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Sh. Umirkhanova , G. Orynkhanova* ,
Zh. Orynkhanova 

Kazakh National Women's Teacher Training University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

*e-mail: o_gibadat@mail.ru

**GLOBAL TRENDS AND RESEARCH FRONTS
IN «STORYTELLING» AND «EDUCATION»:
A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF SCOPUS DATA
(2006-2024)**

Creating and telling stories in education is becoming an increasingly popular and important method of teaching and upbringing. The aim of this study is to conduct a bibliometric analysis of publications on the keywords “storytelling” and “education” for the period 2006–2024 using Scopus data. Methodologically, the study relies on RStudio tools and the bibliometrix package, including data cleaning, analysis of authors, sources, and keywords, as well as thematic mapping. The sample included 4,719 documents from 1,835 sources. The analysis revealed a steady increase in publication activity (an average annual growth rate of 18.52%), reflecting growing interest in narrative methods in pedagogical practice. A strategic map, constructed based on keyword co-occurrence, visualizes the thematic structure of the fields of “storytelling” and “education,” dividing topics into four quadrants along axes of centrality and development, allowing for the identification of core, periphery, and promising areas for further research. The results highlight a shift from traditional humanistic approaches to technological innovations, such as digital storytelling and HCI, enhancing the role of motivation and creativity in learning. Overall, they reflect the growing importance of storytelling as an innovative tool in modern education, contributing to the development of 21st-century skills.

Keywords: education, storytelling, digital storytelling, bibliometrics, Scopus.

Ш.А. Умирханова, Г.А. Орынханова*, Ж.А. Орынханова
Қазақ ұлттық қыздар педагогикалық университеті, Алматы, Қазақстан
*e-mail: o_gibadat@mail.ru

**«Сторителлинг (хикаялату)» және «білім беру» тақырыптарындағы
жаһандық үрдістер мен зерттеу бағыттары:
Scopus деректеріне библиометриялық талдау (2006–2024)**

Қазіргі білім беруде оқиғаларды құрастыру және әңгімелеу оқыту мен тәрбиелеудің сұранысқа ие әрі маңызды әдісіне айналууда. Зерттеудің мақсаты – 2006–2024 жылдар аралығындағы «storytelling» және «education» кілт сөздері бойынша Scopus деректері негізінде жарияланымдардың библиометриялық талдауын жүргізу. Әдістемелік тұрғыдан зерттеу RStudio құралдары мен bibliometrix пакеттеріне сүйенеді, оның ішінде деректерді тазарту, авторларды, көздерді және кілт сөздерді талдау, сондай-ақ тақырыптық карта құру кіреді. Үлгі 1835 көзден тұратын 4719 құжатты қамтыды. Талдау жарияланымдардың тұрақты өсуін анықтады (жыл сайынғы орташа өсім қарқыны 18,52%), бұл педагогикалық практикада нарративтік әдістерге деген қызығушылықтың артуын көрсетеді. Кілт сөздердің бірлескен жиілігі негізінде құрылған стратегиялық карта «storytelling» және «education» салаларының тақырыптық құрылымын визуализациялайды, тақырыптарды орталықтылық және даму осьтері бойынша төрт квадрантқа бөліп, ядроны, периферияны және болашақ зерттеулер үшін перспективті салаларды анықтауға мүмкіндік береді. Нәтижелер дәстүрлі гуманитарлық тәсілдерден цифрлық сторителлинг және HCI сияқты технологиялық инновацияларға ауысуын баса көрсетеді, бұл оқуда мотивация мен шығармашылықтың рөлін күшейтеді. Жалпы алғанда, олар сторителлингтің қазіргі білім берудің инновациялық құралы ретіндегі артуы маңыздылығын көрсетеді, ол 21 ғасыр дағдыларының дамуына ықпал етеді және жалпы білім сапасын айтарлықтай жақсартады.

Түйін сөздер: білім беру, сторителлинг, цифрлық баяндау, библиометрия, Scopus.

Ш.А. Умирханова, Г.А. Орынханова*, Ж.А. Орынханова
 Казахский национальный женский педагогический университет, Алматы, Казахстан
 *e-mail: o_gibadat@mail.ru

**Глобальные тенденции и актуальные направления исследований
 по теме «сторителлинг» и «образование»:
 библиометрический анализ данных Scopus (2006–2024)**

Создание и рассказывание историй в образовании становится востребованным и значимым методом обучения и воспитания. Цель исследования заключается в проведении библиометрического анализа публикаций по ключевым понятиям «сторителлинг» в образовании («storytelling» и «education») за период 2006–2024 гг. на основе данных Scopus. Методологически исследование опирается на инструменты RStudio и пакет bibliometrix, включая очистку данных, анализ авторов, источников и ключевых слов, а также тематическое картирование. Выборка включала 4719 документов из 1835 источников. Анализ выявил устойчивый рост публикационной активности (среднегодовой темп роста 18,52%), что отражает растущий интерес к нарративным методам в педагогической практике. Стратегическая карта, построенная на основе совместной встречаемости ключевых слов, визуализирует тематическую структуру областей «storytelling» и «education», разделяя темы на четыре квадранта по осям центральности и развития, что позволяет выявить ядро, периферию и перспективные области для дальнейших исследований. Результаты подчеркивают сдвиг от традиционных гуманитарных подходов к технологическим инновациям, таким как цифровой сторителлинг и HCI, усиливая роль мотивации и креативности в обучении. В целом, они отражают растущую важность сторителлинга как инновационного инструмента современного образования, способствующего развитию навыков 21 века.

Ключевые слова: образование, сторителлинг, цифровое повествование, библиометрия, Scopus.

Introduction

Modern education is being reshaped by three interrelated forces: digitalization, the globalization of educational practices, and a renewed interest in humanistic, student-centered teaching methods. At the intersection of these forces, storytelling – structuring a lesson around a narrative rather than simply presenting facts – has attracted growing attention. Over the past 10-15 years, this interest has shifted focus: whereas storytelling was initially treated mainly as a didactic technique built on spoken language and text, today it is increasingly mediated by digital tools, as the analysis below confirms.

Along with the spread of digital technologies – from simple multimedia presentations to generative AI – new forms of storytelling are emerging and are being actively discussed in the academic community. While some aspects of this field have already been reviewed individually, a comprehensive bibliometric mapping of its evolution over two decades – covering key centers, authors, and thematic shifts within a single dataset – has not yet been conducted. This is the gap the present analysis addresses.

In modern educational practice, a distinction is made between traditional storytelling and digital storytelling. Digital storytelling refers to narratives presented in an interactive multimedia environment and enhanced with sound, music, and visuals (Oz-

kaya, 2022). Researchers emphasize that digital stories have become a “preferred learning tool” due to their ability to engage multiple senses and provide a high level of interactivity (Ozkaya, 2022). Teachers can present ready-made digital stories or engage students in co-creating narratives during the lesson (Ozkaya, 2022).

The aim of this study is to conduct a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of scientific publications on storytelling and education for the period 2006-2024, based on Scopus data, in order to identify global trends, leading research centers, and thematic areas for development in this field, and to situate Kazakhstani research within this landscape.

Thus, the study has both practical and theoretical significance: on the theoretical side, it contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamics and structure of scientific research in the field of storytelling and education, and on the practical side, it provides educators, researchers, and policymakers in the field of education with an analytical basis for developing effective strategies for integrating storytelling into the educational process and further developing innovative educational practices.

Literature review

Humanity has used storytelling to convey knowledge and values since ancient times, from

cave paintings to modern educational technologies. Psychologists note that stories activate basic cognitive processes and emotionally engage the listener (Bagley et al., 2025). This is why storytelling is considered a natural foundation for learning – stories help familiarize the learner’s brain with new information through a clear structure and inspire trust and curiosity (Bagley et al., 2025). With the development of technology, storytelling has received a new lease of life: digital and interactive formats allow stories to be enriched with multimedia (sound, images, animation), which increases learner engagement (Ozkaya, 2022; Bagley et al., 2025). The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated widespread social distancing have increased educators’ interest in new methods, stimulating “global changes” in teaching and the introduction of innovations, including storytelling in higher education (Akasheva and Lomteva, 2023).

Interactive storytelling (e.g., case studies, simulations with choice elements) engages learners as active participants: stories “respond” to their decisions, reinforce meaning and motivation, and develop problem-solving skills. As Bagley et al. note, interactive stories “promote meaning-making in the classroom” by connecting educational material to real-world situations and practical applications (Akasheva and Lomteva, 2023). Modern technologies (including VR and generative AI) expand the possibilities of interactive storytelling: for example, generative models can create adaptive scenarios, personalize the narrative, and provide instant feedback, making learning dynamic and realistic (Bagley et al., 2025). Such innovations are seen as a promising trend: case studies are already underway using AI-generated stories that respond to student responses in real time (Bagley et al., 2025).

Storytelling in education has a number of proven benefits. Using foreign language teaching as an example, storytelling has been shown to significantly increase student motivation and attention (Kanayat, 2024). For example, Akasheva and Lomteva (2023) note: “Storytelling as an innovative teaching method helps solve the key problem of motivation development... [and] serves as a universal tool for teaching foreign languages, developing listening and dialogic speaking skills”(Kanayat, 2024). Storytelling promotes the formation of strong emotional bonds between teacher and students, which creates a favorable atmosphere and reinforces the process of memorization of material (Kanayat, 2024; Abdurakhmonova, 2025).

In addition to motivation, storytelling develops a wide range of skills:

- Communication skills. Students improve listening, speaking, reading, and writing through creating and interpreting stories (Ozkaya, 2022)(Davis, 2025). Most empirical studies prove the effectiveness of “computer-assisted storytelling” for the development of integrated language skills: more than 1856 publications (1996-2023) according to Scopus showed a positive impact of digital storytelling on all four language skills (Kanayat, 2024).

- Critical thinking and 21st-century competencies. Meta-analyses show that the use of storytelling significantly improves academic achievement and promotes the acquisition of 21st-century skills (critical thinking, effective communication, research skills) (Ozkaya, 2022). Researchers emphasize the impact of storytelling on the development of creativity, reflection, and problem-solving abilities (Ozkaya, 2022).

- Creativity and self-esteem. Working on stories gives students freedom of expression and stimulates the imagination. Interactive storytelling allows students to analyze their own work, identify weaknesses, and improve (Abdurakhmonova, 2025). The inclusion of multimedia elements (images, video, audio) makes the storytelling process engaging and motivating (Abdurakhmonova, 2025).

- Collaboration and social learning. Many storytelling methods involve working together on a story, which develops teamwork skills. For example, group projects based on digital stories encourage shared plot discussion and mutual support (Abdurakhmonova, 2025; Ozkaya, 2022).

Analysis of publication activity confirms the growing interest in storytelling in education. For example, a study by Özkaya (2022) found that digital storytelling “is currently the method of choice in education” (Ozkaya, 2022). In the works of Davis (2025) and Abdurakhmonova (2025) found a steady expansion of research: from 2013 to 2023, the number of publications on the topic increased, reflecting the “emergence and growing interest” in digital storytelling across multiple disciplines. Particularly numerous articles are devoted to the use of storytelling for the development of language skills and digital literacy.

According to Abdurakhmonova (2025), 1,856 publications related to digital storytelling and language skills integration were collected in Scopus from 1996 to 2023 (Davis, 2025). Most of these studies provide empirical evidence of the benefits of storytelling for the development of all four language skills (Davis, 2025). Keyword analysis shows that the focus of scholars is specifically on “digital storytelling”, “storytelling” and “technology” (Ozkaya,

2022). At the same time, many articles also address topics such as motivation, 21st-century skills, collaborative learning and project-based learning (Ozkaya, 2022).

Research on the use of storytelling as a teaching method in elementary schools has become an important area of research due to its potential to develop language, literacy and social-emotional competencies in young students (Luzón, 2025; Speaker et al., 2004). Historically, storytelling has been viewed as a basic pedagogical tool that has evolved over time from traditional oral narratives to digital and multi-modal formats (Harashchuk, 2025; Puspitasari et al., 2025). This development is part of broader trends in education – a greater emphasis on creativity, engagement and inclusivity in the learning process (Howell, 2010; Manganello & Baldacci, 2024). The practical value of storytelling for primary schools lies in fostering motivation, empathy and critical thinking – qualities that are essential to a child's holistic development (Irshandy et al., 2025; Kaur, 2024). Furthermore, empirical evidence shows that storytelling improves vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and narrative skills, helping to overcome persistent literacy gaps in primary education worldwide (Satriani, 2019; Mojapelo, 2020).

In their literature review, Zaitseva, Goncharova and Daineko (2024) identified two main research areas: traditional storytelling and digital storytelling in higher education. The results of their review reveal a variety of effects: a positive impact on motivation, engagement, social interaction, creativity, and reflection. (Akasheva and Lomteva, 2023) Furthermore, a global shift in educational practices is being observed: COVID-19 has accelerated the testing of new techniques, leading to increased interest in storytelling among educators around the world (Akasheva and Lomteva, 2023).

The way in which the storytelling method is represented within Kazakhstan's educational landscape deserves special attention. The global Scopus sample described above contains virtually no Kazakhstani authors – but this observation in itself raises a question rather than answering it: is this due to a genuine lack of research in the country, or is it an artefact of the search strategy – a narrow time frame, specific wording of keywords in English, or Scopus's coverage of certain national publications? To answer this question, four Kazakhstani works found outside the scope of the main bibliometric query are examined below. These four sources do not constitute a representative sample (this would require a separate systematic bibliometric study

of national periodicals), but rather illustrative case studies showing that research activity on the topic exists beyond the main sample; their analysis in Section 6 (Results and Discussion) reveals which part of the divergence from the global picture is explained by methodological factors, and which is not.

At the higher education level, the experience of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University is particularly telling: a study by Shamshadinkyzy et al. (2025), published in the Scopus-indexed *Qubahan Academic Journal*, demonstrates the effectiveness of storytelling and dramatisation in teaching the literary heritage of the Alash figures – students who were taught using narrative and performative methods achieved significantly higher results in terms of understanding the material, retention, engagement and creative self-expression compared with traditional lecture-based teaching (Shamshadinkyzy et al., 2025).

At the level of school education, Kazakhstani researchers are also turning to storytelling as a tool for moral education and the development of language skills. Mynbayeva, Anarbek and Nurgaliyeva (2020) have shown that oral storytelling is one of the key techniques for moral education in self-awareness lessons, helping schoolchildren to make sense of moral dilemmas and develop empathy through stories (Mynbayeva, Anarbek, & Nurgaliyeva, 2020). An experimental study by Kondybay and Abdimanuly (2025), published in the peer-reviewed *Bulletin of the I. Zhansugurov Zhetysay University*, applied the method of digital storytelling to the study of the poetry of 19th-century Kazakh akyns – Birzhan sal, Akan seri, Zhayau Musa and others. In the experiment, which involved 49 Year 10 pupils, the group that learnt by creating their own multimedia stories (video essays, podcasts, animations) scored 12 percentage points higher in the test than the control group, as well as showing a significant increase in reflection (+26 p.p.) and in their intention to study the material independently in the future (+35 p.p.) (Kondybay & Abdimanuly, 2025).

These practices are rooted in a deeper tradition: as Aitbayeva, Khazbulatov, and Shaigozova (2021) show, narrative and children's play have historically formed the core of the traditional Kazakh system of upbringing – from lullabies and counting rhymes (sanamaqtar) to epic poetry and aitys – with each genre of folklore being associated with a specific stage of a child's development and serving a particular educational purpose (Aitbayeva, Khazbulatov, & Shaigozova, 2021). The authors propose specific ways of integrating this heritage into modern subject

areas – from language and literature to mathematics (for example, the traditional game ‘Togyz Qumalaq’ for developing logical thinking). This allows us to put forward a tentative hypothesis (requiring separate research): the interest in storytelling in Kazakhstani education may reflect not only the adoption of Western methodologies, but also a reinterpretation of the country’s own earlier pedagogical tradition in a digital format.

It should also be noted that the scope of the material presented here is limited: the four sources were selected as the most relevant based on the results of a targeted search of national databases and peer-reviewed publications included in the list of the Science and Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, rather than on the basis of an exhaustive systematic review of all Kazakhstani periodicals – this confirms their illustrative, rather than representative, status, as stated above.

Thus, current research identifies the following key trends in storytelling and education:

- Growing interest in digital storytelling formats and interactive environments. The number of publications and citations on digital storytelling is increasing (Ozkaya, 2022).

- Interdisciplinarity. Storytelling is used in the pedagogy of languages, natural sciences, medicine, social sciences, and other disciplines, as stories help connect theory with practice (Akasheva and Lomteva, 2023).

- Technological integration. The proliferation of multimedia, mobile devices, generative AI, and virtual reality expands the possibilities of storytelling, making it increasingly interactive and adaptive (Bagley et al., 2025) (Abdurakhmonova, 2025).

- Focus on developing “soft” skills. Storytelling is seen as a tool for developing motivation, communicative, and creative competencies (Kanayat, 2024) (Ozkaya, 2022).

- Motivation and interactivity. The key concept of “motivation” has been highlighted as a leading cluster of studies (Ozkaya, 2022), confirming the importance of students’ emotional engagement through stories.

In summary, storytelling in education is confidently moving from a “fashionable idea” to a subject of serious scientific interest. The synthesis of anthropological understandings of storytelling with modern technologies has led to a rapid development of research: the number of publications in Scopus is steadily growing, and stories themselves are being enriched by digital tools. A literature

review shows that storytelling is effective in enhancing motivation and the acquisition of language and communication skills (Kanayat, 2024; Davis, 2025), and that its application is supported by a broad scientific base. Future research areas include the integration of storytelling with artificial intelligence, the expansion of interactive technologies, and a more in-depth study of its impact on different age groups and disciplines.

Materials and methods

This analysis was conducted to systematically review and map the scientific field encompassing the concepts of “storytelling” and “education” using bibliometric methods. The Scopus scientometric database (scopus.com) served as the empirical basis for the study. An initial search query, formed using the “AND” operator for the keywords “storytelling” and “education,” identified 5,536 documents. Data preparation involved cleaning and standardising the dataset: removing duplicates, standardising the spelling of authors’ names and organisation names, and correcting encoding errors. Of the initial 5,536 documents selected via the search query, 4,719 remained in the final dataset for analysis following this processing – meaning that 817 documents (14.8 per cent of the initial dataset) were excluded during the cleaning stage. At this stage, records were excluded on the basis of three criteria applied sequentially: (1) first, exact or near-exact duplicates were removed, identified by a matching DOI or by a match between the title and the first author, occurring more than once amongst the exported records; (2) next, amongst the remaining records, those in which the title, abstract or author name fields were corrupted by character encoding errors and could not be reliably restored were excluded; (3) finally, records lacking key bibliographic metadata required for the calculation of bibliometric indicators in this study (e.g. missing publication year, author affiliation or abstract) were removed. Taken together, these three criteria account for the exclusion of all 817 records. The final sample covers publications from 2006 to 2024. Documents from 2025 were excluded because, at the time of data extraction, that year had not yet been fully indexed by Scopus; records from 2005 were filtered out during the data cleaning stage due to incomplete metadata. The final dataset consists predominantly of scientific journals and conference proceedings. This approach enabled a comprehensive analysis of the most productive sources, authors, affiliated organisations, the geography of collaboration and thematic trends.

Results and discussion

The bibliometric analysis, based on SCOPUS data, covers research published between 2006 and 2024. The analysis included 4,719 documents presented in 1,835 sources (primarily scientific journals and books) (see Figure 1). The average annual growth rate of publication activity was 18.52%, demonstrating a rapidly expanding research area related to the use of storytelling in educational contexts. This growth can be attributed to the development of digital technologies, the emergence of new pedagogical approaches, and increased interest in narrative teaching methods. The data demonstrate a moderate scientific impact – an average of 10.3 citations per document – indicating the stable interest of the academic community in this topic. The average age of publications is 6.13 years, demonstrating the relevance and dynamic development of this research field. The analysis identified 11,205 authors, 1,275 of whom have published

solo publications. This reflects a high level of research activity and a balance between individual and collaborative forms of research. The average number of co-authors per article is 2.84, confirming the widespread practice of scientific collaboration. The share of international co-authorship is 12.46%, indicating a moderate level of global interaction between researchers from different countries. This figure reflects the presence of stable international scientific ties but also leaves potential for further collaboration. The wide range of sources (1,835) attests to the interdisciplinary nature of the research – storytelling is studied not only in pedagogy but also in psychology, linguistics, communication, digital media, and cultural studies. Overall, the analysis reveals that the topic of “storytelling” in education is actively developing, characterized by an increase in publications, a growing number of researchers, and expanded international collaboration, making it a promising area of contemporary educational discourse.

Figure 1
Research publication statistics dashboard



Note : Generated by the author based on Bibliometrix data

The results of the bibliometric analysis confirm the growing importance of storytelling in education, especially in the context of digital and interactive formats (Abdurakhmonova, 2025; Ozkaya, 2022). The steady increase in the number of publications, citations, and international collaborations reflects the high and expanding academic interest in the integration of narrative methods across various disciplines (Akasheva & Lomteva, 2023; Bagley et al., 2025). These trends are consistent with the literature emphasizing the role of storytelling in the development of language skills, motivation, creativity, and socio-emotional compe-

tencies in students (Luzón, 2025; Kanayat, 2024; Irshandy et al., 2025). Overall, the results indicate that storytelling is not only a versatile pedagogical tool but also a dynamically developing field of research with growing global significance and interdisciplinary potential.

The year-on-year trend speaks for itself: whilst 38 articles were published in 2006, by 2024 the figure had risen to 809 – an increase of approximately 21-fold (Table 1). A steady increase began in 2010 and accelerated significantly from 2019 onwards (Figure 2), indicating a rapidly expanding field of research.

An analysis of publication sources revealed a fairly broad but uneven distribution across journals and conferences (Figure 3). The clear leader was the *Lecture Notes in Computer Science* series, with 140 papers; in second place was the *ACM International Conference Proceedings Series* (60 papers). These were followed by the *ASEE Annual Conference and Exposition* (44), *Communications in Computer and Information Science* (38), *CEUR Workshop Proceedings* (35), *Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems* (33), *Education Sciences* (32), the *Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (27), *Proceedings – Frontiers in Education Conference* (22) and *Proceedings of the European Conference on Games-Based Learning* (21). This distribution – with a clear predominance of sources in informatics and computer science over strictly pedagogical publications – is telling in itself: it indicates that, amongst the publications indexed by Scopus, the most active area of storytelling research today is emerging at the intersection of pedagogy and educational technology, rather than within the framework of traditional humanities. It should be emphasised that this observation applies specifically to the Scopus-indexed segment of the field – it does not imply that the same ratio holds true for national publications not indexed by Scopus (see below). This creates a certain asymmetry in visibility: the technological aspects of storytelling are more prominently represented in the international database, whilst content-based and culture-specific research – including that published in national

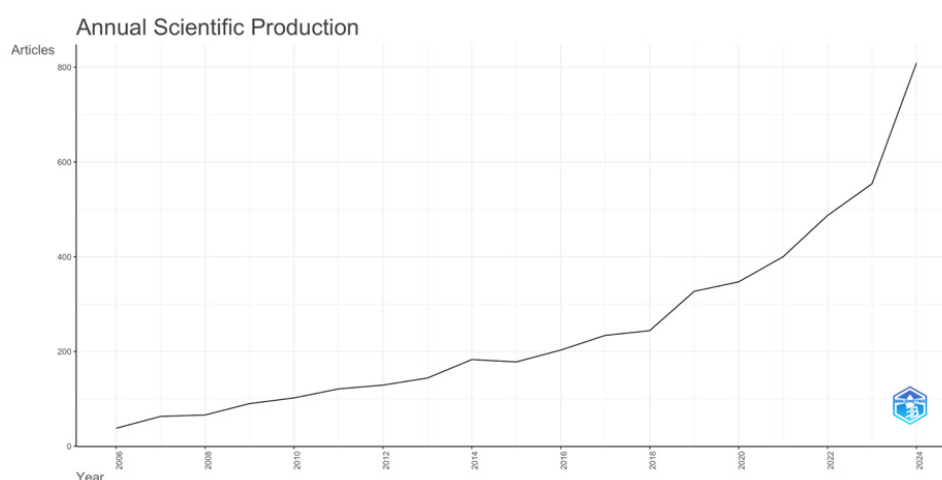
journals – remains less visible to global bibliometrics simply because of where it is indexed.

Table 1
Number of publications by year

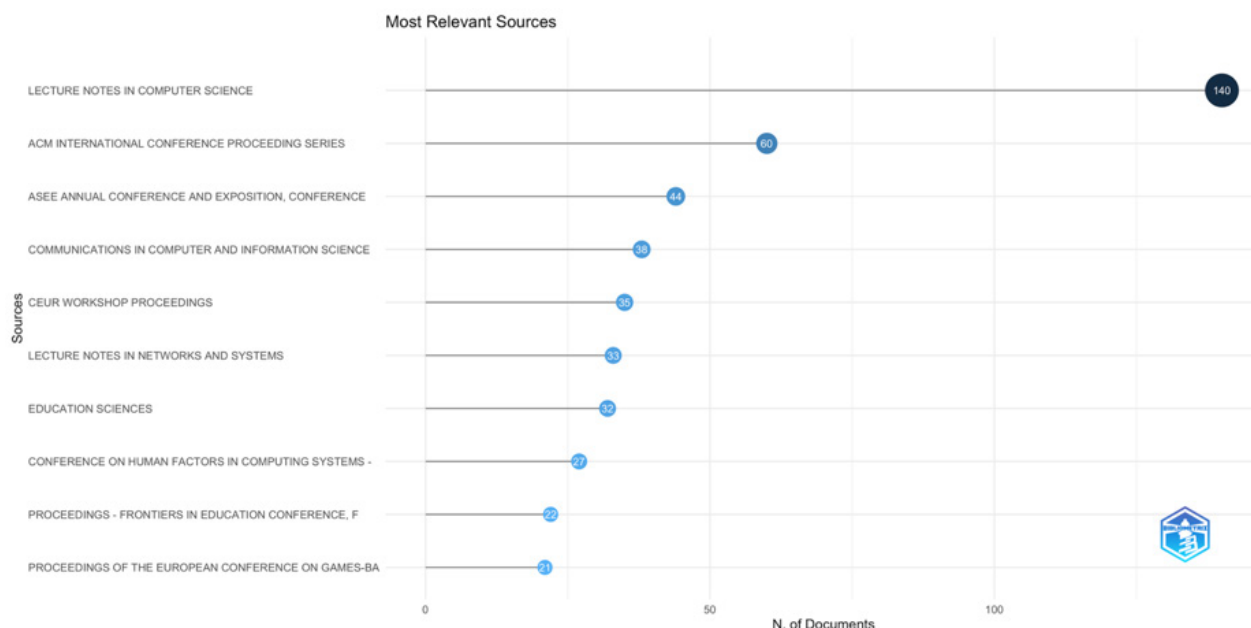
Year	Articles
2006	38
2007	63
2008	66
2009	90
2010	102
2011	121
2012	129
2013	144
2014	183
2015	178
2016	203
2017	234
2018	244
2019	327
2020	347
2021	400
2022	487
2023	554
2024	809

Note : Compiled by the author based on Bibliometrix data

Figure 2
Annual scientific production



Note : Generated by the author based on Bibliometrix data

Figure 3*Top 10 Sources by Publication Volume*

Note : Generated by the author based on Bibliometrix data

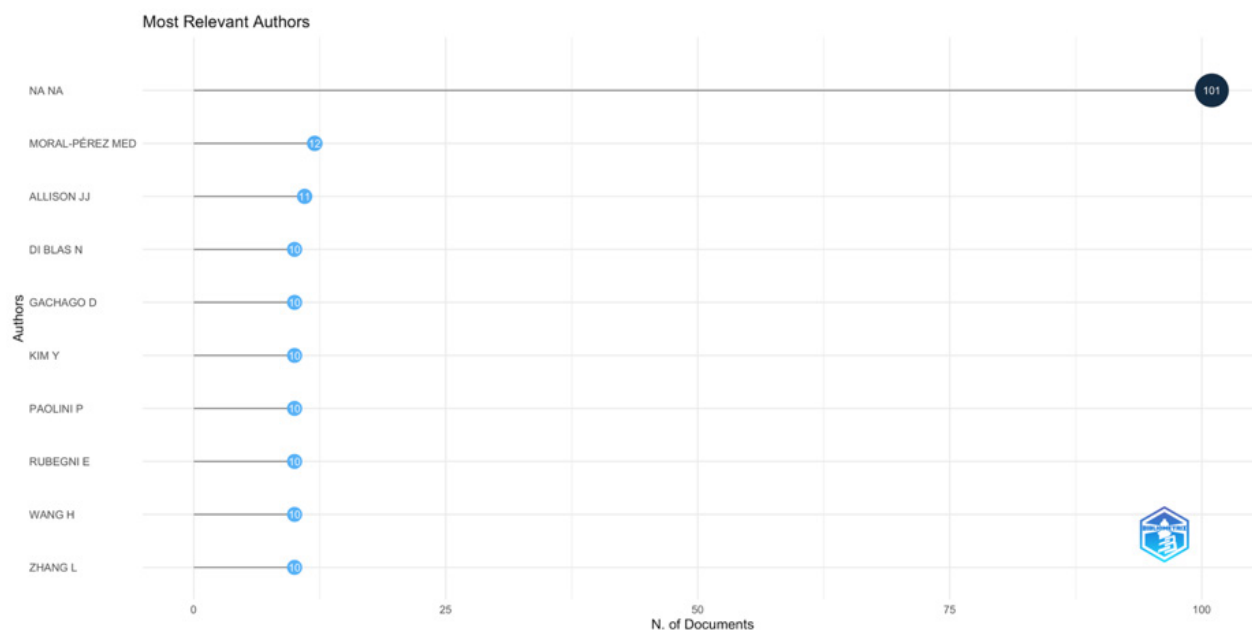
This observation is consistent with the findings of the literature review: digital storytelling and multimodal formats require technological integration (Abdurakhmonova, 2025; Bagley et al., 2025), whilst the research field itself brings together pedagogy, computer science, psychology and communication (Akasheva & Lomteva, 2023; Ozkaya, 2022). It is worth noting, however, a certain asymmetry: whilst in the international Scopus sample the subject area is clearly skewed towards technology journals, in the Kazakhstani context (see the section ‘Storytelling in Kazakhstani education’ above) the picture is the reverse – here, humanities- and education-focused publications currently predominate over technology-focused ones, and digital tools (Canva, StoryMap, Adobe Express) are used more as supporting aids for content-related rather than technical teaching challenges.

The study revealed that the majority of documents (191) do not contain a specific author (“NA NA”), which may be due to the indexing characteristics of conference proceedings or publications without individual authorship. Among the identified authors, publication activity is evenly distributed.

The most productive are Moral-Pérez, M.E.D., with 12 documents, and Allison, J.J., with 11 documents (Figure 4).

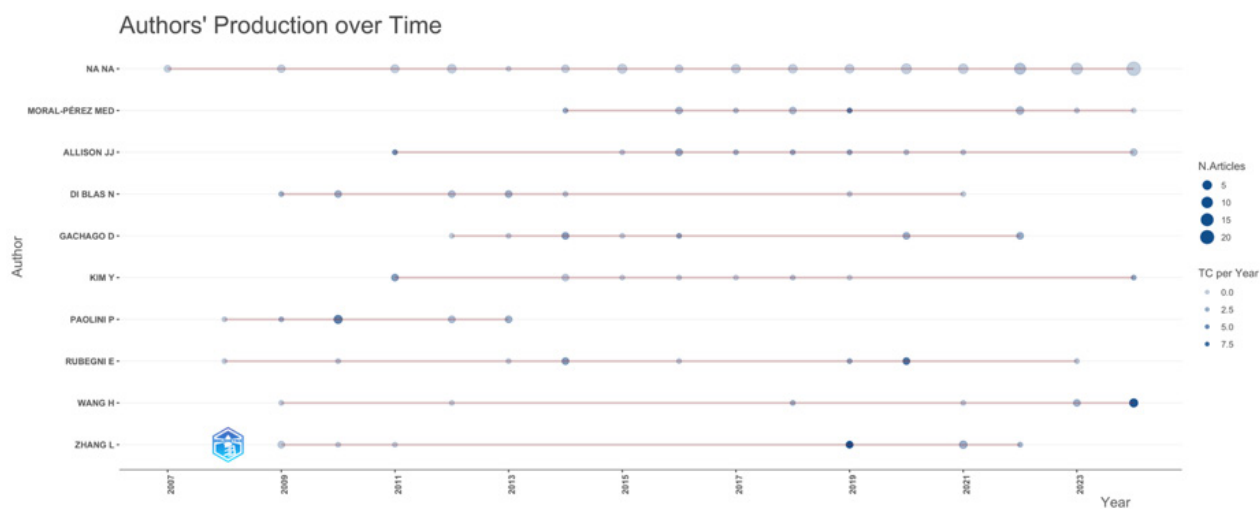
An analysis of the activity of leading authors over time revealed that, despite the dominance of “NA NA” records (from 2007 to 2024) with high volume but low impact (which is likely due to non-individualized conference proceedings), most identified researchers demonstrate consistent interest in the topic. Some authors, such as Di Blas, N., had a peak in productivity in the early years (2009-2013). As for the most frequently cited authors in recent years, Moral-Pérez and Wang saw their citations peak in 2019 – and both work specifically with digital, interactive and VR technologies (article by Wang H., with TCpy 8.1 on VR storytelling). It would be premature to draw conclusions about the entire field based on a sample of just two authors, but the fact itself is worth noting: the most frequently cited works in recent years focus specifically on digital, interactive, and immersive technologies within education – this is consistent with the shift in the field towards educational technologies, as shown above (Figure 5).

Figure 4
Ranking of authors by number of publications



Note: Generated by the author based on Bibliometrix data

Figure 5
Authors' production over time



Note: Generated by the author based on Bibliometrix data

An analysis of affiliations shows that publication activity on the topics of “storytelling” and “education” is concentrated at a few large universities. The clear leader in number of documents is the University of California with 65 publications, followed by the University of Toronto with 62 documents. Monash University also makes a significant contribution (37 documents). The top ten most productive institutions also include:

- The University of British Columbia (31 documents)
- University of Alberta (30 documents)
- Deakin University (30 documents)
- Università degli Studi di Salerno (27 documents)

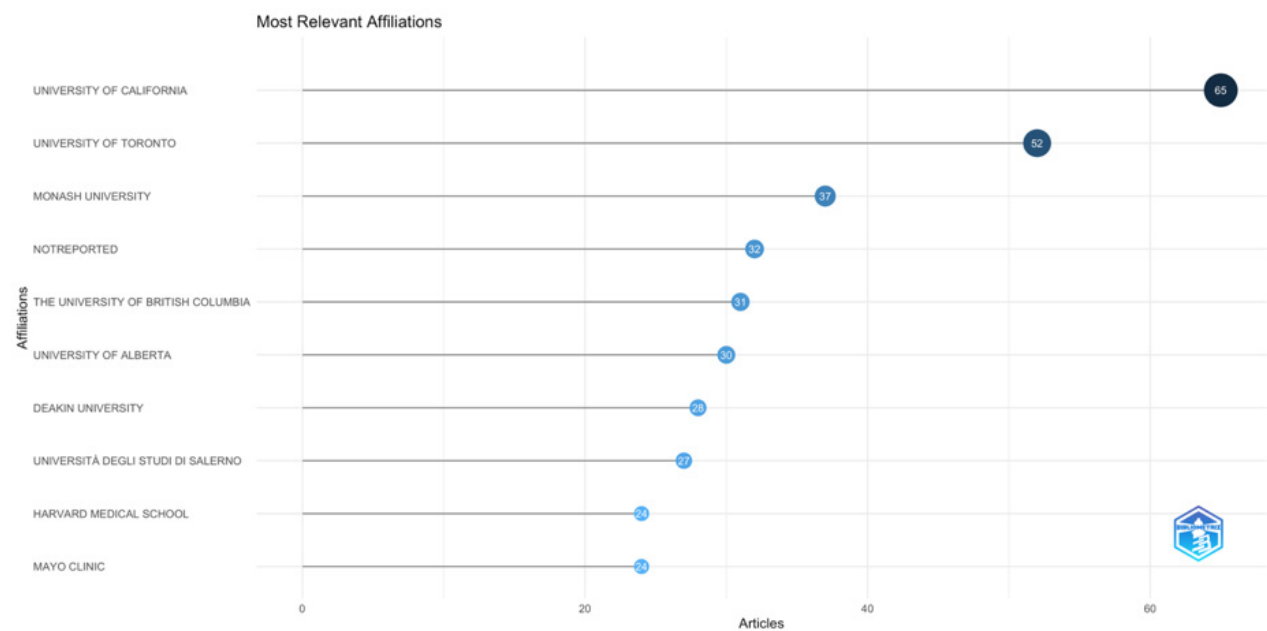
It is noteworthy that 32 documents have a “Not Reported” affiliation. Furthermore, two medical institutions are present in the top 10: Harvard Medical School and Mayo Clinic (24 documents each) (Figure 6).

The United States of America (USA) is the clear leader in the number of publications, with

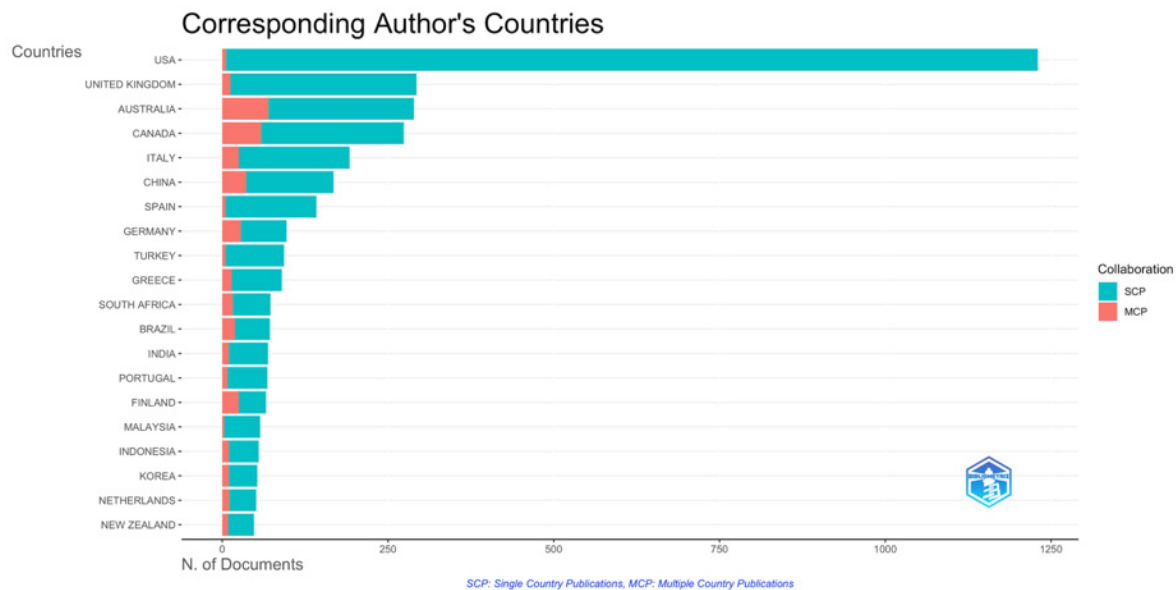
over 1,230 papers. Despite its high productivity, the share of articles created through international collaboration (MCP – Multiple Country Publications) is extremely low, at just 0.5%. This suggests that storytelling and education research in the US is largely self-sufficient or focused on domestic research networks. The United Kingdom ranks second with 293 articles and also demonstrates a relatively low rate of international collaboration (4.1%), indicating a strong domestic research base. On the other hand, a number of countries demonstrate high levels of international collaboration. Australia (289 articles) and Canada (274 articles) demonstrate a good balance between productivity and collaboration, with high MCP shares – 24.2% and 21.5%, respectively – highlighting their active participation in international projects. Among the countries with a high percentage of collaboration, Finland stands out (66 articles) with the highest share of MCPs on the list – 37.9%, which indicates its strategic inclusion in global research networks (Figure 7).

Figure 6

Ranking of Affiliations by Number of Articles



Note : Generated by the author based on Bibliometrix data

Figure 7*Number of documents by corresponding author's country**Note: Generated by the author based on Bibliometrix data*

An analysis of scientific productivity by country reveals a clear dominance of the United States of America (USA) in research on the topic of “storytelling” and “education”. The US leads by a wide margin, with 2,958 papers. It is followed by the United Kingdom (UK) with 645 publications, Canada with 592, and Australia with 497 papers. This concentration of activity in English-speaking countries of North America and Oceania indicates their role as key hubs in the development of educational technologies and pedagogy related to storytelling. The next group of countries, demonstrating high but moderate productivity, includes European and Asian countries. Italy rounds out the top five with 379 papers, and China ranks sixth with 345 publications (Figure 8). They are followed by Spain (259), Turkey (169), Portugal (167), and Greece (154). Overall, the top 10 countries are composed primarily of North America, Western Europe, and Australia, with significant participation from China, reflecting the broad, but uneven, distribution of research effort globally (Table 2).

An analysis of the citation rates of the participating countries shows that the United States of America (USA) is the absolute leader not only in the volume of publications but also in their impact on the scientific community. The total number of citations of documents related to the US is 15,266. This colossal lead confirms the key role of Ameri-

can research in shaping the agenda in the fields of storytelling and education. The next positions are occupied by the United Kingdom (UK) with 4,361 citations, Australia (3,292), and Canada (2,848). This trend reflects that English-speaking countries are the main sources of both publications and the most highly cited works. Meanwhile, China ranks fifth with 1,471 citations, indicating the growing influence of Asian research (Figure 9).

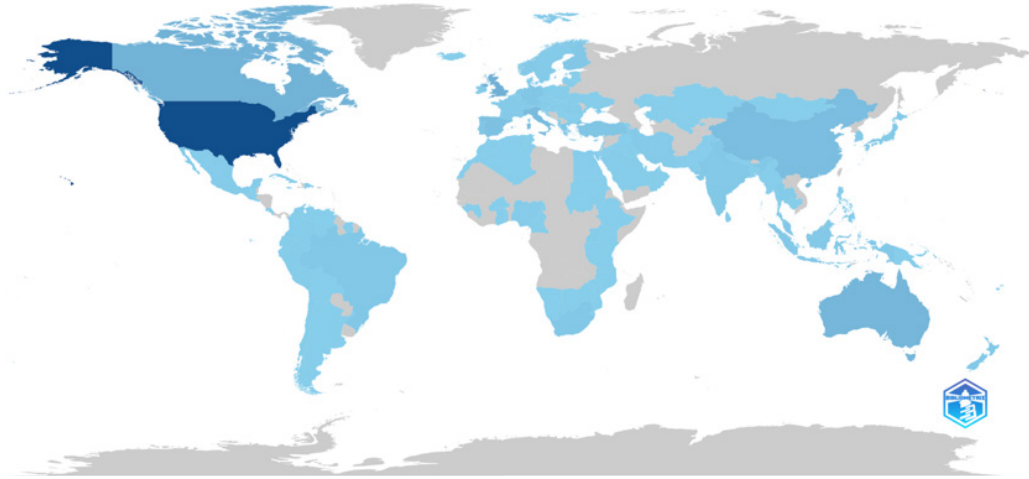
Table 2*Top-10 country ranking by total citations*

Country	Frequency
USA	2958
UK	645
CANADA	592
AUSTRALIA	497
ITALY	379
CHINA	345
SPAIN	259
TURKEY	169
PORTUGAL	167
GREECE	154

Note : Compiled by the author based on bibliometrix data

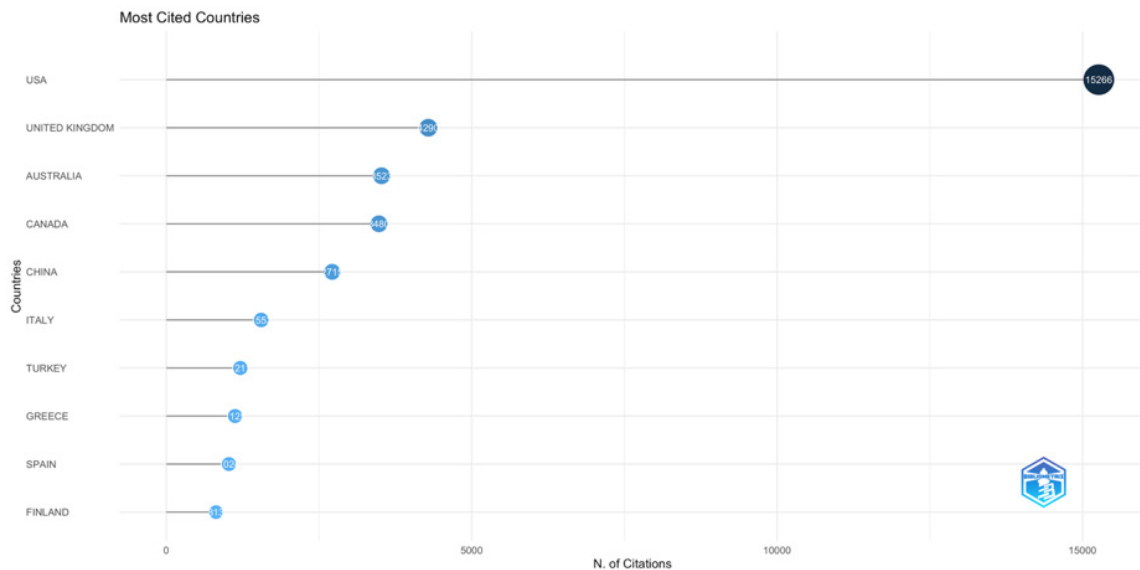
Figure 8
Geographical Distribution of Research Publications

Country Scientific Production



Note : Generated by the author based on Bibliometrix data

Figure 9
Top countries by citation impact



Note : Generated by the author based on Bibliometrix data

What is striking is the almost complete absence of Kazakhstan from the 4,719 documents analysed: the country did not even feature in the top 20 in terms of the number of publications (Figure 7). A comparison with the four Kazakhstani sources discussed in the literature review section allows us to explain

this discrepancy precisely, rather than resorting to general assumptions about ‘under-representation’.

Firstly, the sample of articles itself is limited to the period 2006-2024. Two of the four Kazakhstani studies – Shamshadinkyzy et al. (2025) and Kondybay & Abdimanuly (2025) – were published in

2025 and, for purely chronological reasons, could not be included in the analysed dataset, regardless of the language of publication or indexing. This is not a case of ‘invisibility’, but rather a natural limitation of the search timeframe – and, at the same time, a reason to note that it was precisely at the turn of 2024-2025 that the first Kazakhstani works on the subject, indexed by Scopus, appeared (Shamshadin-kyzy et al., 2025 – in the Qubahan Academic Journal).

Secondly, the paper by Aitbayeva, Khazbulatov and Shaigozova (2021) could not be found using the search query ‘storytelling’ AND ‘education’: the title uses the term ‘narrative’ rather than ‘storytelling’ – that is, the discrepancy is of a terminological, verifiable nature, and is not linked to a language barrier as such.

Thirdly, the only paper that formally meets both the chronological and terminological search criteria – Mynbayeva, Anarbek and Nurgaliyeva (2020), in which the term ‘storytelling’ appears directly in the title, consists of conference proceedings (European Proceedings), the indexing status of which in Scopus we have not verified. To be clear: had this proceedings volume been indexed in Scopus at the time the data was extracted, the paper could have been included in the main sample, as it formally meets both the search query and the time window. Since this did not happen, the most likely explanation is that the proceedings are either not indexed by Scopus at all, or were not indexed at the time the sample was formed; this illustrates a narrower, but real, effect of the database’s incomplete coverage of certain publishing platforms.

Thus, the absence of Kazakhstani works from the sample in three out of four cases can be explained by verifiable methodological factors – the time frame of the search and differences in key terms (storytelling / narrative) – rather than by a general claim of the systematic invisibility of Kazakhstani scholarship. Practical conclusion: future reviews on this topic should broaden the chronological scope and include the term ‘narrative’ in the search query – otherwise, related but differently titled works are systematically overlooked. At the same time, even when the search was deliberately extended beyond Scopus, only a handful of relevant Kazakhstani studies were identified. Whilst the conclusion based on $n=4$ must be treated with caution, this suggests that the topic of storytelling as an independent, terminologically defined field within Kazakhstani education is still at an early stage of institutionalisation. Relevant work is being carried out, but more often under different

names (narrative, digital storytelling) and within broader pedagogical and cultural studies topics.

Keyword analysis reveals the main areas and contexts in which the topics of “storytelling” and “education” are studied. Predictably, the terms “storytelling” (1,368 occurrences) and “education” (918 occurrences) are dominant, as they formed the basis of the search query. Among the next most frequently occurring terms, the anthropocentric focus of research stands out. The terms “human” (794 occurrences) and “humans” (601 occurrences) indicate the widespread use of storytelling in the context of human-computer interaction (HCI) and the humanities. The keyword “digital storytelling” (630 occurrences) confirms that a significant portion of the research focuses on the technological aspect of the topic, that is, the use of digital tools for the creation and dissemination of narratives in education. Words directly related to the educational process include “students” (557 occurrences) and “teaching” (428 occurrences), which defines the primary applied field. The presence of the word “female” (370 occurrences) may indicate research on gender aspects in educational storytelling or in literature related to the humanities.

Keyword analysis confirmed that the main focus of the studies was on the terms “storytelling”, “education”, and “digital storytelling”, which is consistent with the literature on the growing interest in digital and interactive narrative formats (Abdurakhmonova, 2025; Ozkaya, 2022). The frequent use of the terms “human” and “humans” reflects the anthropocentric focus of the studies and the connection of storytelling with the humanities and human-computer interaction, which is consistent with the idea of interdisciplinary application of storytelling (Akasheva & Lomteva, 2023; Bagley et al., 2025). Educational keywords such as “students” and “teaching” support the practical focus of storytelling on developing students’ linguistic, socio-emotional, and cognitive skills (Luzón, 2025; Irshandy et al., 2025). The presence of the term “female” may indicate an exploration of gender aspects in educational storytelling, highlighting the diversity of contexts for the application of storytelling noted in the literature (Kanayat, 2024; Puspitasari et al., 2025).

An analysis of keyword frequency by year demonstrates an exponential growth in interest in the topic of “storytelling” in education. During the early period (2006-2010), the number of occurrences was minimal; for example, the keyword “storytelling” appeared between 17 and 134 times, while “digital storytelling” appeared only between 1 and 32 times.

During this period, the keywords “storytelling” and “education” predominated. A turning point occurred around 2014-2015, after which a steady and sharp increase in the frequency of all keywords was observed. By 2019, the frequency of “storytelling” exceeded 600 occurrences for the first time, and “education” exceeded 500. The period of greatest growth (2020-2024) demonstrates a near doubling of these figures in four years. In 2024, the number

of occurrences of the word “storytelling” reached 1,367, while “education” reached 918. Meanwhile, “digital storytelling” also showed explosive growth, reaching 638 occurrences in 2024, confirming its emerging central role in the research agenda. Overall, all keywords –including “human”, “students” and “teaching” – have shown consistent growth over the past two decades, demonstrating the continuous expansion of the field of research (Table 3).

Table 3

Trend analysis of top keywords over time

Year	STORY-TELLING	EDUCATION	HUMAN	NA	DIGITAL STORY-TELLING	HUMANS	STUDENTS	ARTICLE	TEACHING	FEMALE
2024	1367	918	794	705	638	601	557	472	386	376
2023	1142	809	664	583	560	513	455	395	322	311
2022	1008	732	582	493	492	461	383	345	296	276
2021	869	680	507	424	431	408	331	299	279	236
2020	738	618	435	379	374	350	284	258	249	206
2019	627	562	363	337	330	293	243	214	231	168
2018	531	497	317	292	279	259	209	185	213	139
2017	454	444	275	249	242	225	182	157	198	121
2016	386	360	247	215	194	201	149	145	170	103
2015	331	304	202	180	153	168	126	135	142	87
2014	270	248	166	152	124	139	106	122	121	66
2013	229	194	137	123	93	113	88	113	97	57
2012	190	163	115	98	68	97	71	97	82	50
2011	165	136	96	68	44	83	56	81	67	45
2010	134	113	72	49	32	63	37	61	48	33
2009	100	90	59	34	16	51	24	49	35	25
2008	66	47	43	25	11	35	14	34	24	19
2007	42	25	29	19	4	24	7	22	14	13
2006	17	12	12	6	1	7	3	7	6	6

Note : Compiled by the author based on bibliometrix data

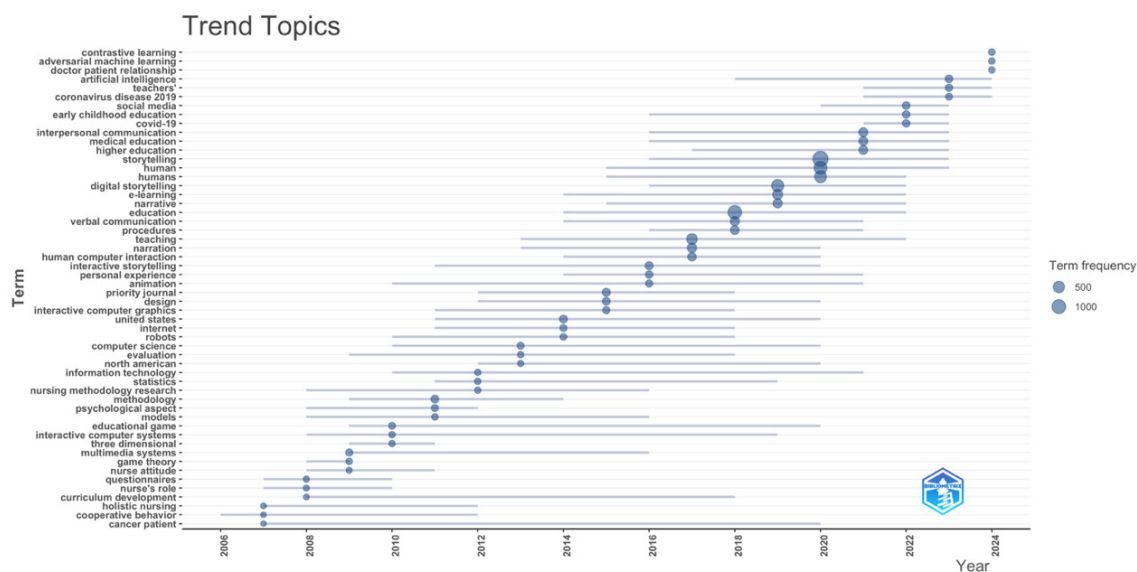
An analysis of keyword trends from 2006 to 2024 reveals a clear shift in research focus. Early trends (2006-2012) were predominantly focused on health and care issues, as evidenced by the emergence of terms such as “cancer patient”, “cooperative behavior”, “holistic nursing”, and “nursing methodology research”. This indicates an early, significant focus on the application of storytelling in medical and nursing education. Medium-term trends (2012-2020) were marked by a growing interest in technology

and design. During this period, keywords such as “computer science”, “information technology”, “internet”, “robots”, as well as “human computer interaction” and “design” emerged. This demonstrates a growing interest in technology-oriented research. In particular, the topics “storytelling”, “digital storytelling”, “education”, and “e-learning” show significant growth and gain popularity around 2018-2020. The rise in the word “humans” may indicate an increase in research involving human subjects. Recent trends

(2020-2024) are characterized by the dominance of topics related to COVID-19 (“coronavirus disease 2019”, “covid-19”), reflecting the pandemic’s impact on research. At the same time, the relevance of artificial intelligence and machine learning sharply increases, as evidenced by the emergence and growing

importance of the terms “artificial intelligence” and “adversarial machine learning”. Also, the frequency of the words “teachers” and “social media” increases, indicating a broader focus on teacher training and the influence of social platforms on educational communication (Figure 10).

Figure 10
Timeline of research trends



Note : Generated by the author based on Bibliometrix data

The Blue Cluster is the largest and centers around general terms related to human factors and the humanities context. Key terms here are “humans”, “education”, and “human storytelling”. Other notable terms include “article”, “adult”, “female”, and “male”, as well as specific fields such as “medical education”, “nursing”, and “psychology”, indicating a strong focus on human subjects and the application of storytelling in healthcare. The Red Cluster focuses on the technological and digital aspects of research. Key words include “digital storytelling”, “e-learning”, “virtual reality”, “augmented reality”, “human computer interaction”, “interactive storytelling”, and “learning systems”. This cluster clearly indicates active exploration of storytelling tools and applications in the context of educational technology and engineering education. The Green Cluster is the smallest and highlights the pedagogical focus of research. It brings together terms directly related to the educational process: “students”, “teaching”, and “creativity”, emphasizing the emphasis on teaching and learning processes.

A node centrality analysis (circle size) reveals that the key concepts “human”, “storytelling”, “education”, and “humans” are the most influential and have the most connections, acting as bridges between clusters. The strong connections between clusters (especially between Blue and Red/Green) clearly demonstrate the interdisciplinary nature of the field, integrating aspects of storytelling, technology, and pedagogy.

A strategy map based on keyword co-occurrence visualizes the thematic structure of the fields of “storytelling” and “education”, dividing topics into four quadrants along two axes: Relevance, which reflects the importance and connections of a topic, and Development, which reflects the density and degree of elaboration of a topic.

Thematic Quadrants

1. Motor Themes: Located in the upper right quadrant (High Centrality, High Development). This quadrant is occupied by the “Human” cluster (including “human”, “humans”, and “article”). Its position indicates that it is the driving force behind

the entire field of research, highly developed and of fundamental importance, with a strong focus on the human experience and its contexts (healthcare, education).

2. Basic Themes: Located in the lower right quadrant (High Centrality, Low Development). This quadrant includes the “Storytelling, Education, Students” cluster (including “storytelling”, “education”, and “students”). These are fundamental themes that are central to the field but not yet as comprehensively developed and elaborated as the “Motor Themes.” They form the core of the field.

3. Emerging or Declining Themes: Located in the lower left quadrant (Low Centrality, Low Development). This quadrant includes the “Digital Storytelling, E-Learning, Engineering Education” cluster (including “digital storytelling”, “e-learning”, and “engineering education”). These themes are in their infancy and/or have weak connections to other themes in the overall research landscape, indicating potential for future growth. The map confirms that research is clearly divided into a fundamental humanities focus (“Human” as a driving force) and a core pedagogical approach (“Storytelling” and “Education”). Technological aspects (“Digital storytelling”) remain on the periphery, which allows us to view them as a promising area for further development.

An analysis of the geography of collaboration (co-authorship) reveals the United States (US) as the dominant hub of scientific productivity. The deep blue color on the map confirms the US’s leadership

in publication volume. Secondary hubs are Western and Northern European countries (the UK, Germany, and the Netherlands), as well as Australia, which also demonstrate strong scientific activity. China emerges as a large but more isolated hub. International collaboration in storytelling and education is characterized by several dense networks:

- Transatlantic collaboration: The map clearly shows a dense network of connections between the US and Europe, reflecting a long-standing partnership and shared research interests.

- US-Asia collaboration: Significant connections are observed between the US and Asian countries, primarily China and India, indicating a growing scientific partnership between these regions.

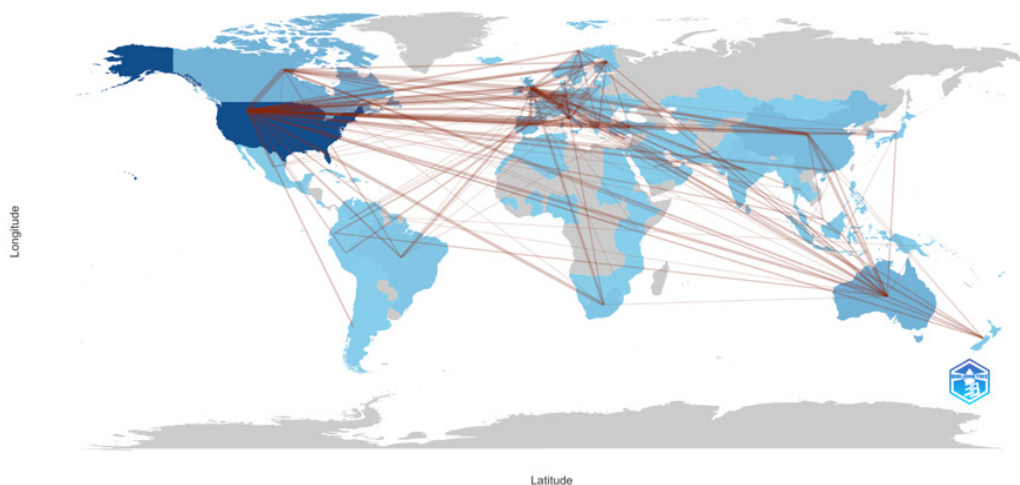
- Intra-European Collaboration: Strong ties are evident between European Union member states, highlighting the importance of joint research projects and networks within the region.

- Australia and its Connections: Australia collaborates actively with Europe and, to a moderate extent, with the United States.

Overall, the geographic map demonstrates the dominance of the Western world in research. Significantly less collaboration is observed with countries in the Southern Hemisphere (Africa, South America), which may be explained by differences in research funding, infrastructure, or historical factors. China’s growing prominence and its ties to the United States and Europe, however, point to the emergence of an East-West partnership (Figure 11).

Figure 11
World map of scientific co-authorship

Country Collaboration Map



Note: Generated by the author based on Bibliometrix data

Conclusion

The bibliometric analysis revealed that research in the field of storytelling and education is actively developing and is characterized by a steady growth of scholarly interest. The topic demonstrates a high level of interdisciplinarity, combining humanities, technological, and pedagogical approaches. The analysis was based exclusively on Scopus data, which may not cover all publications on the topic, especially regional or local studies. Furthermore, a bibliometric approach reflects quantitative trends but does not assess the depth of quality of individual studies or their practical effectiveness.

Despite the dominance of traditional fields related to human factors and educational practice, technological aspects such as digital storytelling represent the most promising area for further research. The obtained results provide a holistic understanding of the current state and evolution of scholarly

discourse, serving as a foundation for subsequent theoretical and applied research in education.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest

Author Contributions

Sh.A. Umirkhanova: Investigation, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft.

G.A. Orynkhanova (corresponding author): Conceptualization, Methodology, Supervision, Writing – review and editing.

Zh.A. Orynkhanova: Formal analysis, Data curation, Visualization.

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Information about the authors:

Umirkhanova Shynar – PhD student of the doctoral program “Russian language and literature”, Faculty of Philology, Kazakh National Women’s Teacher Training university, Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan, (Almaty, Kazakhstan, e-mail: umirhanovas@gmail.com).

Orynkhanova Gibadat (corresponding author) – Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor, Kazakh National Women’s Teacher Training university (Almaty, Kazakhstan, e-mail: o_gibadat@mail.ru).

Orynkhanova Zhanat – Master of Economics, Senior Lecturer, Kazakh National Women’s Teacher Training university, Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan, (Almaty, Kazakhstan, e-mail: zhakenty1414@gmail.com).

Авторлар туралы мәлімет:

Умирханова Шынар Адильханқызы – «Орыс тілі мен әдебиеті» кафедрасының докторанты, филология факультеті, Қазақ ұлттық қыздар педагогикалық университеті (Алматы, Қазақстан, e-mail: umirhanovas@gmail.com).

Орынханова Гибадат Аманжоловна (корреспонденттік автор) – филология ғылымдарының кандидаты, Қазақ ұлттық қыздар педагогикалық университетінің Орыс тілі мен әдебиеті кафедрасының қауымдастырылған профессоры (Алматы, Қазақстан, e-mail: o_gibadat@mail.ru).

Орынханова Жанат Аманжоловна – магистр, аға оқытушы, Қазақ ұлттық қыздар педагогикалық университеті, Алматы, Қазақстан Республикасы, (Алматы, Қазақстан, e-mail: zhakenty1414@gmail.com).

Сведения об авторах:

Умирханова Шынар Адильханқызы – докторант программы «Русский язык и литература», филологический факультет, Казахский национальный женский педагогический университет (Алматы, Казахстан, e-mail: umirhanovas@gmail.com).

Орынханова Гибадат Аманжоловна (корреспондирующий автор) – кандидат филологических наук, ассоциированный профессор кафедры русского языка и литературы Казахского национального женского педагогического университета (Алматы, Казахстан, e-mail: o_gibadat@mail.ru).

Орынханова Жанат Аманжоловна – магистр, старший преподаватель, Казахский национальный женский педагогический университет (Алматы, Казахстан, e-mail: zhakenty1414@gmail.com).

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