

World Conference on Research in Teaching and Education

12 - 14 June 2026

Tokyo , Japan

AI-Supported, Creativity-Driven Storytelling Tasks for EFL Learners

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Abstract

The unprecedented advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) has fundamentally reshaped pedagogical approaches in English Language Teaching (ELT). While AI offers powerful affordances for e-learning, concerns remain regarding overreliance on technology and the preservation of creativity. This mixed-methods study examines how AI can provide complementary support to extend learner capabilities without undermining human ingenuity. Participants were 29 college freshmen in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) course. Working in small groups, students drafted original animal narratives structured around setup, confrontation, and resolution. These drafts were refined through human or AI consultations, followed by iterative image prompting to produce visuals for final multimodal videos. Emphasizing collaboration and critical thinking, the project positioned AI as a linguistic and multimodal scaffold rather than providers of ready-made text. Data sources included eight student-produced videos, classroom observations, and post-project student reflections. Analysis of these materials indicates that integrating AI into story-creation tasks can effectively engage learners in meaning-focused interaction, stimulate creativity in plot development, and support the production of original narratives articulated in students' own voices and lexical choices. From an EFL perspective, the iterative cycle of discussion, drafting, and prompt engineering provided authentic opportunities for integrated-skills practice across listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The findings suggest that thoughtfully designed AI-assisted projects can enhance foreign language learning by fostering autonomy and ownership while safeguarding human creativity and authorship. This study provides empirical evidence for pedagogical frameworks leveraging AI to enhance language development while nurturing student voice, collaboration, and creative authorship.

Keywords: AI; collaborative learning; English as a Foreign Language (EFL); learner autonomy; multimodal creative storytelling