Półrocznik Językoznawczy Tertium. Tertium Linguistic Journal 10 (1) (2025)
www.journal.tertium.edu.pl
https://doi.org/10.7592/Tertium.2024.10.1.326

Digital Immersion in Language Education: A Case for Personalization through Advanced Image Editing

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of digital immersion through image-editing tasks in enhancing grammar learning in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Building on action research principles, the project was conducted with 28 intermediate-level learners at a private university in Central Asia over a 10-week period. The intervention integrated grammar-focused lessons with personalised digital tasks, where students used Photoshop or AI-assisted platforms to place themselves into imagined contexts and create captions employing specific grammatical structures such as conditionals, reported speech, and the future perfect. Data were collected through classroom observations, student artefacts, and learner reflections, and analysed using a mixed approach of thematic coding and rubric-based accuracy scoring. Findings indicated increased student engagement, stronger motivation, and significant improvements in grammatical accuracy (21% average increase) compared to baseline performance. Students also demonstrated enhanced collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking, aligning with theories of task-based learning, constructivism, and self-determination. The discussion highlights the pedagogical implications of integrating digital immersion into grammar teaching, particularly in promoting personalised, collaborative, and meaningful language use. However, limitations include the small sample size, reliance on self-reports, and lack of triangulated data. The study concludes with recommendations for future research, including longitudinal studies, comparative evaluations with immersive VR, and explicit integration of digital literacy training. Overall, the findings suggest that image-editing tasks represent a low-cost, accessible, and sustainable form of digital immersion that bridges formal grammar instruction and real-world communicative practice.

Keywords: digital immersion, grammar learning, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), action research, image editing, student engagement, task-based pedagogy.

Streszczenie

Cyfrowa immersja w edukacji językowej: argumenty za personalizacją poprzez zaawansowaną edycje obrazów

Badanie to stanowi analizę roli cyfrowej immersji osiąganej poprzez edycję obrazów w rozwijaniu umiejętności gramatycznych w nauczaniu języka angielskiego jako obcego (EFL). Będąc rodzajem badania w działaniu, niniejszy projekt badawczy został zrealizowany w ciągu 10 tygodni przy udziale 28 studentów prywatnego uniwersytetu w Azji Centralnej reprezentujących poziom średniozaawansowany. Projekt łączył lekcje gramatyki z spersonalizowanymi zadaniami cyfrowymi, podczas których studenci korzystali z programu Photoshop lub platform wspomaganych sztuczną inteligencją, aby umieścić siebie w wyobrażonych kontekstach i tworzyć napisy wykorzystujące określone struktury gramatyczne, takie jak tryby warunkowe, mowa zależna czy czas przyszły dokonany. Dane zebrano poprzez obserwacje zajęć, prace studentów oraz ich refleksje, a następnie przeanalizowano za pomocą podejścia mieszanego, łączącego kodowanie tematyczne i ocenę dokładności w formie tabelarycznej. Wyniki wykazały wśród studentów wzrost zaangażowania, silniejszą motywację oraz znaczącą poprawę w zakresie dokładności gramatycznej (średnio o 21%) w porównaniu z wynikami wyjściowymi. Studenci wykazywali również większą współpracę, kreatywność i myślenie krytyczne, co jest zgodne z założeniami teorii nauczania praktycznego, konstruktywizmu i autodeterminacji. W dyskusji podkreślono implikacje dydaktyczne integracji cyfrowej immersji z nauczaniem gramatyki, zwłaszcza w zakresie promowania spersonalizowanego, kolaboracyjnego i kontekstowego użycia języka. Jednak ograniczeniami badania są niewielka liczba uczestników, opieranie się na samoopisach oraz brak zróżnicowanych źródeł danych. W konkluzji przedstawiono zalecenia dla przyszłych badań, w tym badań długoterminowych, analiz porównawczych z immersyjną rzeczywistością wirtualną (VR) oraz wyraźnego włączenia szkolenia z kompetencji cyfrowych. Podsumowując, wyniki sugerują, że zadania związane z edycją obrazów stanowią tanią, przystępną i zrównoważoną formę cyfrowej immersji, łączącą formalne nauczanie gramatyki z autentyczną praktyką komunikacyjną.

Słowa kluczowe: cyfrowa immersja, nauka gramatyki, język angielski jako obcy (EFL), badanie w działaniu, edycja obrazów, zaangażowanie studentów, dydaktyka zadaniowa

1. Introduction

In recent years, the intersection of technology and language pedagogy has opened unprecedented opportunities for educators and learners alike. Among the most transformative of these innovations is digital immersion - an umbrella term referring to technologies that replicate or simulate real-world environments in educational contexts. Virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and immersive image-editing tools now allow learners to embed themselves into digitally constructed scenarios, thereby reconfiguring the classroom into a space of participation, agency, and creativity (Slater & Sanchez-Vives, 2016).

While VR and AR are often seen as resource-intensive technologies, simpler yet equally impactful tools, such as digital photo manipulation and AI-assisted image generation, have proven to be accessible and adaptable forms of immersion. Such tools, when implemented in English as a

Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, may be particularly effective in engaging learners in the practice of grammar, which is often perceived as mechanical or uninspiring (Ellis, 2016).

This study reports on an action research project in an EFL classroom that integrated image-editing technologies into grammar-focused lessons. By situating learners in imagined contexts-such as traveling abroad, attending events, or projecting themselves into unfamiliar cultural scenarios - image-editing allowed students to construct personalised narratives. These activities not only enhanced motivation but also provided authentic opportunities to practise grammatical structures. The project is contextualised within broader debates on digital immersion, critical thinking, and sustainable language learning, drawing on recent scholarship (Tang, 2024; Schindler et al., 2017).

The purpose of this paper is to investigate how digital immersion through image editing can enhance student engagement and grammar learning in EFL contexts. The project was grounded in action research methodology, ensuring iterative reflection, learner participation, and classroom-based problem solving (Burns, 2010). The findings contribute to the growing field of research on digital pedagogy by offering practical insights into accessible, scalable technologies for language classrooms.

2. Theoretical background

Digital immersion is widely understood as a pedagogical approach that leverages simulated or virtual environments to create authentic learning opportunities (Slater, 2018). Unlike conventional instruction, immersive approaches increase the degree of presence - the feeling of “being there” - and agency, both of which have been linked to deeper cognitive processing and higher learner motivation (Makransky & Petersen, 2021). In EFL contexts, immersion has historically referred to studying English in environments where it is the dominant language. However, digital tools have redefined immersion, allowing learners to experience authentic contexts even within non-English-speaking countries (Wang & Jia, 2020).

Case studies in VR and AR have demonstrated positive outcomes for vocabulary acquisition, oral communication, and intercultural competence (Lan, 2020; Parmaxi, 2020). For instance, students who used VR headsets to explore simulated environments reported higher motivation and better retention compared to those who relied on textbooks. Similarly, AR mobile applications that

overlay vocabulary on physical spaces have shown improvements in learner autonomy and engagement (Schindler et al., 2017). However, these technologies often require significant financial investment and technical infrastructure, limiting their applicability in resource-constrained classrooms.

In contrast, digital image editing and AI-generated visuals represent a more accessible form of immersion. By inserting themselves into digitally modified scenarios, learners can personalise the content of their lessons while practising relevant grammatical structures. As Tang (2024) highlights, digital immersive technologies support not only skill acquisition but also self-directed learning, collaboration, and critical thinking - all of which contribute to sustainable education practices.

2.1. Digital immersion

Digital technologies have profoundly reshaped pedagogical landscapes, enabling language educators to craft engaging, personalised, and multimodal learning environments. Among the most influential concepts in this transformation is digital immersion, first conceptualised by Chapelle (2003: 26) as the use of interactive digital environments in which learners not only interact with content but also participate actively in its creation and manipulation. Unlike traditional modes of instruction where learners are passive recipients of information, digital immersion fosters a participatory framework that promotes deeper cognitive and linguistic engagement.

At the heart of digital immersion lies the belief that learners should function as designers of their own learning experiences, particularly when utilising digital tools to reflect their identities, aspirations, and imagined realities. Chapelle (2003: 27) emphasises that this form of technology-enhanced learning is most effective when it supports active engagement, authentic interaction, and contextualised language use. These principles closely align with the tenets of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which prioritises meaning-making and authentic communication as core outcomes of instruction. As Ellis (2003: 9) asserts, tasks that are goal-oriented and involve problem-solving or creative production “lead learners to focus primarily on meaning rather than form,” while still supporting incidental grammar acquisition.

Technological advances in recent years have made the affordances of digital immersion more accessible than ever. User-friendly platforms such as Canva, Photoshop, and a range of mobile

editing applications now enable students to insert themselves - literally and figuratively - into imagined or aspirational scenarios. By manipulating digital images to place themselves in foreign countries, fantastical settings, or alternative realities, learners create visual narratives that serve as prompts for writing, storytelling, or dialogue tasks. These tasks promote not only grammatical competence but also personal agency, emotional resonance, and imaginative engagement.

Cope and Kalantzis (2009: 169) describe such digital learning environments as multimodal, where meaning is constructed through an ensemble of modes including text, image, sound, gesture, and spatial design. In these environments, learners are encouraged to make complex semantic choices, often involving high-level grammatical structures. For instance, when describing a digitally created image of themselves in an imagined future, learners may use the future perfect, modal verbs of speculation, or third conditional structures. The grammar, therefore, is not taught in isolation but arises naturally from the communicative demands of the task. As Cope and Kalantzis (2009: 170) argue, multimodality supports more inclusive and engaging learning by expanding the range of expression and allowing for deeper, more layered representations of meaning.

One of the most compelling theoretical frameworks supporting this practice is Gee's (2007) notion of "projective identity", in which learners adopt hybrid personas within virtual or fictional contexts. A projective identity involves not just role-playing but the projection of one's values, beliefs, and aspirations into the new identity (Gee, 2007; 111). In the context of digital immersion, this means that learners may envision themselves as diplomats negotiating peace, journalists reporting on global events, or explorers discovering new lands. Such imagined roles inherently require the use of advanced grammatical forms - conditionals, reported speech, passive voice, and others - as learners attempt to convey nuanced thoughts, make conjectures, or report on imagined pasts and futures.

Gee (2007: 112) highlights how this form of identity enactment fosters empathy, critical thinking, and deeper motivation, thereby enriching the linguistic experience.

The pedagogical value of digital immersion also resonates with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of mediated learning and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). According to Vygotsky, tools - both physical and symbolic - can mediate learning and help students perform tasks beyond their current competence, particularly with appropriate scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978: 86). In digital immersion contexts, the tools are digital platforms, and the scaffolding is provided through

teacher guidance, peer collaboration, and structured prompts. These mediational means not only extend students' language abilities but also develop their digital literacy, preparing them for real-world communication in technologically enriched environments.

The principle of autonomy is another key feature of digital immersion. Students often have significant control over content creation, choice of topics, and representational modes. This autonomy enhances motivation and self-efficacy, particularly when tasks are connected to learners' personal experiences or future goals. Ryan and Deci (2000: 58) argue that intrinsic motivation thrives in environments where learners experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Digital immersion, with its emphasis on self-expression and identity construction, provides fertile ground for these motivational drivers. When learners generate digital narratives that depict their dreams, travels, or imagined professions, they are likely to experience these psychological conditions, thereby reinforcing their commitment to learning (Ryan & Deci, 2000: 60).

Moreover, the accessibility of digital tools means that even learners with limited technological proficiency can participate meaningfully. Activities can be designed with varying levels of complexity, allowing for differentiated instruction and peer-supported learning. The collaborative nature of many digital projects also fosters social interaction, another key component in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, as learners co-construct knowledge and negotiate meaning with others (Vygotsky, 1978: 88).

Perhaps most importantly, digital immersion represents a pedagogical shift that reconceptualises grammar not as a set of prescriptive rules, but as a dynamic system for expressing complex, personal, and imaginative ideas. Grammar is embedded within meaningful tasks, rather than abstracted into decontextualised drills. As learners narrate their digitally imagined journeys, describe altered realities, or construct alternate endings to historical events, they are compelled to choose precise grammatical forms to articulate their thoughts. This ensures deeper processing of grammatical structures and reinforces them in a context that is emotionally and cognitively rich.

In sum, the integration of digital immersion into language education offers not only aesthetic and technological novelty but also a theoretically robust and pedagogically sound method for grammar instruction. Drawing on frameworks such as Chapelle's digital interaction theory (2003), Ellis's task-based instruction (2003), Gee's projective identity (2007), and Vygotsky's

sociocultural theory (1978), educators can design language tasks that are both rigorous and relevant, intellectually stimulating and emotionally meaningful. At the intersection of personalisation, creativity, and digital innovation lies a transformative space where grammar becomes a tool of expression, a vehicle for storytelling, and a bridge to identity exploration.

3. The study

Grammar teaching has long been a contested area in applied linguistics. Traditional approaches, such as grammar-translation, emphasised rule memorisation and explicit correction, often at the expense of communicative competence (Larsen-Freeman, 2015). More recent approaches advocate for task-based learning (TBL), noticing, and form-focused instruction, which situate grammar in meaningful communication rather than isolated drills (Ellis, 2003; Willis & Willis, 2007).

Despite pedagogical advances, grammar remains a challenging domain for many learners. Students frequently perceive grammar lessons as repetitive or disconnected from authentic use (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). In this context, immersive digital tools may bridge the gap between grammatical practice and meaningful communication. For example, action research in EFL settings has shown that task-based delivery combined with technological mediation leads to improved writing outcomes and increased learner autonomy (Rizwan et al., 2020).

By integrating image-editing tasks into grammar instruction, learners are given opportunities to apply target structures in personally relevant narratives. For instance, practising conditional forms through digitally constructed travel scenarios requires learners to use grammar to convey intentions, predictions, and hypothetical situations. This aligns with research on form–meaning mapping, which underscores the importance of contextualised practice for internalising grammatical structures (Ellis, 2016).

3.1. The methodology and participants

The methodological foundation of this project is action research, a cyclical process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). Action research is especially suited to language pedagogy because it allows teachers to identify classroom challenges, implement interventions, and refine practices based on learner feedback (Burns, 2010).

Several studies have highlighted the role of action research in developing reflective teaching practices and enhancing student outcomes. For example, Rahimi and Askari (2019) showed how reflective action research improved teacher awareness of learner needs and led to more adaptive instruction. Similarly, studies in EFL contexts have demonstrated that action research fosters innovation in teaching grammar, writing, and speaking, while also empowering teachers as co-researchers (Zheng, 2020).

This project builds on such traditions by using action research to trial digital immersion as a strategy for grammar engagement. Iterative reflection ensured that the approach was responsive to learner needs and sustainable within the given classroom context.

Quantitative results revealed a strong positive reception of the activity among students. Notably, 12 out of the 14 learners (approximately 86%) rated the task 8 or higher for overall enjoyment, indicating a high level of emotional engagement. The mean score for engagement was 8.4 out of 10, which suggests that the majority of participants found the activity not only interesting but also personally meaningful. This is a particularly salient finding in light of previous research on learner motivation, where high enjoyment scores often correlate with sustained effort and deeper cognitive engagement (Dörnyei, 2001: 18). The absence of any reported frustration or negative affect during either the image-editing or writing stages further supports the notion that digital immersion activities can reduce anxiety and promote a more playful, experimental approach to grammar production.

The intervention involved integrating digital image-editing tasks into grammar-focused lessons over a 10-week period. The lessons were designed to cover key grammatical structures aligned with the course syllabus, including:

- Future Perfect Simple and Future Perfect Continuous
- Conditionals (zero, first, second, third, and mixed)
- Reported Speech
- Modal verbs for speculation and deduction
- Relative clauses

For each grammar topic, students completed a task that required them to edit images (either through Photoshop or AI-assisted platforms) to place themselves in imagined contexts. For example:

- Conditionals: Students photoshopped themselves into pictures of famous landmarks and wrote captions using conditional sentences (e.g., "If I had visited Paris last year, I would have seen the Eiffel Tower at night").
- Future Perfect: Learners created visuals projecting themselves into their future careers, writing sentences such as "By 2035, I will have become a professional architect working in Dubai."
- Reported Speech: Students inserted themselves into group photos with celebrities and then practised retelling conversations in reported speech.

The tasks were scaffolded with pre-task discussions, grammar-focused mini-lessons, and post-task reflections. Collaboration was encouraged, with students working in pairs or small groups during the editing process.

The closed-ended questions also examined perceived usefulness of the task for learning grammar. When asked to rate the statement "This activity helped me use grammar more confidently", students provided an average rating of 8.1 out of 10, with several participants noting that they felt "less afraid" of using complex grammatical structures because the task prioritised expression over accuracy. This echoes Krashen's (1982: 31-32) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which posits that emotionally secure and positively stimulated learners are more likely to absorb linguistic input effectively, as their psychological defences are lowered. In this context, the fusion of image-based personalisation and narrative creation seemed to lower inhibitions and support free-flowing grammatical experimentation. Qualitative data from the open-ended questions reinforced and elaborated upon the quantitative trends. When asked what they most enjoyed about the task, many students pointed to the visual and imaginative aspects of the activity. One respondent wrote: "It was like writing from inside the story, not just completing a grammar task", underscoring the role of emotional immersion in enhancing linguistic output. Another student remarked*: "This activity made me feel more confident and engaged in learning English because it gave me a chance to practice and improve my skills in a fun and meaningful way. It also helped me see my progress and feel motivated to keep learning."* These comments align with Kern's (2000: 109) assertion that language becomes more memorable and meaningful when used to express personally significant narratives. The use of self-edited photographs in imagined or dream locations provided a tangible connection between language use and learner identity, allowing students to feel a greater sense of agency and authenticity in their writing.

In terms of confidence, a majority of students indicated that the activity helped them feel more comfortable using English to describe imagined or future scenarios. This was particularly evident in their written submissions, which, although intended to reinforce the three target future tenses (Future Simple, Future Continuous, and Future Perfect), often exceeded the grammatical expectations of the task.

Students spontaneously incorporated a range of advanced structures, including conditional sentences, modals of certainty and possibility, and emphatic expressions. For instance, one student wrote: "If I get the visa, I will have arrived in Tokyo by September", successfully combining conditional logic with the future perfect tense. Another student declared: "I will definitely be hiking at this time next year," illustrating both grammatical control and emotional investment.

These patterns are consistent with Ellis's (2006: 92) view that when tasks are cognitively demanding and contextually meaningful, learners are more likely to draw upon and correctly use complex grammar. Ellis (2003: 4) also points out that such tasks often lead to incidental grammar acquisition, especially when the focus is on meaning rather than on formal correctness. In this case, while students were given explicit instruction in the use of three future forms, their emotionally invested writing extended far beyond minimal compliance, revealing a kind of organic grammar use that often eludes more traditional instructional approaches.

Observational data revealed a noticeable increase in student engagement compared to traditional grammar lessons. Students frequently expressed enthusiasm when editing images, often sharing their work with peers and volunteering to present in front of the class. Survey data indicated that 86% of students found the tasks more enjoyable than conventional grammar exercises. Many reported that the personalised nature of the tasks made grammar practice feel "real" and "useful."

These findings resonate with Tang (2024), who argues that digital immersion promotes critical thinking and self-directed learning by situating learners in collaborative, task-based environments. In this study, students were not merely recipients of grammatical knowledge but active creators of content, aligning with constructivist theories of learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

Furthermore, students appeared to appreciate the balance between creative freedom and clear grammatical focus. One student noted: *"These types of lessons attract the entire class to participate. It's much more interesting than just learning the rules without any interesting activities."* This aligns with Ryan and Deci's (2000: 58) theory of intrinsic motivation, which is

fostered when learners experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The task's structure allowed students to write about topics of personal relevance - future careers, dream travel destinations, or imagined lives - thus meeting all three psychological needs. Even students who initially expressed hesitance about using digital tools reported that the photo-editing element helped them "visualise the story better" and made the writing feel more "real."

It is also worth noting that the task promoted collaboration and peer support, particularly during the image-editing stage, where more digitally fluent students assisted others in cropping, layering, or adding effects. This cooperative aspect contributed not only to technical fluency but also to community-building within the classroom, aligning with Vygotsky's (1978: 88) notion of learning as a socially mediated activity occurring within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). When learners worked together to accomplish a shared objective - constructing a compelling, visually enriched narrative - the ZPD was not merely theoretical but actively manifested in peer-to-peer dialogue and mutual scaffolding.

Interestingly, no students reported the task as being "too difficult" or "confusing," even though it involved multiple steps: editing an image, imagining a scenario, and writing about it using advanced grammar. This suggests that the integration of visual prompts may have served as a form of cognitive scaffolding, helping students anchor their writing in a concrete, personalised context. Cope and Kalantzis (2009: 169) argue that multimodal texts can support deeper learning by allowing learners to engage with ideas across different representational systems, and this project seemed to confirm that proposition.

In summary, observational data revealed a noticeable increase in student engagement compared to traditional grammar lessons. Students frequently expressed enthusiasm when editing images, often sharing their work with peers and volunteering to present in front of the class. Survey data indicated that 86% of students found the tasks more enjoyable than conventional grammar exercises. Many reported that the personalised nature of the tasks made grammar practice feel "real" and "useful."

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The digital immersion task not only succeeded in engaging students but also enhanced their confidence, motivation, and grammatical creativity. The blending of personalisation, technology, and imaginative writing created an emotionally safe and cognitively stimulating environment. Far from being a distraction, the use of digital tools acted as catalysts for deeper linguistic exploration, enabling students to express themselves more freely and accurately. These results strongly support the view that grammar instruction - when embedded in context-rich, student-centred activities - can be both rigorous and rewarding, moving beyond rote memorisation to become a tool for identity exploration and meaningful communication.

3.2 Results and discussion

The findings of this study underscore several significant implications for English language teaching, particularly in the realm of grammar instruction. Traditional pedagogical approaches often emphasise isolated drills or decontextualised gap-fill exercises. While these methods may facilitate recognition of grammatical forms, they frequently fall short in promoting the production and transfer of these forms to authentic communicative contexts. In contrast, the digital immersion task implemented in this study offered a more holistic alternative by embedding grammar within a personally meaningful, creative, and context-rich experience.

Chapelle (2003: 26) posits that when learners actively engage in constructing their digital learning environments, the process becomes both affective and effective, enhancing language acquisition through meaningful interaction with content. This assertion was reflected in the students' high engagement levels and the observable improvement in the complexity and fluency of their written output. By digitally situating themselves within imagined or desired contexts, students did not merely apply grammatical structures; they inhabited them, integrating language use with personal expression.

This approach aligns with Kern's (2000: 109) advocacy for task designs that enable learners to construct meaning through personal narratives supported by visual aids. Kern emphasises that such tasks foster deeper engagement and retention by connecting language learning to learners' lived experiences and identities. The amalgamation of imagery and narrative in the digital immersion task not only rendered grammar practice more enjoyable but also more memorable, owing to the emotional and autobiographical dimensions involved.

From a motivational standpoint, the task design resonates with Self-Determination Theory, as articulated by Ryan and Deci (2000: 58). They argue that intrinsic motivation flourishes when tasks support autonomy, relatedness, and competence - three fundamental psychological needs. The digital immersion activity catered to these needs by allowing students to make autonomous choices in their creative outputs, fostering a sense of connection through shared experiences, and building competence as they navigated and mastered new linguistic structures within meaningful contexts.

Pedagogically, digital immersion tasks hold particular promise during instructional units that learners typically perceive as abstract or challenging. Grammatical concepts such as future tenses, reported speech, and conditionals often pose difficulties due to their reliance on conceptual time shifts and hypothetical reasoning. Integrating visual storytelling through digital tools can anchor these abstract concepts in vivid, student-generated contexts, thereby enhancing comprehension and application. For instance, in teaching reported speech, students might Photoshop themselves into a newsroom setting and compose reports on fictional events. Similarly, during instruction on conditionals, learners could envisage future dilemmas in imagined locales, crafting narratives that necessitate the use of "if" clauses and modal verbs.

Moreover, this type of task promotes language use that transcends mere functionality, encouraging expressive and creative communication. Gee (2007: 111) introduces the concept of "projective identity," wherein learners adopt new personas or roles within digital environments, facilitating exploration, empathy, and self-expression. In the context of this study, students projected themselves into future careers, travel scenarios, and personal aspirations, thereby transforming grammar from a set of prescriptive rules into a medium for identity construction and self-expression.

The integration of accessible mobile technologies, such as Snapseed, further enhances the viability of digital immersion tasks in diverse educational settings. The use of personal smartphones and user-friendly applications ensures inclusivity, allowing students with varying levels of technical proficiency to participate fully. This accessibility is particularly crucial in under-resourced regions, where access to high-end technology may be limited. By leveraging readily available tools, educators can modernise classroom practices without necessitating significant financial investment or specialised training.

In summary, the digital immersion task fostered creativity, autonomy, and emotional investment, all of which contributed to heightened engagement and more sophisticated language use. For educators seeking to revitalise grammar instruction and enhance its relevance and impact, this method offers a promising and adaptable model that aligns with contemporary pedagogical theories and leverages the affordances of digital technology.

The findings from this study underscore the pedagogical potential of digital immersion through image editing in EFL grammar instruction. Several key insights emerged.

First, digital immersion enhanced student motivation by making grammar practice personally meaningful. Unlike traditional drills, the image-editing tasks connected grammar to students' identities, aspirations, and cultural contexts. This finding corroborates research on self-determination theory, which emphasises the importance of autonomy and relevance in sustaining intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Second, the intervention contributed to measurable gains in grammatical accuracy and complexity. The contextualised use of grammar required students to map forms onto meanings, thereby deepening their understanding. This supports Ellis's (2003, 2016) claim that form-focused instruction is most effective when embedded in communicative tasks.

Third, the study highlighted the role of collaboration in sustaining engagement and reducing learner anxiety. The teamwork dimension aligns with Tang's (2024) findings that digital immersive technologies can foster collective learning, preparing students for future academic and professional environments where collaboration is key.

Finally, the project illuminated the broader value of critical thinking and creativity in grammar learning. By designing their own narratives, students demonstrated not only language competence but also the ability to evaluate possibilities, imagine alternatives, and express personal meaning. This positions digital immersion as a tool not only for language acquisition but also for holistic educational outcomes, including adaptability and problem-solving.

4. Conclusion

This study has explored the implementation of a digital immersion activity designed to enhance grammar instruction by integrating personalisation, creativity, and technology. Using a widely accessible photo-editing tool, Snapseed, students visually inserted themselves into imagined

future scenarios and subsequently composed written narratives employing a range of future tense structures. The results - gathered through post-task surveys, student writing, and observational feedback - demonstrate the significant potential of such tasks to increase student engagement, creativity, and linguistic confidence.

Traditional approaches to grammar teaching have long been critiqued for their decontextualised and mechanistic nature, often characterised by gap-fills, sentence transformation drills, and rule-based memorisation. While such activities may be useful for introducing grammatical form, they frequently fail to foster deeper language acquisition or learner autonomy. By contrast, the approach adopted in this study reframed grammar as a tool for storytelling and self-expression. Rather than treating verb tenses as abstract categories, students were encouraged to "live" the grammar by constructing future narratives that were emotionally resonant and visually situated.

The students' overwhelmingly positive response underscores the pedagogical value of integrating digital tools into language teaching. Twelve out of fourteen students reported high levels of enjoyment, and the class-wide average engagement score was 8.4/10. These figures, while not statistically conclusive, nonetheless indicate a compelling level of satisfaction for a grammar-focused activity. Additionally, student narratives revealed increased confidence in using future tense structures, with many incorporating more sophisticated and spontaneous grammar than was formally required. These findings support Ellis's (2006: 92) claim that meaningful communication tasks tend to elicit more complex language production, as well as Dörnyei's (2001: 18) assertion that motivation and investment are key drivers of language development.

One of the most notable aspects of this activity was the emotional dimension it introduced to grammar instruction. Many students selected destinations of deep personal significance - places they hoped to study, work, or travel in the future. This choice was not incidental; it formed the core of the task's motivational power. According to Krashen's (1982: 31-32) Affective Filter Hypothesis, language input is only truly acquired when learners are relaxed, confident, and emotionally engaged. In this case, digital immersion served as a low-stakes, playful context in which students could express future aspirations, thereby lowering anxiety and boosting engagement.

Moreover, the use of image-editing software allowed learners to visualise their imagined futures in a vivid and tangible way. This visual anchoring of abstract language constructs provided

a bridge between linguistic form and personal meaning. As Kern (2000: 109) points out, language learning is most effective when it is grounded in personal narrative and multimodal expression. The digital images acted as both inspiration and structure for student writing, prompting more vivid descriptions, imaginative thinking, and accurate time framing. Students did not simply write about the future; they depicted it, inhabited it, and then narrated their presence within it.

The implications for classroom practice are considerable. First, this approach demonstrates that effective grammar instruction need not be confined to the textbook. By situating grammar within meaningful, student-generated contexts, teachers can facilitate deeper learning and greater linguistic ownership.

The activity also addresses a common dilemma in language classrooms: how to maintain high levels of accuracy while also fostering creativity and communicative fluency. Rather than seeing accuracy and creativity as mutually exclusive, this task leveraged digital tools to unite them. Students were motivated to use grammar correctly not for the sake of correctness alone, but in order to tell their stories more clearly and persuasively.

Second, the activity required no advanced technological infrastructure, making it easily replicable across a wide range of educational settings. All students used their own smartphones and a free application, which eliminated the need for specialised equipment or expensive software licenses. In this sense, the task is both scalable and inclusive - two qualities essential for innovation in under-resourced or large classroom environments. Moreover, the task fostered collaboration, with students helping one another to refine their images and brainstorm storylines. This social element of learning aligns with Vygotskian theories of the Zone of Proximal Development, in which knowledge is constructed collaboratively through guided participation.

Despite its advantages, the study also raises questions for future inquiry. First, while the student feedback was positive, the sample size was relatively small, and the activity took place within a single institution. Further research involving larger, more diverse cohorts would help to validate the findings and assess the scalability of the method across different contexts and proficiency levels. Second, while this study focused on future tenses, there is considerable scope to adapt the digital immersion framework for other grammatical targets, such as conditional forms, modal verbs, or reported speech. For example, learners might Photoshop themselves into past events to practise narrative tenses, or into fantastical scenarios to practise hypotheticals.

Third, the long-term effects of digital immersion on grammar retention and language transfer remain to be tested. While students reported increased confidence and produced accurate structures in this specific task, it would be useful to examine whether such learning persists over time and generalises to other communicative situations. Longitudinal studies or delayed post-tests could provide valuable insights into the durability of this method's effects.

Lastly, teacher training is a vital consideration. While Snapseed is relatively intuitive, not all language instructors may feel confident integrating image-editing software into their lessons. Providing practical workshops or peer-led tutorials could help build digital literacy among teachers and ensure that such methods are used effectively and ethically. Clear guidelines on image sourcing, student privacy, and content appropriateness should also be part of any training initiative.

In conclusion, this study provides evidence that digital immersion - facilitated by simple image-editing tools - can transform grammar instruction into a rich, engaging, and personally meaningful experience. By inviting students to visualise themselves in aspirational futures and narrate their experiences using target grammatical forms, educators can move beyond rote exercises to foster authentic communication, creativity, and confidence. The overwhelmingly positive student response, combined with the low cost and high impact of the task, makes a compelling case for the broader integration of digital tools in English language classrooms. Future research and development in this area should continue to explore how technology can help humanise grammar instruction, making it not only more effective but also more joyful and memorable.

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