

Talking Stick Learning Model in Fostering EFL Students' Digital Communicative Competence in the 21st Century

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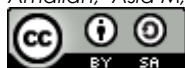
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Abstract

Digital communicative competency has evolved into a must for EFL students in the twenty-first century if they are to connect boldly and appropriately in English via email, video conferences, and messaging apps. This study aims to examine how the Talking Stick learning paradigm affects EFL students' digital communicative competence, or their capacity to communicate confidently, appropriately, and effectively in English across digital platforms. This study used a quantitative research design, using a survey approach. The findings show that all four dimensions had statistically significant improvements, with the highest gain in Confidence in Digital Communication, and displayed a statistically significant increase. Confidence in Digital Communication (M difference = 0.91) had the highest significant mean improvement; closely followed was Clarity in Online Expression (M difference = 0.89). The observed variations were statistically significant since all p-values were less than 0.05. These results suggest that in EFL environments, the Talking Stick model efficiently supports several aspects of digital communication. This study concludes that the Talking Stick learning model effectively enhances EFL students' digital communicative competence, improving key areas such as confidence, clarity, appropriateness, and engagement in online communication.

Keywords: Competence, Digital Communicative, Talking Stick Model, EFL Students

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INTRODUCTION

Global issues, including digital inequality, cross-cultural communication, and shifting educational paradigms, affect EFL learning in the 21st century. As digital platforms become the dominant method of global communication, students must engage well across cultures and languages. Uneven access to technology and digital literacy causes differences, notably between urban and rural students (Usria et al., 2023). Globalisation has pros and cons, like losing traditional values and cultural homogeneity. These facts require imaginative and inclusive teaching methods that improve digital communication, cultural awareness, teamwork, and ethics. Culturally grounded strategies like the Talking Stick model in digital EFL education address global issues by promoting polite communication, equal participation, and digital citizenship.

For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in the twenty-first century, digital communicative competency has evolved into a vital ability. The capacity to speak effectively, suitably, and boldly in English utilizing digital tools is crucial as worldwide contacts take place via digital platforms, including emails, video conferencing, online forums, and messaging applications (Hasan, 2023). In online communication settings, this competency covers not only language abilities but also computer literacy, cultural sensitivity, and pragmatic awareness (Usria et al., 2023).

Rooted in Indigenous traditions, the Talking Stick approach offers a useful pedagogical tool for encouraging polite and ordered speech. Originally, this approach encourages active listening and equal involvement by letting just the person carrying the stick speak while others pay close attention (Sari, 2016). Important interpersonal qualities including patience, empathy, and mutual respect—skills equally vital in digital communication (Sasabone et al., 2022), where turn-taking and careful responses can sometimes be disregarded—are cultivated by this model (Samangun et al., 2024).

The Talking Stick paradigm can be successfully incorporated with digital resources to promote disciplined and inclusive discussion when modified for EFL classes (Balashov, 2023). Digital talking sticks can be used, for example, via discussion boards with controlled publishing orders, 'raise hand' tools in video conference systems, or collaborative apps like Flipgrid and Padlet that let students speak in turns using recorded messages or typed inputs. These adaptations offer controlled situations where students may develop their digital communication competency in low-anxiety, relevant settings (Wibowo et al., 2024).

Digital communicative competency of EFL students is their capacity to properly and efficiently use digital tools and platforms to express in English (Kessler, 2018). This covers not just language abilities like syntax, vocabulary, and pronunciation but also digital environment navigation, interpretation of multimodal texts, and meaningful virtual engagement capacity (Sukmawati et al., 2024; Imran et al., 2023). Competent digital communicators show multicultural knowledge and digital etiquette by

engaging in online forums, writing emails, producing digital materials, and working across several platforms (Hasnani et al., 2023).

Encouragement of digital communicative competency is essential in the framework of 21st-century education to equip EFL learners to operate in social, academic, and professional environments. Students must be able to clearly articulate ideas, answer properly in many digital environments, and interact politely as online contact grows more common (Asdar et al., 2024; Nurhikmah H et al., 2024). This competency improves not only their language skills but also helps them grow as global citizens ready to use technology to engage in cross-cultural communication and cooperation.

Combining the cultural diversity of the Talking Stick methodology with contemporary digital platforms ultimately helps students develop not only their English competency but also their capacity to participate politely and successfully in worldwide digital environments. This method motivates students to consider their digital behaviour, enhance their confidence to express themselves in English across many online environments (Sukmawati et al., 2022), and rethink their communication. Through encouraging digital citizenship and cooperative learning, this approach promotes the more general objectives of 21st-century EFL education.

The design of cultural learning is carried out by paying attention to the needs of the target group, especially in terms of knowledge, which is combined with the instillation and development of attitudes that uphold the understanding and values of integration, being different in unity, and being united even in differences. Education is not only an attempt to create a learning atmosphere and learning process in the classroom, and also not only creates an interaction between an educator and students either through learning media or directly, but more than that (Zega et al., 2024).

Although the role of education is so significant that it does not preclude the possibility of it operating without any difficulties, the process of putting it into practice frequently involves encountering difficulties and restrictions. This can be seen by the policies of the government, specifically the Ministry of Education and Culture, which has altered and rewritten the educational curriculum on multiple occasions (Rokhman et al., 2014). A number of serious obstacles are currently being faced by the educational system in Indonesia. The discrepancy in the quality of education that exists between urban and rural sections of the country is one of the most significant concerns. Schools located in urban regions typically have access to more resources, including nicer facilities, more qualified teachers, and more technological resources. On the other hand, schools located in rural places frequently find themselves lacking in facilities, qualified teachers, and sufficient instructional resources. There is a correlation between this and the uneven learning outcomes of students, which in turn leads to their character education and social skills not being at their best.

Due to globalisation, education challenges are growing more complex. People live differently as individuals, society members, and citizens due to globalisation. Globalisation is unavoidable. Every person must choose to participate in world change or be swept up by it. Along with the global era's characteristics, instructors must address global society's issues (Singh, 2019). In this day and age, there is a significant need placed on educators to enhance their professionalism in their roles as educators and teachers. In addition to maintaining a professional demeanour, educators also need to contend with several keywords in the field of education. These keywords include competition, transparency, efficiency, and high quality.

Consequently, global developments influence students' behaviour, manifesting in various issues such as bullying and violence in schools, regardless of whether they are located in urban or rural locations. The rapid worldwide changes exert both beneficial and detrimental effects on education, necessitating urgent assessment and prompting educators to mitigate these adverse implications by enhancing student motivation and engagement in learning (Pattaro, 2016).

However, to ensure that the realistic approach runs effectively, a supportive learning model is needed. One model that has been proven effective in increasing social interaction among students is the Talking Stick cooperative learning model (Wibowo et al., 2024). This model requires students to listen to each other and respect each other's opinions, because only students holding the stick are allowed to speak. In this way, this learning model not only increases student participation but also helps them learn to respect the opinions of their friends. Cooperative learning can improve student learning outcomes and the development of their social skills.

Conversely, the Talking Stick cooperative learning style enhances engagement and collaboration among students. This methodology permits students to sequentially express their opinions and ideas using a "talking stick." This technique fosters attentive listening and appreciation of peers' perspectives, cultivating an environment of reciprocal support (Kurniawati & Sudiana, 2023). Cooperative learning enhances students' academic comprehension and fosters vital social skills, including communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution. These skills are crucial for enabling students to navigate an increasingly intricate social landscape (Sopiatun et al., 2024).

This study addresses an important gap in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, namely in developing digital communicative competence among 21st-century students. Although digital literacy is prioritized in language education, the incorporation of culturally relevant pedagogies, like the Talking Stick learning model, into digital communication is yet little examined. This concept, historically employed in in-person environments to facilitate turn-taking and active listening, has not been adequately modified for online platforms to foster effective digital communication, particularly in EFL situations. Moreover, issues associated with the digital divide, especially in rural regions with restricted technological access, underscore the necessity for inclusive pedagogical strategies.

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of the Talking Stick learning model in enhancing EFL students' digital communicative competence, focusing on their ability to interact confidently, appropriately, and effectively in English through various digital platforms in the 21st-century learning environment.

METHOD

This study investigated the efficacy of the Talking Stick learning model in developing digital communicative competence among EFL students in the 21st-century learning environment using a quantitative research design using a survey approach. The quantitative method was selected to help gather numerical data reflecting students' opinions, experiences, and self-evaluated digital communication competency (Creswell, 2021). Traditionally stressing respect and turn-taking in verbal contacts, the Talking Stick model was modified and used in digital learning environments, including online conversations, group projects, and video conferences. This methodical approach sought to give a quantifiable understanding of the link between model use and students' digital communicative growth.

Thirty-five EFL students in the second semester of the 2024–2025 academic year participated in this study at both Universitas Bosowa and Universitas Megarezky. Students with past knowledge of online learning environments and basic digital communication abilities were chosen using purposeful sampling. Over [insert length, e.g., six weeks], students participated in structured communication activities using digital technologies as Google Meet, WhatsApp group conversations, or LMS-based forums employing the Talking Stick model integrated into classroom instruction. This guaranteed that the research stayed contextually relevant for digital communication patterns and modern education.

Using a structured questionnaire created based on important elements of digital communicative competence—digital fluency, coherence in online discussions, turn-taking, clarity of digital messages, and confidence in virtual interactions—data were gathered. Three TEFL and educational technology specialists looked over and evaluated the instrument to guarantee content validity. The questionnaire was tested with a small group of students before complete deployment using Cronbach's Alpha reliability testing, which produced a coefficient of [insert value, e.g., 0.82], therefore suggesting a good degree of internal consistency. Thanks in part to the students' familiarity with digital tools, the last form of the questionnaire, which was sent via Google Forms, got a 100% response rate.

There was descriptive as well as inferential statistical analysis of the data. The general degrees of students' digital communicative competency were compiled using descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations. Using SPSS software, inferential analysis, including paired sample t-tests or one-way ANOVA, was done to investigate notable variations and correlations (Arkkelin, 2014). The results were then analyzed to ascertain whether students' development of digital communicative competency was statistically significantly changed by using the Talking Stick

approach. These findings provide the empirical basis for reaching conclusions and providing pedagogical recommendations for the incorporation of student-centered, culturally anchored models into electronically mediated EFL education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Dimension-Based Analysis

The questionnaire items were grouped into four key dimensions of digital communicative competence. The following table shows the mean scores before and after the implementation of the Talking Stick model:

Dimension	Mean (Pre-Test)	Mean (Post-Test)	Mean Difference	Std. Dev. (Post)	Sig. (p)
Digital Fluency	3.20	4.05	0.85	0.40	0.000
Clarity in Online Expression	3.12	4.01	0.89	0.38	0.000
Turn-Taking in Digital Interaction	3.10	3.95	0.85	0.42	0.000
Confidence in Digital Communication	3.15	4.06	0.91	0.36	0.000

All four dimensions showed statistically significant improvements, with the highest gain in Confidence in Digital Communication. Table 1 shows that following the Talking Stick learning approach, all four measures of digital communicative competency displayed a statistically significant increase. Confidence in Digital Communication (M difference = 0.91) had the highest significant mean improvement; closely followed was Clarity in Online Expression (M difference = 0.89). The observed variations were statistically significant since all p-values were less than 0.05. These results suggest that in EFL environments, the Talking Stick model efficiently supports several aspects of digital communication.

Effect Size (Cohen's d)

To determine the practical significance of the intervention, Cohen's d was calculated for the total score:

$$\text{Cohen's } d = \frac{M_{\text{post}} - M_{\text{pre}}}{SD_{\text{pooled}}} = \frac{4.03 - 3.14}{0.42} = 2.10$$

This yields a Cohen's d = 2.10, which represents a very large effect size, indicating that the Talking Stick learning model had a strong practical impact on students' digital communicative competence.

Frequency Distribution of Overall Scores

Score Range (Post-Test)	Frequency	Percentage
2.50 – 2.99	0	0%
3.00 – 3.49	4	11.4%

3.50 – 3.99	10	28.6%
4.00 – 4.49	16	45.7%
4.50 – 5.00	5	14.3%

Most students scored above 4.00, confirming a positive shift in competence levels.

Strong proof that the Talking Stick learning approach helps EFL students develop digital communicative competency comes from the quantitative results. The notable rise across all four competency levels shows that this model not only enhances students' capacity to express themselves in digital contexts but also develops their confidence, digital fluency, and respect of interaction rules, including turn-taking. The significant effect size emphasizes even more the educational worth of including culturally based, structured dialogue practices in modern EFL classrooms, especially in online or blended learning formats.

The findings of this study underline the major contribution of the Talking Stick learning model in enhancing the digital communicative competency of EFL students in the twenty-first-century classroom. Rooted in a conventional turn-taking and polite communication practice, the paradigm proved flexible on digital platforms and sensitive to contemporary learning requirements. Utilizing organized exercises promoting equal involvement and active listening, students were able to improve their communicative skills in virtual environments. Mean score changes between pre-test and post-test data suggest that students grew more involved, confident, and successful in their online interactions (Asri et al., 2019).

Students' confidence in digital communication shows among the most obvious changes. With the highest mean score this factor indicated that the Talking Stick approach offers a psychologically safe environment where students feel free to express themselves. Learners who knew when their moment would come and heard without interruption had the confidence to participate more regularly and purposefully. This result is consistent with the ideas of student-centered learning, in which academic exchanges help students to feel appreciated and encouraged (Usria et al., 2023).

Apart from confidence, online expression clarity showed a significant rise. The exercises around the Talking Stick concept forced students to arrange their ideas before speaking or typing, therefore enhancing their clarity in communication. The model calls for deliberate turn-taking, hence students had time to review their answers and provide more cogent and ordered arguments. In digital learning situations, where communication usually lacks instantaneous response and clarity is crucial for efficient idea sharing, this is especially helpful (Herawati et al., 2023).

Moreover, the increases in turn-taking behavior and digital fluency mirror the more general communicative advantages of the approach. Through consistently scheduled speaking and listening assignments, students developed not just more fluency in expressing themselves but also more respect and responsiveness toward others in digital environments. A crucial but sometimes underappreciated component of communication competency, turn-taking improved greatly and helped students create better digital etiquette and group projects. In academic,

social, and professional settings as well as in actual internet communication, these abilities are essential.

The results imply that the Talking Stick learning approach is not only relevant in conventional classroom situations but also very successful in digital learning environments. In EFL teaching, it is a useful tool because of its disciplined yet adaptable character that lets one fit several platforms. Integrating culturally grounded, interactive tactics like this model can help to close the gap between conventional pedagogies and new communicative needs, as 21st-century communication depends more on digital forms. Teachers are urged to investigate this method further to increase student involvement and communication results in both hybrid and online environments (Usria et al., 2023).

The novelty of the study combines the conventional Talking Stick learning model with the digital EFL classroom environment, more especially, to promote digital communicative competency—a construct that goes beyond conventional speaking and listening skills to include fluency, clarity, interactional discipline, and confidence in online platforms. Although the Talking Stick approach has usually been used in face-to-face learning to encourage polite dialogue and turn-taking, this study is among the first to investigate its efficacy within virtual or technologically enhanced environments, so addressing the critical need for culturally relevant pedagogies in 21st-century digital education. Moreover, employing validated survey instruments and empirical data, the study offers new evidence-based insights on how culturally embedded, student-centred models can be modified to enhance communicative results in digital EFL environments. The subject of language education and instructional innovation gains a new and context-sensitive dimension from this linking of indigenous pedagogy with digital literacy aims (Nurhikmah H et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study reveals, in the framework of 21st-century learning, that the Talking Stick learning model greatly improves EFL students' digital communicative competency. The study shows its efficacy in digital environments by modifying a culturally anchored paradigm usually utilized in oral, in-person contacts. Over four criteria—digital fluency, clarity in online expression, turn-taking, and confidence in digital communication—the quantitative results revealed notable improvement. While simultaneously encouraging respect for others' contributions in digital environments, the organised turn-taking inherent in the Talking Stick technique helps students communicate more deliberately and confidently. These results imply that, when carefully included in digital formats, conventional pedagogical approaches can solve contemporary communication problems in EFL education. Especially to foster organized interaction and student involvement in online communication, EFL teachers can include the Talking Stick learning model in their digital and blended learning strategies. This paradigm should be included in classroom management and interaction techniques, stressing equity and involvement in teacher training programs. Talking Stick and other culturally sensitive approaches are also urged to be included into curricula to enhance communication assignments in computer literacy

courses. Using mixed-method approaches to investigate students' experiences and long-term communicative development more thoroughly, comparable studies can be carried out across many educational levels or cultural settings in future studies. Combining digital pedagogy with traditional values provides a sustainable framework for inclusive, skill-oriented language acquisition in the digital era.

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