex worlds of children in immigrant families and their cultural, social and linguistic practices (Nettie, 2021 & Richards, 2017 and Heo, 2021). The use multimodal in this form of multiliteracy storytelling helps the students to communicate through drawing and pictures.

The research found that the seven articles

which talked about storytelling and multimodal literacy showed various form of multimodal components. From seven articles, there is only found one study which use DST in early education (Eisazadeh & Rajendram, 2020). Frequent components can be seen in the use of drawings and photos (Zollo, 2019; Richards, 2017; Kim 2017; Boivin, 2021, Hembrough, 2019). The audio visuals are also included like video-taped, video recording (Boivin, 2021; Kim, 2017). The art is also flavored the use of multimodal components such as coloring, finger painting, dance, music, theatre, mime, and puppetry (Eisazadeh & Rajendram, 2020, and Bovin 2021). This means that the components used are various in supporting students' literacy.

In the second level of education, from nine articles selected, there are diverse components of multimodal used in storytelling. In this level, the components of multimodal have the tendency to apply technological advancement through the combinations of digital tools and images, videos, and sound. The application of computer dominates the components; they are sound picture books, a program of sci-fi narratives, pixton comic, computing and literacy education, and digital stories named Storyboard (Smith, Shen, & Jiang, 2019; Whyte, Ainsworth, & Medwell, 2020; Johnson & Kendrick, 2017; Normann, 2021; and Reyes-Torres et al, 2021). Besides the application of digital tools, the components of multimodal used in the primary to secondary also apply images, sounds, video, and action (Ferdiansyah, 2018 and Koelzer, 2017; Har, Mohamad, & Jamal, 2019).

The targeted skills in this level focus on speaking skill as said in Naujok (2023) that through the use of multimodal in storytelling, the students are able to participate in the storytelling despite limited understanding of new words. The benefit of storytelling is also seen in science storytelling (Smith, Shen, & Jiang, 2019, 2020) that storytelling with multimodality offers powerful opportunities for problem solving, collaboration, and identity expression. In their study, readers are encouraged to apply multimodal sci-fi narratives in their classrooms in order to improve students' creativity in solving problem by finding solution through the miniature of sci-fi narrative writing. Eisazadeh & Rajendram (2020) found that some learners may take advantage of the use of oral storytelling through audio animation in digital stories, while others prefer traditional print texts and other formats. In combination, they say they have the potential to

develop both traditional and new literacy skills.

Linguistic theories of multimodality used in the teaching of storytelling

The second focus of the study is to find out the trend of linguistic theories in the application of multimodal approach in the teaching of storytelling. There are some theories used that related to linguistics while others focus on the interaction of between the class participations among the learners, the teachers, or the instructor. In the first place is the use of Kress and Gunther (2009) multimodal theories combined with a palette of digital tools to enhance learners' stories with diverse mode in a participatory observation (Eisazadeh & Rajendram, 2020), then the use of Vygotskian sociocultural lenses with multimodality (Richards, 2017). Another theory of linguistics is also used by Powell using Discourse analysis and a multimodality theoretical lens in a qualitative study combined with ethnographic methods as well as participant observation. The social semiotic theory of multimodality is used by Kim, 2017 while Boivin (2021) used MDA guided framework Pecorini and Duplaa (2017).

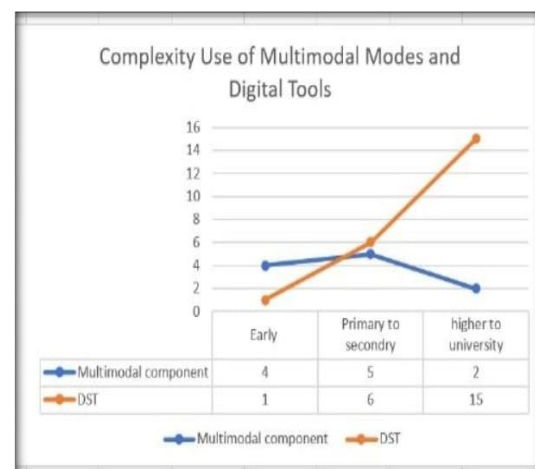


Figure 4. *Linguistic theories of multimodality used in the teaching of storytelling*

The above table show the types and modifications of multimodal approach using linguistic theories. The most frequent linguistic theory is multimodal theory which is proposed by Kress, Kress and Jewitt, Kress and Leeuwen (2001, 2010, 2012). The next is Multimodal social semiotic theories in 3 times frequencies. The other research focused more on the class observation, collaborative project-based learning, case study, and A design-based research approach (Charles, 2018; Boivin, N. 2021, Smith, Shen, & Jang, 2019).

Complexity of multimodal approach in the teaching of storytelling across level of education
Different level of education shows certain complexity. In the early education, the complexity is less seen in the combination of sophisticated tools of digital storytelling. The most used is visual, text and aural or audiovisual. The is only one paper which discussed about the use of digital storytelling in early education (Eisazadeh & Rajendram, 2020). In this study, digital storytelling is used improve children's narrative writing skills in a small-scale qualitative case study: two children (six-year-olds) in grade one. The complexity of the media might be simple here; however, the complex procedure can be seen in the implementation of the study with the participants. The participants are involved elder people, co-teachers and the students, and elder storytellers and the students. This might be because the dependency of the students to the literacy to the older people.

In the primary and the elementary education. The complexity is seen from the combination of linguistic theories with the other discipline, the design of the research, and the combination of tools of digital storytelling. From ten paper, there are half of the total publications or 5 studies out of ten use digital storytelling, while five other papers discussed about the use of text, visual, audio, and gesture (Barreto, J. M. (2021).

In higher to university education, the complexity of the approach is seen through the use of digital tools, audio and visual modality (Aşık, 2023; Liang, 2019; Meletiadou, 2022; Fu, Yang & Yeh, 2022; Korosidou, 2019; Zuhriyah, 2023; Sultana & Turner, 2021; Liontas & Mannion, 2021; Fitri, Husnawadi & Harianingsih, 2021) The technological tools applied in the digital storytelling are toontastic, storyboardThat, website of app.bookcreator.com, and another digital video. Most of the storytelling apply DST (Digital Storytelling). The complexity of the application of multimodal approach occurs due to the linguistic theories applied such as MDA, social semiotics, and structural semiotics.

Table 2. *The Complexity of Multimodal Components and Digital Tools across Education Level*

Linguistic Theories	
Kress's, Kress and Van Leeuwen Multimodality (2001) (2010), (2016)	4
Discourse analysis and Multimodality	1
Multimodal social-semiotic theory	3

multimodal discourse guided framework Pecorini and Duplaa	1
Multimodal narrative discourse analysis (MNDA)	1
Semiotic, Jewitt 2009, Kress 2009	1
multimodal digital storytelling	1
Pink's visual semiotic and Kress' multimodality	1
Jewit's semiotic (2006)	1
Content analysis (Cullum-Swan & Manning, 1994	1

The chart shows the complexity of multimodal components used in storytelling and the tools that is digital storytelling applications. In the early educations, from 5 paper, there is only one research aided by digital tools or called digital storytelling (DST). In the next level of primary to secondary study, the use of digital tools in storytelling increases to more than half of the total papers. There are 6 articles using digital storytelling and five articles use multimodal components with audio, visual, and text. In the next level of education if higher to university level, there are found 15 digital storytelling while there are only two papers highlight about the use of multimodal approach without digital tools.

The high use of digital tools of storytelling in higher schools and university level is due to the independency of students in learning process and the high contact of technology. Puspitasari (2018) states that when learning English, DST not only helps students learn monomodal skills such as listening, speaking, writing, and reading in a single way; but it has been proven to be useful when learning to use all the skills in an integrated way. In the primary to elementary school, the students start to engage with technological tools but with high control of parents. This is why this level, the tendency of using digital tools almost takes the same place to the conventional multimodal modes or component. In the early education, the use of the digital media is very limited due to their dependency of older people's protection of children's exposure to digital media.

CONCLUSION

Multimodal approach is significant to be used in teaching storytelling across level of education which starts from early, primary to secondary, and higher to university level. This systematic literature review's objective is to investigate and synthesize how multimodal approach is used in the teaching of storytelling. There are 71 articles collected to make a synthesis of storytelling which are published in range of 2017 to 2023. The

selected articles are then made to narrow selection to 33 for articles based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The result of the study showed that the use of multimodal literacies in different level of study different in the components and media used. In early educations, multimodal approach in storytelling uses simpler components of multimodal like audio and visual components, less digital application. In the primary to secondary education, the combination of audio, visual and digital tool is balanced, on the other hand higher to university education applied more complex combination of digital storytelling with linguistic theories such as MDA, social semiotics, and structural semiotics.

This study offers insights about how multimodal approach is conducted in different level of education, the component used and the trend of combination between media and digital tools for primary to university level. The less use of digital tool of multimodality in early education might be due to the limited access to the technology and the need of companion from older people. This research could be applied as valuable guidance in designing age-appropriate storytelling tools, moods, and media and also descriptions of how educators could effectively use multimodal approaches across educational levels.

This study identifies a gap in the accessibility and implementation of digital tools in early education. Further research could investigate how to bridge these gaps to ensure equitable access to multimodal storytelling. In addition, this research focuses on storytelling, future research could investigate how this approach enhances language skills. At last, this current study limited to the use of multimodal approach across level of education with 33 articles reviewed. Further studies need deeper research about multimodal approach in more robust foundation for advancing both research and practice in the field of multimodal literacy and storytelling.

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