

# INCORPORATING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING IDIOMS TO MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

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## Abstract

Developing and implementing digital literacy practices for multilingual learners can gradually improve English learning performance. They have various first language backgrounds, yet they are digitally literate. To deal with multilingual learners, the instructions needed may be different for each learner for multilingual learners to simultaneously develop their knowledge in written and spoken English. In this presentation, I would like to share a technology-enhanced lesson plan that encourages teachers to construct a safe environment for multilingual learners to enhance their idiomatic knowledge using their local languages. I will also share various technology tools in lesson planning to enhance learners' productive language skills to communicate and interact with native English speakers, as idioms are commonly used in casual conversation. My presentation will benefit English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers looking for technology-enhanced teaching and learning ideas to help multilingual learners learn idioms and achieve language learning objectives set in their classrooms.

**Keywords** – technology, English, teaching idioms, multilingual learners

## Introduction

Writing and speaking are the core productive skills to learn at the university level, especially in English Language Learning. There are various approaches to learning speaking and writing, and one of them is through idioms. Teaching idioms can help improve fluency by using expressive and vivid language that can be enjoyable for English language learners. The approaches used in teaching English idioms are stories, definitions, and visuals through simple technology tools. Visuals, graphics organizers, manipulatives, hands-on experiences, and multimodal presentations help multilingual students understand new concepts while still learning to articulate these new ideas in their native language (Hamilton, 2018).

According to the World Economic Forum, Indonesia is second among the most multilingual countries globally, with 715 languages spoken. This data shows that most students in Indonesia are

multilingual. The mother tongue of children is frequently a local language rather than Bahasa Indonesia, the national language. Indonesian students learn two languages as part of their daily lives, as per Nursanti's (2021) findings: their local language and Bahasa Indonesia. To deal with multilingual learners, teachers need instructions that may differ for each learner to simultaneously develop their knowledge in written and spoken English (Hamilton, 2018). Learning idioms can be especially beneficial for multilingual learners' language development. Since idioms are often culture-specific and sometimes not translated directly to other languages, understanding and using them can help learners better understand English and its nuances. It can also improve their ability to communicate and interact with native English speakers and comprehend authentic text written by the natives (Suhodolli, 2022).

This paper presents a lesson plan design using an approach supported by various technology tools, such as *English in a Minute* (VOA), *My Storybook*, and *Google Slides*. This lesson plan should interest EFL teachers and educational practitioners looking for supportive technology-enhanced teaching and learning activities in the classroom, as reported in the literature (see Ammade et al., 2018; Hadijah & Shalawati, 2017).

## Method

In this paper, the writer did not use a qualitative or quantitative approach, similar to McLain (2019), Frazier et al. (2021), and Mali (2021) in their studies. The writer presents a lesson plan that provides a practical way to teach English idioms supported by various technology tools, such as *English in a Minute* (VOA), *My Storybook*, and *Google Slides*, to multilingual learners.

### *English in a Minute*

(<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/z/3619>)

*English in a Minute* is a section of the Voice of America (VOA) website that includes a one-minute clip that explains American English idioms and can be linked with an idiom activity (Hamilton, 2018). Vaishnavi and Gandhi (2020) added that this website emphasizes speaking at times to help learners enhance their oral production and later could improve their understanding of English vocabulary. The use of an American English idiom is introduced in a one-minute clip using diverse body language and expressions to explain the meaning and origin of the idiom. Various images appeared on the screen behind to accompany the explanation (see Figure 1). Viewers memorize by viewing the image and hearing the explanation with many senses simultaneously. Yang and Xiao (2019) concluded that through this clip on this

website, learners could significantly enhance their oral expression memory and learning effect. One of the many good things about this website is that the video is uploaded weekly. Along with *My Storybook* and *Google Slides*, this website could combine teaching idioms designed in this paper's lesson plan. The following section is the lesson plan designed for use in an EFL context and a face-to-face classroom by incorporating the technology tools mentioned above.



Figure 1. *English in a Minute*

### *My Storybook*

(<https://www.mystorybook.com/>)

*My Storybook* is a great literacy resource for teachers and students to create a storybook that can be published online. Users can start creating a storybook from a blank page and employ templates provided on the website. There are some stories that can be used as inspiration for first-timers provided by other users on the library website. To scaffold stories, users could use free templates on their narrative writing with outlines, characters, problems, solutions, and setting scenes (see Figure 2). To print the final storybook, users need to get a premium membership. For free users, the link is available for others to see the final storybook. In this lesson plan, the writer designs the final product of the lesson by asking the students to share the link to their storybook on *Google Slides*.

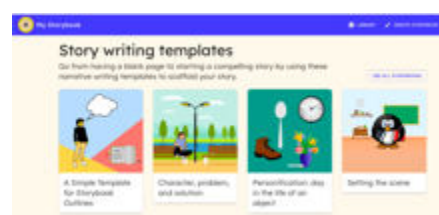


Figure 2. Free templates on *My Storybook*

### Google Slides

(<https://www.google.com/slides/about/>)

In the need for collaboration between teachers and students, *Google Slides* is one of the options. It is an online platform that allows teachers and students to create, format, and collaborate on presentations. Presentations can be shared, opened, and modified by numerous users simultaneously, and users can observe slide-by-slide and character-by-character changes as other collaborators make changes. In this paper, the writer utilized *Google Slides* as the worksheet for students to list the idioms and write their stories. This platform allows teachers to check and provide feedback on students' work. At the end of the session, teachers can then show students' work to everyone in the class (see Figure 3).

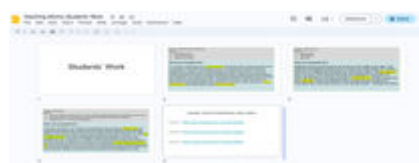


Figure 3. Students' work on *Google Slides*

### Lesson Plan

The lesson plan presented in this paper should foster creativity in teaching English speaking and writing through idioms for multilingual learners.

**Level:** Tertiary level (University students) **Time:** 120 minutes

**Aims:** The students will be able to (1) recognize and understand the meaning of various idioms, (2) identify and explain the meaning of some idioms from their first language, (3) create a paragraph story using three idioms chosen in *English in a Minute*.

**Resources/materials:** Internet access, laptops or PCs, and LCD projector

**Supporting technology:** *English in a Minute (VOA)*, *My Storybook*, *Google Slides*

**Possible problems:** Slow internet connection, unavailability of equipment, and some students might not be able to draw on the whiteboard.

### Procedures:

#### 1. Opening

- Teacher (T) greets the students (Ss) and checks in on their feelings, then explains the learning aims.
- T shows pictures of Indonesian idioms (see Figure 4) and asks Ss to guess to lead them to the topic.



*gulung tikar*



*gaji buta*

Figure 4. Examples of Indonesian idioms (image source: Google Images)

- T invites Ss to play Idiom Pictionary, where some idioms in the Indonesian language are printed on slips of paper. T assigns SS to take turns and draw the idioms on the whiteboard, and the rest of the class guesses for example, *kambing hitam*, *panjang tangan*, *kecil hati*, *tangan kanan*, *naik daun*, *bunga tidur*, *buah tangan*, *bermuka dua*.
- T asks a few Ss to share idioms they know from their first language and to explain them in English.

#### 2. Main Activities

- T briefly explains the definitions of idioms and gives various examples of common idioms and its meaning, then

asks Ss to put them in sentences, e.g., spill the beans, break a leg, call it a day, hit the sack, buy it, on the same page, and sleep on.

- b. T introduces the *English in a Minute* website to Ss to explore more idioms.
- c. T invites Ss to work in pairs to write a one-paragraph story using idioms from *English in a Minute*. The story can be funny, serious, or thrilling.
  - i. T asks Ss to choose three idioms from the website, and Ss can watch the videos to find the meaning and how to use it.
  - ii. T invites Ss to write the chosen idioms and make a paragraph of 10 sentences in Google Slides (see Figure 5).

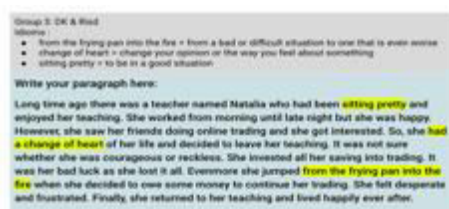


Figure 5. Students' work on Google Slides

- d. T invites Ss to design their story using *My Storybook*.
  - i. T introduces *My Storybook* and its features.
  - ii. T shows how and where to finalize the story and share the link on *Google Slides*.
- e. T encourages Ss to work creatively, then after Ss finish the work, T shows each masterpiece on the screen for everyone to see. Figure 6 below is one of the examples of students' work on *My Storybook*.



Figure 6. [Students' work on My Storybook](#)

T asks Ss to give their opinions/comments on others' stories designed in *My Storybook*. T ends the lesson by appreciating Ss' participation.

## Conclusions

The paper has presented a lesson plan to outline the potential of technology integration in supporting language learning, students' creativity, and communication for multilingual learners. The writer welcomes the readers to modify this lesson plan according to the needs of the students in the classroom. It is recommended that before implementing this lesson plan, teachers may devise holding a meeting, simulating the lesson plan together, determining what works and what does not, and modifying any needed changes. During the meeting, teachers may also work in pairs to create a digital book using *My Storybook* and explore the functions of some other tools (e.g., *English in a Minute*, *Google Slides*). Considering some teachers might not welcome using technology in the classroom, studies conducted by Ding et al. (2019) and Owen et al. (2020) suggested that teachers must be assisted and supported when dealing with technology. To conclude, the best way to get the students to learn more is to increase the quality of the teaching, and it can be done with the help of technology (Renandya, 2022).

## 3. Closing

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