DIGITAL STORYTELLING IN THE ELT CLASSROOM: MAKING

USE OF DIGITAL NARRATIVES TO PROMOTE THE

PRODUCTIVE SKILL OF SPEAKING

A MASTER'S THESIS

BY

METİN ESEN

THE PROGRAM OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BILKENT UNIVERSITY

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To my beloved sister, Merve…

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SPEAKING

The Graduate School of Education

of

İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

Metin Esen

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BILKENT UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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Promote the Productive Skill of Speaking

Metin Esen

June 2019

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction.

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ABSTRACT

DIGITAL STORYTELLING IN THE ELT CLASSROOM: MAKING USE OF
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SPEAKING

Metin Esen

M.A., Program of Curriculum and Instruction

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June 2019

This quasi experimental study, done with 124 prep school students at a state
university, aimed at examining if digital storytelling activities could boost these
learners' competency in spoken English, and if digital storytelling had any effects on
the learner attitude towards speaking. The study also evaluated the participant
students and the teachers' attitude towards digital storytelling as a technique to
practice speaking.

The findings in the study revealed that digital storytelling actually contributed to
learners' spoken performances, and students seemed to have a more positive attitude
towards speaking skill with the intervention. Also, the learners regarded digital
storytelling as an effective technique to practice speaking, and the teachers perceived
digital storytelling tasks as successful learning material.

Key words: English as a Foreign Language, speaking skill, speaking competency,
digital storytelling, technology in learning English, technology in education, learner
attitude towards speaking

ÖZET

İNGİLİZ DİLİ ÖĞRETİMİNDE DİJİTAL HİKÂYE ANLATIMI: ÜRETİME YÖNELİK BİR BECERİ OLAN KONUŞMA BECERİSİNİ DESTEKLEMEDE DİJİTAL ANLATILARDAN YARARLANMA

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Bir devlet üniversitesinin hazırlık okulunda okuyan 124 öğrenci ile yapılan bu yarı-deneysel çalışma, dijital hikâye anlatımının öğrencilerin konuşma İngilizcesindeki yeterliklerini artırıp artıramayacağını ve dijital hikâye anlatımının öğrencilerin konuşma becerisine olan tutumlarına etkisi olup olmayacağını araştırmayı hedeflemiştir. Çalışma ayrıca katılımcı öğrenci ve öğretmenlerin dijital hikâye anlatımını konuşma becerisini uygulamada bir teknik olarak nasıl değerlendirdiklerini ele almıştır.

Çalışmadaki bulgular, dijital hikâye anlatımının öğrencilerin konuşma becerisindeki performanslarına bilfiil katkıda bulunduğunu ve öğrencilerin müdahale ile birlikte konuşma becerisine karşı daha olumlu bir tutum geliştirdiklerini ortaya çıkarmıştır. Ayrıca katılımcı öğrenciler dijital hikâye anlatımını konuşma pratiği için etkili bir teknik olarak görmüşlerdir ve yine katılımcı öğretmenler de dijital hikâye anlatımını başarılı bir öğrenme materyali olarak bulmuşlardır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Yabancı dil olarak İngilizce, konuşma becerisi, konuşma yeterliği, dijital hikâye anlatımı, İngilizce öğreniminde teknoloji, eğitimde teknoloji, öğrencilerin konuşma becerisine yönelik tutumu

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Abbreviation	Explanation
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
DST	Digital storytelling
EFL	English as a foreign language
ELF	English as a lingua franca
ELT	English language teaching
GSE	Global Scale of English
L1	The mother tongue of a language learner
L2	The target/foreign language that the learner is studying
SLA	Second language acquisition

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This chapter first introduces the background of the study explaining the motives and reasons that led to the conduction of the research. Afterwards, the main problem that was approached in the study is laid out along with the intervention, digital storytelling, that was used to address the problem. The purpose of the research is clearly explained, and the research questions designed to narrow down the scope are listed. The chapter then touches upon the significance of the research, and ends with the definitions of some key terminology mentioned in various chapters.

Background

Today, English language exists as a phenomenon called 'English as a lingua franca' as only 25% of the people who speak English are actually native speakers (Crystal, 2003). English stands as the preferred means of communication among individuals from different mother tongues and cultures all around the world (Firth, 1996). Along with many areas such as trade, aviation, politics, engineering, and telecommunication, English also dominates academia as the means of instruction in university education. This situation is the natural result of reasons such as the consequences of historical cases changing societies, the military dominance of English-speaking nations, and the financial power maintained by international businesses run widely in English (Erling, 2013).

A considerable number of university departments in Turkey offer their courses in English. According the research carried out by Taquini, Finardi, and Amorim (2017),

80 (77.7%) of the 103 Turkish state universities included in the scope had at least one program available in English as the medium of instruction. Another study by British Council- TEPAV Proje Ekibi (2015) done with 4320 participant students reveals that on average, 88% of the university students stated that English preparatory school was compulsory for their departments while 90.1% of them stated that they either had studied or were studying at a preparatory school. Consequently, students have to proceed to their departments with the required level of proficiency in English, and the ones who do not have the proficiency have to study at a one-year compulsory English preparatory school and achieve this proficiency within an academic year. These preparatory schools mostly aim to construct their curricula in accordance with widely-accepted borders such as the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) or the *Global Scale of English* (GSE). These frameworks or other similar references of guidance for language teaching approach the process in recognition of four basic skills of language learning, which are Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing, all serving different purposes in the process of acquiring a second language. Listening and reading are commonly categorized as "receptive skills" in the literature. Their main purpose is to supply learners with language input (Widdowson, 1978). To illustrate, students can learn the pronunciation of newly-learnt vocabulary through an audio record, or read a passage containing bits of grammatical forms covered in the syllabus. Speaking and writing, on the other hand, are known as "productive skills" as they create the field where students can practice the language they have learnt and turn input into output (Widdowson, 1978). They can practice pronunciation in a role-play speaking activity or use the target structure in a writing assignment.

Various approaches, methods, techniques, and procedures are used to teach learners these four basic skills, and storytelling is one of the techniques preferred by many teachers of English. "Stories serve the biological function of encouraging prosocial behavior. Across cultures, stories instruct a version of the following: If we are honest and play by the social rules, we reap the rewards of the protagonist; if we break the rules, we earn the punishment accorded to the bad guy." So does Eagleman (2012, p. 3) explain the essence of stories in his book review of *The Storytelling Animal* by Jonathan Gottschall. He emphasizes that even if "how" people tell their stories changes, "why" they tell them will always remain intact. With regards to this "how" issue, it is undeniable that different phases of history have witnessed different types of storytelling such as drama in ancient amphitheaters, puppet shows, the printing press, and the radio.

Thanks to the advancements in technology, another means of storytelling, *digital storytelling*, has become a significant attachment to the education sector, and McWilliam (2009) reports that 123 of the 300 digital storytelling programs most of which (274) began to function in the early 2000s were affiliated with an institution with educational purposes. There exist several digital storytelling types (Gregori-Signes, 2014), and this abundance results from the presence of countless channels for self-publication (e.g. social media networks, Tumblr, blogs, YouTube, etc.). McWilliam (2009) describes the practice as a "workshop-based practice in which people are taught to use digital media to create short audio-video stories, usually about their own lives" (p. 3) in the general sense. For him, the ultimate idea lying behind digital storytelling is that it gives the simple, insignificant affairs of everyday life an opportunity to have a place among the eternal productions of this digital era.

There are different opinions about the combination of storytelling and digital tools as to include what types of technology into the practice. For some researches, digital storytelling is the use of videos, still images, or slides accompanied by a soundtrack that contains music or the narrator's voice (Bull & Kajder, 2004; Robin, 2008; Sadik, 2008). For others, it is just a mere combination of storytelling and multimedia like videos, audios, or images, not necessarily requiring the accompaniment of soundtrack or a recorded narration (Robin, 2006).

According to Lambert (2010), there are seven steps that can be listed as the characteristic features of a digital story, which are not so different than those of a traditional story. First, storytellers need to identify what their story-to-be-told is going to be about. What comes next is to decide on which emotions the story is going to reflect, and how the storyteller is going to pass these emotions to the audience. Then storytellers will have to detect the breaking point in their stories; the point where things have started to change for them. After this point, the means of publication must be chosen so as to display the story in the most appropriate way for the audience. Another step is to decide on the use of sound as the narrator could either be content with the recorded voiceover or add additional sound effects such as music or ambient. Having chosen the media, storytellers will then need to carry out the assembly of all this content and instruments. The final stage is sharing the story and introducing it to the target audience, which will define what end awaits the end product.

This study is intended to evaluate the use of digital storytelling in teaching speaking and to see if the speaking tasks designed in the light of digital storytelling concept

can result in meaningful differences in the target sample's speaking performances measured in grades, and their attitudes towards the skill of speaking. Before the details of the research, it is useful to define some of the learner problems with the skill of speaking that the target population might have and construct some research questions to narrow down the scope of the study.

Problem

Turkey is one of the countries that benefit from English as a lingua franca in a widespread context. Therefore, the number of people who attempt to learn English is considerably high although the number who can actually use this language in daily life situations would be relatively small. This situation is quite comparable to the ones Thailand, Japan, and China where various research (Dwyer & Heller-Murphy, 1996; Khamkhien, 2010; Liu, 2005; Zhang, 2009) points to the fact that despite the much effort, finance, and duration spent on English, an average learner of English as foreign language (EFL) who studies English for at least 10 years of their formal education cannot find the motivation to engage actively in dialogues with other speakers of the language (as cited in Dinçer & Yeşilyurt, 2013, p. 89). Dinçer and Yeşilyurt (2013) list the reasons behind this inverse proportion as fear from of speech in front of an audience, lack of motivation towards this skill, wrong teaching practices that heavily rely on grammar teaching, insufficient input via listening, lack of genuine practice, and a low level in autonomous learning. Lack of self-confidence is a significant factor that hinders students from performing to their best during speaking activities. According to Kubo (2009), students experience this lack of fluency and self-confidence largely because they do not have enough speaking practices outside the classroom. This is the natural result of the

classroom atmosphere, in which students are usually listened by their peers for non-authentic purposes such as replying to the teacher's question, saying an answer of an exercise out loud, or acting out an artificially-constructed dialogue between an imaginary waiter/waitress and a customer. Lucas (2011) quotes, "Many people who converse easily in all kinds of everyday situations become frightened at the idea of standing up before a group to make a speech" (p. 9). This is also the case for EFL learners who are hesitant to speak in front of their peers in the classroom due to various reasons such as fear of making grammatical/lexical mistakes, risk of giving the wrong answer, or a feeling of inadequacy in the target language (English) to speak out one's mind. This public speaking anxiety is closely linked to the learners' proficiency in speaking skill as Tacheva (2013) states, "The verbal register, intonation, articulation, pronunciation, tone, rhythm, dialect define the character of the communicative impact as positive or negative depending on whether they facilitate or hinder the achievement of communicative purposes" (p. 605). Social environment is one of the factors whose lack of opportunities to practice English puts students off developing their speaking skills via genuine conversations in real-life situations. Most of the time, the only English-spoken social environment for Turkish learners is their institution, and the sole target native-like population that they can talk to are their peers and teachers. However, as stated above, stage fright and fear of making mistakes wrests this chance from their hands. Indeed, a real social context in which English is spoken for authentic purposes is crucial as it contributes to the learners' motivation, learning targets, and their level of proficiency (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Besides, socioeconomic factors prevent Turkish learners from benefiting from facilities such as periodic language schools abroad, especially in countries where English is the official language, due to financial factors such as

the fluctuating currency equivalence, and political factors such the difficulty of obtaining visa for certain countries.

One other element of learning a foreign language is motivation, which shapes learners' perspectives towards the language that they are trying to acquire. According to Lightbown and Spada (2006), two fundamental types of motivation have the greatest share in the larger pie of language learning. The first one encompasses the amount of need that learners have to learn that particular language. This is a more pragmatical way to see a language but still, these learners regard the language learning process as an obligation or as part of their requirements, so they are more eager to speak and increase their proficiency as soon as possible, in accordance with the time constraint given to them. To illustrate, for someone who got a well-paid and prestigious overseas job, with the only requirement being to learn the language of that particular overseas country within a limited timeframe, that foreign language is a fruitful challenge to be accepted with a high spirit. The other type of motivation is more of an intrinsic type as it is related to how the students see the foreign language that they learn. These learners are quite motivated by their positive perspective towards the native speakers and the culture of that particular language. Their main purpose is to be able to communicate using that foreign language in their daily lives. Teachers, their teaching practices, and the materials used during instruction are also factors each contributing to low levels of achievement in EFL learners' speaking skill. Although receptive skills are widely covered in the ELT classroom, productive skills are often neglected as it is difficult for teachers to design and apply communicative activities all the time (Kuśnierek, 2015) and production requires detailed feedback to prevent errors while boosting motivation. Besides, students are

usually more reluctant during the practice of productive skills than during receptive skills. Therefore, it is a problem that curriculum developers, syllabi, and teachers often end up in insufficiency in promoting productive skills in the ELT classroom.

According to Shen (2013), teachers occasionally use teaching material that does not encourage learners to produce speech related to real-life situations. This is also the case for foreign language education in Turkey as the great emphasis is mainly on teaching grammar and lexis rather than focusing on genuine authentic oral or written production. However, as Manurung (2015) argues, topics to be covered in the lesson and the material via which the topic is planned to be instructed greatly influence learner motivation and performance in oral production.

A solution to this problem could be digital storytelling, which is a process combining the elements of traditional storytelling and personal digital equipment such as cameras, computers, microphones, or voice recorders (Yuksel, Robin, & McNeil, 2011). As we can describe a majority of the current student population as "digital natives," it is a good idea to guide them in utilizing technological facilities to create narratives for oral production while supporting speaking.

Digital storytelling

As in anything else in the recorded history, the art of storytelling also received its share from the rapid advancements in technology. Throughout the late 1800s and the early 1900s, the developments in radio, cinema, and photography technologies equipped storytellers with new ways of addressing the audiences. Now, people could listen to the stories as well es watching them on moving images on the screen, or

printed photographs. During the 1960s, when cultural activism was mainstream, the Northern California folk culture attempted using storytelling as a way of expression. Dana Atchley and Joe Lambert became the creators of digital storytelling as known in the present day. Lambert (2006) remarks that the foundations of digital storytelling lie in the culture of democracy which is the outcome of folk music, re-claimed folk culture, and the activism spirit of the 1960s.

Through the years, digital storytelling has been associated with various contexts and defined in different terminology. One of the most well-known definitions comes from Joe Lambert, Dana Atchley, and Nina Mullen, who are the founders of The San Francisco Media Centre in1994, aiming to provide PC technology and easy-to-use editing software (Paull, 2003). Later, the organization was transformed into the Centre for Digital Storytelling in 1996 and today, it is still an active organization running with the same name. The center's first attempts of cooperation with educationalists, activists, and non-profit groups created the pioneering projects at schools (Banaszewski, 2005). Some people were trained at the Centre for Digital Storytelling as promoters and trainers to later work in different schools and facilitate teaching and learning, with an emphasis on personal stories.

The digital storytelling model created by Lambert (2006) focuses on seven basic rules which are: the point of view, a stressed dramatic question, trot, emotional subject, a storyteller's voice, soundtrack, and economy. Every element is dependent on one another in the creation process of capturing a story. Lambert's framework is being used in various areas such as politics, business, and healthcare, and when he published his book (2006) *Digital Storytelling: Capturing Lives, Creating*

Community and Tom Banaszewski (2002) published his article, 'Digital Storytelling Finds its Place in the Classroom,' it was high time the field of education had also made use of digital storytelling for educational purposes.

According to Ohler (2008), elements of a traditional story, which can be identified through story mapping with the help of the Visual Portrait of a Story (Figure 1), can also be present in a digital story, and story mapping is especially significant for digital storytelling. It shifts students' focus from the technology part to their own stories to be told, and it is helpful to design a more structured plot rather than a series of arbitrary events. Besides, it enables teachers to have a glimpse of the perspective of students, and teachers can "ascertain the potential of a student's story … as they discuss the power, quality, and value of their stories" (Ohler, 2008, p. 86).
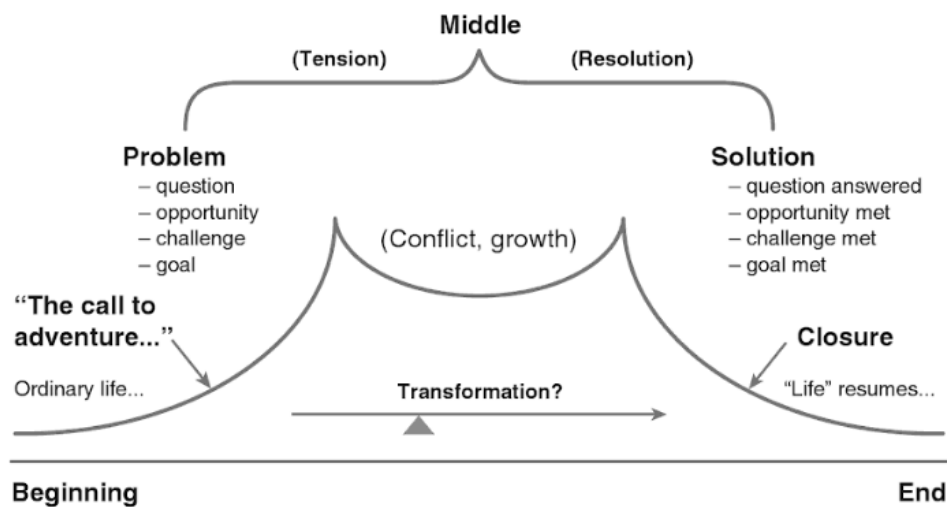
Figure 1. Visual portrait of a story (Taken from *Digital Storytelling in the Classroom: New Media Pathways to Literacy, Learning, and Creativity* with the permission of Ohler (2008, p. 80), who adapted it from Dillingham (2001).

In time, Lambert's original digital storytelling idea has emerged as several different genres and these distinct types still keep their loyalty to the original seven basic elements of digital storytelling. One of the greatest changes, however, is the range of audience that can be addressed thanks to the number of digital mediums that can be incorporated in the story creation process. Traditional stories, learning stories, project-based stories, social justice and cultural stories, and stories grounded in reflective practice are the five main genres that sprang as a result of social economic changes (Garrety, 2008). These genres are used in different grades in education and there is a wide range of research on their educational treatment revealing many precursory findings (Behmer, Schmidt, & Schmidt, 2006; Figg, Ward, & Lanier-Guillory, 2006, as cited in Garrety, 2008, p. 14).

Purpose

The purpose of this quasi-experimental study was to test whether digital storytelling could aid English learners in realizing their true potential for spoken production during lessons. The speaking task grades and final speaking grades of the control group and the experimental group were compared to see if there was any statistically significant difference between the two groups' performances in oral production. Furthermore, the research aimed to find out if digital storytelling tasks, as a treatment, would alter the perspective of learner view towards the challenging skill of speaking. Finally, the study included the participant students and teachers' evaluation of digital storytelling as a technique for improving speaking skills. The expected result of the study was that digital storytelling, as a both enjoyable and challenging way of creating something original, would help promote the mostly-neglected

productive skill of speaking among university English preparatory school students, and it would also alter their attitude towards the skill itself.

Research questions

Three main and two subsidiary research questions made it possible to achieve the purpose of the research:

1. How does the use of digital storytelling tasks influence the learners' performance in spoken production?

    1.1. Is there a significant difference between the speaking performance of the control group and the experiment group?

    1.2. How does digital storytelling affect the learner attitude towards the skill of speaking at the end of the intervention?

2. What are the students' attitudes towards digital storytelling as a technique to improve their speaking skills?

3. What are the comments of the teachers of the experiment group on the two digital storytelling tasks?

Significance

Digital storytelling tasks are distinguished from other speaking tasks such as discussion, interview, simulation, etc. in two main aspects. The first one is the integration of technology, which is already an indispensable element of education due the necessities of the time. However, digital storytelling is an excellent guide for language learners in grasping the fact that technological tools are only a vessel; that incorporating technology into learning is not the target but the means of an enjoyable and personal instruction. And the other aspect is the door digital storytelling opens

towards personalization in language learning. In digital stories, learners find an opportunity to narrate their own stories along with what they imagine, feel, think, and choose. This aspect is especially significant in communicative language teaching because what they narrate about themselves is authentic language.

The digital storytelling tasks done by the experiment group during the study were prepared by an experienced and qualified EFL teacher, who possesses an adequate command of theory and classroom practices equally. Therefore, curriculum units of institutions with similar backgrounds, problems, and student profiles can apply the tasks and the relevant tests in their own institutions to see if their students can benefit from such a practice as well. As well as that, they can follow the research pattern and design their own tasks and tests with minor modifications to fit into their own problems and student profiles. The findings of this study might also benefit English teachers who do not believe they are supporting their learners with sufficient amount of oral production. What is more, English learners who would like to use technology more in their education are provided with a good opportunity to be able to do so.

Definition of key terms

Authenticity: "The concept of who teachers and learners are and what they do as they interact with one another for the purposes of language learning" (Van Lier, 2013, p. 125).

Digital Storytelling: "A workshop-based practice in which people are taught to use digital media to create short audio-video stories, usually about their own lives" (McWilliam, 2009, p. 3).

English as a Lingua Franca: The case for English language when it is the medium of communication between persons who share neither the same culture nor the same mother tongue (Firth, 1996).

Grammar: "… Certain categories of observed repetitions in discourse…. Its forms are not fixed templates but emerge out of face-to-face interaction in ways that reflect the individual speakers' past experience of these forms ..." (Hopper, 1988, p. 156).

Productive skills: Language skills of writing and speaking through which students are actively required to produce language on their own (Harmer, 2007).

Language/Linguistic Proficiency: The ability of a person to express meaning in a certain language orally or in writing.

Learner attitude (language learning beliefs): Learner "opinions on a variety of issues and controversies related to language learning " (Horwitz, 1987, p. 120).

Pronunciation: The way or pattern of speaking a word out loud.

Speaking/ Spoken production: Speaking is an interactional transform of meaning, and this process includes the reception, manipulation, and production of information orally (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997).

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to see the possible effects of digital storytelling on EFL learners' performances in the skill of speaking, and to test if digital storytelling can change the learner attitude towards speaking. However, before looking at the relevant literature, it might be useful to have a look at the factors affecting learner performance in speaking skill and uses of storytelling in language teaching as it is the basis for digital storytelling. For this purpose, this chapter will first present the factors that have an impact on learner success and failure in spoken English. What follows next are some research carried out on the effects of traditional storytelling activities on the performances of foreign language learners. Next, storytelling has also been used to teach English several times, and some research is presented in this chapter to show the degree of success in these studies. Finally, the review of literature related to the uses of digital storytelling to boost the speaking skills of English learners is the topic to be introduced at the end of this chapter.

Factors affecting learner performance in speaking skill

Speaking is one of the two productive skills (the other one being writing) of language learning along with the two receptive skills of reading and listening. In the most basic sense, speaking could be described as the process of communicating thought in the form of verbal means in accordance with the context (Chaney & Burke, 1998), and this process includes the tasks of encoding and receiving a message through

sounds (Brown, 1994). According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), conventional approaches and methodologies have never been able to put the necessary emphasis on speaking as a crucial element of language learning. *Grammar-Translation* method, for example, prioritized reading and writing while *Audio-Lingual* method regarded listening as the most essential skill to acquire a language. In other methods such as *Direct Method* or *Suggestopedia*, teaching native-like pronunciation was important, but speaking was still not in the center of instruction. However, speaking is the most immediate and available form of communication, which is why it must be handled with extra consideration during instruction.

There are several factors that play significant roles in reshaping how teachers approach the speaking skill, how the learning material address it, and how learners perceive the process. According Leong and Ahmadi (2017), the most distinct ones of these factors are accuracy vs. fluency, performance conditions, affective variables, listening competency, grasp of the topical knowledge, feedback, linguistic elements, motivation, anxiety, and inhibition. In the scope of this particular study, performance conditions, grasp of the topical knowledge, motivation, anxiety, and additionally learner attitude towards speaking were the five outstanding factors that had implications on the data collection tools.

Performance conditions in speaking

Nation and Newton (2009) emphasize that it is of great importance to encourage learners to transfer their receptive knowledge into productive output, but there are several conditional components that affect the learner performance. One of these conditions is planning, which is defined as "preparing for a task before the task is

performed, … having time to think about a given topic, having time to prepare what to say, and taking brief notes about what to say" by Nation and Newton (2009, p. 117). Planning and preparation are particularly important for learners in order to ensure a successful output and achieve learner satisfaction. Related to this, time pressure is the second condition and Nation and Newton (2009) believe that providing learners with the adequate duration for their output enables them to bring forward their both latent and manifest grammar skills and boost their performance. The amount of support can also determine the grade of the output as a successful oral performance is dependent on the condition that listeners act patiently, understand the speaker, sympathize, and support the performer. Finally, standard of performance is another condition, and the expectation for a good performance will be higher if the speaker is addressing an audience and the performer is to be evaluated (Nation and Newton, 2009).

Topical knowledge in a speaking activity

Another element of the speaking skill that has a direct effect on learners' performances is the grasp of the topical knowledge of the related area. Bachman and Palmer (1996) define topical knowledge as the sum of knowledge structures placed in the long-term memory. These structures might be related to learners' background knowledge about the culture they are exposed to. In speaking activities, tasks, and examinations, learners may be required to bring forward these structures along with their knowledge of the language. For example, a student who is asked to make a presentation about Hollywood movies will need to either activate all the topical knowledge he/she already has or construct one doing research in the preparation

process. Otherwise, it would be unfair to expect the student to give a simultaneous speech on a subject about which the student possesses no topical knowledge.

Learner motivation for speaking

Motivation is one of the crucial components of learning, and although it is an abstract concept related to classroom applications, its effects are greatly tangible in terms of learner success. There are various definitions of the key term, but it could be defined as the degree to which learners are oriented towards their targets involving learning the particular language (Norris-Holt, 2001). Also, Brown (2001) emphasizes the importance of motivation and the difficulty of achieving it in the classroom with quoting:

> One of the more complicated problems of second languages learning and teaching has been to define and apply the construct of motivation in the classroom. On the one hand, it is an easy catchword that gives teachers a simple answer to the mysterious of language learning. Motivation is the difference. (72)

This factor is also associated with learner success and failure in speaking skill. A considerable number of students are passionate about this skill and they would like to develop their speaking competency even more than the other skills (Ur, 1996). No matter how much input concerning the mastery of the target language learners get; success is not quite possible to achieve in the absence of motivation.

Anxiety during a speaking performance

Another factor that has an impact on learner success in speaking skill is anxiety. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) explain that this type of an anxiety is experienced when learners feel uneasy, nervous, worried, or apprehended in the

process of learning or practicing a foreign language. Hanifa (2018) analyzes the speaking anxiety factor under three main headings, which are cognitive factors, affective factors, and performance factors.

Cognitive factors, very similar to the topical knowledge factor, are about learners' knowledge related to the topic and the linguistic aspects of the language along with the reaction of interlocuters. These are all related to learners' thinking processes and cognitive abilities, and they experience speaking anxiety when they feel less confident about one aspect of these cognitive factors. Affective factors, on the other hand, encompass how learners feel about the process, themselves, and mainly the interlocuters. When they get an unfavorable reaction from the interlocuter such as a negative feedback, a laughter, a judgement, or a power relationship, they may slide into speaking anxiety with the disappointment of not meeting expectations. Finally, performance factors concern learners' apprehension level. Typically, learners who have stage fear, who have lack of confidence to build communication, and who experience difficulties in discourse management have high chances of undergoing speaking anxiety (Hanifa, 2018).

Learner attitude towards speaking

Learner attitude is usually made up of learner beliefs which are "opinions on a variety of issues and controversies related to language learning " (Horwitz, 1987, p. 120). However, these beliefs may also go beyond the learning process and as Brown (2000) proposes, they may target the learners' own culture and the speakers of the target language.

Attitudes of learners is a factor carrying a considerable amount of impression on their studies in the language learning process because the amount of endeavor learners will exert is partially bound to their attitude. (Gardner, Lanlonde, & Moorcroft, 1985). This suggests that learners with a positive and constructive attitude towards the target language and the learning process will be more interested, more exertive, and more successful while a negative and inhibiting attitude will lower down motivation, engagement, and participation along with success.

Traditional stories and digital stories as language learning material

It is a common observation that usually young learners enjoy learning new stories and enjoy learning new information through stories. However, educational theorists claim a wider opinion stating that stories have a great contribution to learning and effective memory in different age groups (Banaszewski, 2005). Bruner (1986) also emphasizes that story is a useful apparatus to help us see the intended meaning behind what the others tell.

Storytelling to teach English

Many studies done to show the effectiveness of storytelling, especially with young learners, reveal that it is actually a successful technique yielding productive results. A research carried by Abasi and Soori (2014) investigated if storytelling had any effects in improving English vocabulary learning skills of kindergarten students in Iran. The participants were 20 children (11 girls and 9 boys in total) with average age of five. All of the children were taught by the same teacher using the same textbook, which was the story of *The Three Bears* in this particular research. The children were given picture vocabulary tests in a pre-test/post-test scheme to compare their

vocabulary performances before and after the treatment. The statistical results of one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test suggested that the children performed better in the post-test than they did in the pre-test, with a statistically significant increase in their mean scores. This finding suggests that storytelling is an effective way to boost the vocabulary learning skills of young learners of EFL.

Another similar study on teaching English vocabulary by Çubukçu (2014) aimed at finding out if the technique of Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS), which was formed by Blaine Ray in 1988, could contribute to the lexical skills of secondary school students. The participants were 44 sixth grade secondary school students in the city of İzmir in Turkey, 22 of whom were in the control group studying the 20 target vocabulary in a text while the other half were the experiment group learning the same group of words through storytelling and personalization. When the results were analyzed, it was observed that the experiment group had significantly higher scores than the learners in the control group. Therefore, storytelling, and its component of personification, had an effect on the vocabulary learning skills of secondary school learners of English. The researcher also stated that TPRS was a fun way of learning vocabulary as creativity for both the teacher and the learners is in the core of this particular technique.

Kalantari and Hashemian (2015) conducted a research on the use of storytelling technique to teach English to see if it could foster Iranian EFL learner's vocabulary learning and change the attitude of EFL learners towards learning English. The learners particularly selected for this study were sixty upper-beginner students who were enrolled in a private language center in Iran, levelled low-intermediate and aged

10-14, and the selection criteria was the placement test applied by the center. Participants were placed into four different groups; two of them as the control groups and two of them as the experiment groups. The tools used were the stories presented by the teacher/researcher, the teacher's personal notes to be able to have comparison between groups in terms of interest and motivation, and a standardized post-test which belongs to the coursebook. The results gained at the end of this research suggest that storytelling had an impact on the vocabulary learning of the students in the experimental group, and their attitude towards the technique was affirmative. The researcher also reported that storytelling encouraged students to learn in an authentic, synergistic, and relevant context, boosting their opportunities to have a connection with the learning environment and articulate what is in their minds properly and situationally.

There are also studies revealing the fact that storytelling technique has certain disadvantages in the classroom atmosphere. One study, a master's thesis by Dolzhykova (2014), aimed at exploring how digital storytelling was used as a didactic technique to English to young Ukrainian and Norwegian learners, and what perspectives teachers had towards storytelling in the classroom. The study was built around the main questions of how storytelling was apprehended and utilized by L2 teachers in Ukraine and Norway; what the similarities and differences were between the cases in two different contexts; and what challenges were experienced by students who used storytelling, and how they overcame these challenges. This qualitative study used semi-structured interviews to collect views from three Ukrainian and three Norwegian teachers of English about their ways of using storytelling technique in their classes. It was understood from the answer of the

participant teachers, both in Ukraine and Norway, that they all benefited from this technique in their classes, though not on a regular basis but at times. The biggest reason for this irregularity appeared to stem from the absence of storytelling approach in the national curricula. This fact was the reason why there were only a few pre-prepared and operational storytelling material to teach young learners English, which makes teachers use their own constructed short stories. Although the participant teachers pointed to the effectiveness of storytelling in teaching English, they also found it time-consuming as the time allocated by the curricula to teach English was limited, and storytelling required a lot of the class time to be spared. What is more, teachers also thought it was difficult to convey all the story in English, and they occasionally switched to L1 to make sure that the learners have a good grasp of the story.

Digital storytelling in the ELT classroom

Digital storytelling is an effective and time-saving tool that can be manipulated for various purposes within the classroom environment. It can provide teachers with an unprecedented way of presenting new information to learners (Robin, 2008). Thus, it becomes a good opportunity to avoid dull teaching cycles and spices up lessons with joy and curiosity, two crucial factors leading to learning. Besides, digital storytelling makes it possible to present abstract content in such a concrete way that students may find it easier to relate to the topic and elaborate from there (Robin, 2008). Most importantly, students might also be asked to create their own individual or collective digital stories, through which they can cater to their own learning (Sadik, 2008). Digital storytelling can be used in the classroom for a variety of purposes, and it can contribute to students in several different ways. Students can shoot videos of

themselves or other people or objects; or record their voices to narrate a certain story. They can capture photographs of themselves, other people, or objects and build a story in sequences of images or photo albums. They even might draw caricatures or create comic stories through digital tools which provide them with a number of ready-made features.

According to Robin and Pierson (2005), learners who take part in the making of a digital narration acquire how to organize thoughts, state their opinions on a given topic, and tell a complete story, which will improve their communication in return. On the other hand, digital storytelling gives learners chances to share with others (or an audience) what they have created. This is nothing but an opportunity to help students realize the motives behind what they are doing and feel significant in the face of connecting with others (Jakes, 2006).

A study done by Liu, Tai, and Liu (2018) is an indication that digital storytelling can positively contribute to the process of learning English. The target of the study was to find out how digital storytelling could be integrated into the classroom as a technique building autonomy and creativity, and what the effects on learner motivation and performance were. The setting was a formal elementary school and the participants were 64 sixth grade Thai students. The researchers of this experimental study found out that digital storytelling had an affirmative effect on the performance of the participant students as they proved more fluent in oral reading had more extrinsic motivation. They also concluded that:

> … teachers need to give students a certain level of openness in digital storytelling activities to allow them to expand their creativity under the existing language teaching practices. … the incorporation of the free-space digital storytelling activity should not only aim at helping students

demonstrate their language ability, but also expanding their creativity-oriented performance as the creativity-based performance may act as a motivation catalyst that triggers students learning with higher level of motivations (Liu, Tai, & Liu, 2018, p. 931)

Amelia and Abidin (2018) also conducted a research to analyze the possible impacts of tablet-based digital stories on learners of ESL. The purpose of this qualitative study was to observe how tablet-based digital storytelling effected fifth grade primary school students, and the context was a Malaysian public primary school from which six students were purposefully selected to collect data from. The technique of tablet-based digital storytelling was developed by the researcher to help Malaysian ESL learners with their vocabulary learning, with reference to Mayer's (2001) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning. The study revealed that students had a positive point of view towards the use of tablet-based digital storytelling in their learning, and the findings suggest that digital storytelling mostly helped students develop their skill in four main areas, listening, reading, speaking, and writing; but especially their lexical range which was the most reported result by the participants. As with the other studies cited above, the learners in this study were also more enthusiastic and motivated to learn English with the innovative and diversified nature of digital storytelling.

There are also studies that investigated the impact of digital storytelling on learning English in the Turkish context. Bozdoğan (2012) carried out a study that concentrated on the perceptions of ELT students regarding the stories intended for young learners. The participants were seventy-seven junior ELT department students who were taking the Teaching English to Young Learners II course, with their ages ranging from 21 to 23. It was a kind of material preparation process for these

candidate teachers in which they were instructed to create digital stories for young learners. They were given three weeks in total, and at the end of the process, 38 digital stories were uploaded by the participants unto the Facebook course group created for material sharing. The finding of the content analysis of the digital stories revealed that friendship was a recurring theme in the stories, which possesses a direct relation to cognition and social-cognition of young learners. Another major finding was that the ages of the character in the stories are very close to those of children for whom the material were intended, so the audience could relate to the characters and the events easily. Lastly, male characters occurred in the stories more often than their female equivalents, but males were associated with negative affiliations more, which pointed to the fact that sexism might have an impact on the point of view of younger learners as well.

Another research by Adıgüzel and Kumkale (2018) set sight on discovering the effects of digital stories on learners' level of reading and understanding. Data were collected from a control group of 17 5th grade students (8 girls and 9 boys) and an experiment group of 17 5th grade students (9 girls and 8 boys). Both groups were given a pre-test on the past simple tense to see their preliminary knowledge about the topic and check if the beginning conditions were on an equal basis. Then groups were taught the simple past tense with the use of a story; the experiment group through digital story version and the control group through printed papers in the traditional sense. Then the group took the same test in the post-test phase to look for a meaningful difference after the different treatments. The results of the pre-test/post-test scheme suggested that both the paper prints and the digital stories enabled the participants to improve their success in reading and comprehension. However, the

post-test comparisons clearly showed that digital stories had a greater effect than the traditional approach. Therefore, digital storytelling could support learners in terms of their reading and comprehension skills in English.

Digital storytelling for teaching speaking

There are a few studies that touch upon the use of digital storytelling for enhancing language skills in general, but the number of researches done on directly the effects of digital storytelling on speaking skill is limited. A study carried out by Yuksel, Robin, and McNeil (2011) aimed at inquiring in what ways students, tutors, and various other people in the world benefited from digital storytelling to boost their teaching and learning. The researchers used an online survey to collect responses from participants of the study and revealed the present uses of digital storytelling for a variety of educational purposes, along with several advantages and difficulties. One of the results of the research is related to language skills, and according to the researchers, seven participants stated that digital storytelling is beneficial in enhancing the learners' foreign language skills. The areas specifically stated within these seven responses comprise the skills of listening and speaking, written and spoken narration, and finally pronunciation, which is also directly related to speaking.

Another research, a case study, done by Soler Pardo (2013) focused on augmenting the participant learners' speaking and writing skills through a collaborative project combining the elements of traditional and digital storytelling, targeting an increase in EFL learners' language learning skills. The participants were 21 students aged 18-35 whose levels varied between B2- and B2+ (in accordance with the CEFR), studying

English Language at the Faculty of Education of the Universitat de València, training to become primary school teachers. The result of the study showed that students were able to lessen their grammatical mistakes in their written and spoken production. However, the learners still insisted on having pronunciation and intonation problems, and digital storytelling seemed to have had no impact on either of the sub skills for speaking.

One action research conducted by Wahyuni and Sarosa (2017) intended to find out if the participant students' digital literacy and speaking skill could be enhanced by digital storytelling implemented in Project-Based Learning. The data necessary for findings were collected from thirty-six learners and a teacher via an interview, a questionnaire, observations, and tests. The results of the research suggested that the process actually contributed to the improvement of the students' speaking skills. Students seemed to have gained an insight towards the grammatical formations, while there was a considerable advance in their lexical knowledge. Besides, they were now more fluent speakers and committed lesser pronunciation errors. Lastly, students appeared to have gained self-confidence in their oral presentation skills. Afrilyasanti and Bashtomi (2011) carried out a study to evaluate the use of digital storytelling in teaching speaking to EFL students. For this case study, five 8th grade students from MTs Surya Buana Indonesia were observed for the changes in their spoken competence as they did presentations. At the end of the research, the collected data revealed that digital storytelling had a number of influences on the students' speaking skill. With the use of digital storytelling, the students gained more-self confidence in asking more questions, being more active, and simultaneously replying to discussions and bringing new points forward. They were

also able to clearly justify their choice of vocabulary, pictures, and music. The researchers stated that digital storytelling could contribute to the competencies of critical thinking, decision making, tackling possible troubles, teamwork, and efficient communication.

In a study aiming to develop autonomy in learners with their oral proficiency, Kim (2014) aimed to find out if ESL learners could gain autonomy in improving their performances in the skill of speaking by the use of online self-study material, online recording devices, and feedback. Five participants of higher intermediate or advanced level were assigned tasks on a weekly basis to record their stories, and the researchers collected both qualitative and quantitative data from these students. The results pointed to the fact that, self-assessment, motivation, and feedback were crucial if learners were to use self-study material to boost their performances in oral production. When the learners self-monitored the process of their learning, their speech became gradually more fluent as they reflected on errors. Active engagement was also triggered with the use of self-evaluation through recording stories, and the online tools used to prepare the stories enhanced the participant students' vocabulary, sentence structure, and pronunciation, which are all elements of the skill of speaking.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the factors that have an impact on the learners' success and failure in speaking skill. Following that, uses of storytelling in the context of teaching English, and some studies to exemplify the case were cited. Finally, researches related to the use digital storytelling to teach English, and especially in terms of the skill of speaking, were presented. The common and similar findings in

all the studies cited above point to the fact that digital storytelling is perceived in a positive way by the learners of EFL as it boosts their motivation and increases their interest in English. What's more, digital storytelling seems to have definite constructive impacts on the speaking performances of learners.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter firstly reveals the research design used to collect data during the eight-week period of the study. What follows is the context of the study which had a great influence in both the choice and the results of the inquiry in the research. Then the participants from whom the data were collected are briefly introduced along with insights regarding sampling. The tools used to collect data are explained in detailed in the instrumentation section. Finally, the method of how the data was collected and how it was analyzed are thoroughly addressed at the end of the chapter.

The aim of the study was to examine if digital storytelling can help learners of English enhance their speaking skills. Therefore, the study sought to find out any possible "effect" of digital stories to be created by students on their spoken production. For the purposes of this type of a study, similar to the ones cited in the literature review section, it was crucial to choose a suitable research method to be able to apply a treatment (which was the use of digital storytelling in this study) and measure its effects on the subjects of the study. However, it was also advisable to analyze the reasons that led to the collected data, which could help understand deeply what type of an impact digital storytelling had on learners.

Research design

The research questions in the study were:

1. How does the use of digital storytelling tasks influence the learners'
   performance in spoken production?

   1.1. Is there a significant difference between the speaking performance of the
   control group and the experiment group?

   1.2. How does digital storytelling affect the learner attitude towards the skill
   of speaking at the end of the intervention?

2. What are the students' attitudes towards digital storytelling as a technique to
   improve their speaking skills?

3. What are the comments of the teachers of the experiment group on the two
   digital storytelling tasks?

The nature of the research questions called for an experimental design in which
digital storytelling was applied as a treatment factor to an experiment group, and
their results were compared to those of a control group who is not exposed to the
treatment. According to Seltman (2015), majority of the findings in the science realm
result from experimental studies, which could be done for confirmatory or
exploratory purposes. In an experimental study, it is of utmost importance to define
and classify variables "which are quantities of interest or which serve as the practical
substitutes for the concepts of interest" (Seltman, 2015, p. 9). In the frame of this
study, the use of digital storytelling is the independent variable and the speaking skill
is the dependent variable, a change about which defined the possible effects of the
treatment. For this study, four different classes were used with the two classes as

experiment groups and two classes as control groups in order to collect data from a larger number of samples.

On the other hand, the design in this study is not a *true experiment* but rather carries the qualities of a *quasi-experimental* research design as there is an experiment group that receives the treatment and a control group that does not, but the groups are not created randomly (Thyer, 2012). According to Thyer (2012), via a quasi-experimental research design, it is possible to answer a question such as: "What is the status of clients who have received a novel treatment compared to those who received the usual treatment or care?" (p. 15). This study is also based on a similar case as the students in the experiment group designed two digital storytelling tasks during an eight-week period while the students in the control group did the usual speaking tasks already present in the school curriculum.

The research questions also inquire the attitude of the participant students (see *Instrumentation* below) and this is a way of *triangulation* for the results of the experiment. Heale and Forbes (2017) define the term as the use of more than one approach to answer a research question or test a hypothesis in order to obtain a higher confidence level. In this sense, the different approaches, and the data collection tools designed accordingly, renders the study rather a mixed-method research, as the students' success in and attitude towards the use of digital storytelling in speaking were assessed in both quantitative and qualitative ways. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) define mixed method in the light of pragmatist paradigm stating that it is a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches in different stages of a study.

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Context

The research was carried out in the school of foreign languages of a state university, the majority of whose departments use 100% or 30% English as the medium of instruction. At the beginning of each academic year, newly-admitted university candidates (mostly aged between 18 and 22) take a proficiency and a placement test. The ones who pass the proficiency test (with a minimum score of 69.50 out of 100) proceed to their departments while the ones failing the proficiency test are put into classrooms in the preparatory school according to their scores from the placement test. The weakest groups start with beginner-level (A1) and by the end of the academic year, they will have completed at least intermediate (B1) right before the proficiency exam in June. The levels in different periods are parallel to the levels in the CEFR, and these are A, A+, B, B+, C, and C+. The school follows a skill-based curriculum and each of the skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking has equal weight (25%) in the grading of the proficiency exam.

An academic year at the school of foreign languages includes two semesters and four periods. Each period is made up of 8 weeks, the last week of which is spared for the final examination. At the beginning of the year, students who are not able to pass the proficiency exam are placed in the correct level according to their scores in the placement test, and they complete one level during each period. To be able to advance to an upper level, they have to score at least 64.50 out of 100, and they can collect their grades from different percentages including a midterm and a final, quizzes on language skills and systems, online assignments, and a portfolio made up of tasks mostly related to speaking and writing. In the period during which the study

was carried out, two of the portfolio tasks in B+ levels were speaking tasks, and these tasks were replaced with two digital storytelling tasks in the experiment group. Turkish learners of English mostly find speaking as the most challenging skill among the others, and the students in the target prep school are no exception. Even if their speaking exam scores are not too low compared to the other skills, they still complain about not being competent enough. As they do not live in an English-speaking country with chances of practice in an authentic environment, they do not know how to study and improve their spoken competency.

Participants

Students in the two experiment and two control groups were not randomly assigned as the classes were ready-made groups at the beginning of the first period. However, *cluster random sampling* was applied (Ross, 2005), and experiment and control group functions were randomly assigned among four different B+ level (upper-intermediate) classrooms for the first eight-week period in the fall semester of 2018-2019 Academic Year Selecting four classrooms instead of two provided a better sample size, increasing the validity of the study while decreasing the chances of error. In total, 124 (*N*=124) students from four classes participated in the study (Table 1). Nearly all of them were Turkish students but there were a few international students who came from different nationalities; mostly from the Arab countries. The students at the school of foreign languages are assigned into classes according to their departments, so the participants in the control and experiment groups were students from 20 different departments of Medicine, International Relations, Political Science and Public Administration, Civil Engineering, Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Energy Systems Engineering, Metallurgy and Materials

Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Economics Business Management, Computer

Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Information and Document Management,

International Trade and Business, Banking and Finance, History, Psychology, Law,

Faculty of Architecture, and finally one student from Graduate School of Natural

Sciences who was doing a postgraduate study, but still had to pass the proficiency

test to advance to the graduate school.

Table 1
Participant students

Group	n	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Control	63	50.8	50.8	50.8
Experiment	61	49.2	49.2	100.0
Total	124	100.0	100.0	
Gender				
Male	60	48.4	48.4	48.4
Female	64	51.6	51.6	100.0
Total	124	100.0	100.0	
Age				
17 – 19	88	71.0	80.0	80.0
20 – 22	12	9.7	10.9	90.9
23 – 25	3	2.4	2.7	93.6
26 – over	7	5.6	6.4	100.0
Total	110	88.7	100.0	

The experiment group had 61 (49.2%) and the control group had 63 (50.8%) students

in total. However, not all students participated in all phases of the data collection

process since they are given an absenteeism excuse of 20% for each period.

Therefore, the students were not informed in advance about the application of data

collection tools, and some students were missing in some parts of the study resulting

in total sample nonparticipation and item nonresponse. While 51.6% of the students

identified themselves as female, the remaining 48.4% were male participants. In the

experiment group, on the other hand, the percentages became 55.7% females and

44.3% males. A great majority of all participants (71%) were between the ages of 17

– 19 while there were also 7 students (5.6%) who were 26 or over. When it comes to

the type of high school they studied before coming to the prep school, 61.3% studied

at a state school while 25.8 percent studied at a private school.

There were also 4 (*n*=4) participant teachers two of whom taught in the experiment

classes, and the other two were teachers in the control classes (Table 2).

Table 2
Participant teachers

Group	Teacher	Age	Educational background	Teaching experience
Control	1	40	Master of Arts	13 years
	2	52	Bachelor's degree	12 years
Experiment	3	30	Bachelor's degree	8 years
	4	33	Bachelor's degree	12 years

All the teachers were 30 years old or over, and the teacher with the least experience

had been teaching English for 8 years. All the teachers had undergraduate degrees

except one who had an MA degree. They were all main teachers (supervisors) in one

of the four participant classes, and they had 21 lesson hours a week with their

students teaching all four skills, grading their portfolios, keeping the track of their

absenteeism, and filling their gradebooks at the end of the eight-week period.

The researcher did not teach in any of the four aforementioned classes, so he was not

an active participant in the data collection process. All the classes had one teacher

who covered all 21 hours a week. At the beginning of the period, the two participant

teachers who taught in experiment groups were informed about the concept of digital

storytelling via a video presentation prepared by the researcher. The same video

presentation was also shown in the experiment classes, and the teachers informed

their classes about digital storytelling. Similarly, both of the digital storytelling tasks

were first explained to the teachers via video presentations, and then they assigned

the tasks to the experiment group students using the same presentations. Comments of these teachers on the quality of the two digital storytelling tasks were also included in the data collected.

Instrumentation

During the seven-week instruction in the first period, the students in the experiment and control groups had two speaking tasks aimed at covering the speaking objectives given in the syllabus of the week. The students in the experiment group carried out these two tasks using the online and offline digital storytelling tools selected in the light of the research questions while the students in the control group did the same tasks in the same way specified in B+ curriculum of the school. To collect data from both groups, a speaking attitude survey, two different task grades, final exam speaking grades, a digital storytelling attitude survey done with the experiment group, an interview with six experiment group students, and a task evaluation sheet were used during different phases of the study.

Speaking attitude survey

Students' attitude towards the language they are learning, which is English in this case, and the skill of speaking greatly affect their performances in spoken production. Under the light of this information, one of the two aims of the first research question (1.2) is to find out whether students in the experiment group adopted a more positive attitude towards speaking after the intervention with digital storytelling tasks, and whether the students in the control group went through the same change in perspective without any treatment. To answer this attitude question, a

Speaking attitude survey (see appendix A) was used in both experiment and control groups twice in different phases of the study.

The survey was made up two main sections, and the first section collected demographic information on gender, age, high school program and school type, the participants' departments, educational states of both parents, and monthly family income. The 19 statements in the attitude section were taken or adapted from the attitude survey used by Abidin, Pour-Mohammadi, and Alzwari (2012), who also adapted partly from the questionnaire by Boonrangsri, Chuaymankhong, Rermyindee, and Vongchittpinyo (2004) and partly from Attitude and Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) originally designed by Gardner (1985). Although the items were originally designed to assess the learner attitude towards language learning in general, they were adapted so that they can test the learner attitude only concerning the skill of speaking, which is the target language learning skill in this study.

The 19 items in the survey were designed in a Likert scale type so as to "measure 'attitude' in a scientifically accepted and validated manner" (Joshi, Kale, Chandel, & Pal, 2015, p. 397). Students were given the five options of strongly disagree, disagree, not sure, agree, and strongly agree to choose for items such as: *6. I feel embarrassed to speak English in front of other students.*

Even though the proficiency level of the participant students (upper-intermediate) was quite enough to understand the items in the survey clearly, each item was designed as simply as possible so as for students to understand every one of them and to decrease item nonresponse. The participant teachers were also informed that they could help the students with puzzling items during the application of the survey in the classroom.

For the experiment group, the pre-test application of the survey before the treatment yielded highly internally consistent results (α= .70). Similarly, post-test survey results rendered a high internal reliability (α= .89). The survey results of the control group students were also put to reliability test. The results of both the pre-test (α= .70) and the post-test (α= .77) yielded significant outcomes in terms of internal reliability.

Digital storytelling tasks and task grades

For the purpose of finding answers to the research questions in this study only, the researcher designed two digital storytelling tasks that does not exist in the school syllabi to address the same speaking objectives as the usual B+ level speaking tasks already present in the syllabus. The students in the control group did these usual tasks while the students in the experiment group worked on the two digital storytelling tasks designed by the researcher.

For the first digital storytelling task, the experiment group students were instructed to create a story of their first days at the school of foreign languages. For this purpose, they were instructed to use the *Storyboard That*[1], a website to create cartoon storyboards. They were assigned to create cartoons of themselves first and present their stories in the classroom with the aid of these cartoons. The researcher recorded a video on how to use the website step by step and another video with a sample presentation in order for the participant teachers and students to be familiar with the layout of the website and the requirements of the digital storytelling task. The control

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[1] https://www.storyboardthat.com

group students, however, did the usual task in the syllabus, which was a group presentation on an advertisement. They were instructed to choose an advertisement, analyze the content in terms of persuasive techniques, and, present their findings in the classroom as a group in a 5-8 minutes talk. They were not necessarily supposed to use any tools such a PowerPoint presentation or printouts. Both tasks were graded out of 20 points, and the scores constituted the first quantitative data for the first research question.

The second digital storytelling task was about jobs, and this time students were required to use their imagination instead of real experiences. The task required them to put themselves in the persona of a famous person with an interesting or unusual job such as a CEO, and astronaut, a chef, etc., and narrate a day when something unusual happened in their life from the point of view of that famous person. The reason behind the use of imagination was the students had no jobs, so they would not be able to narrate their own experiences. For this task, students were instructed to use *Google Images* to search for some visuals of the particular famous person and create a *PowerPoint* presentation with those images, and finally present their digital stories in the classroom using the slides. Again, the researcher prepared a training video on how to find visuals labelled for non-commercial reuse to avoid copy rights violations, and a sample presentation in order for the participant teachers and students to be familiar with the requirements of the digital storytelling task. The control group, doing the usual task in the syllabus, were required to choose an unusual or interesting job and collect information related to that. They did a role-play interview with a partner as if their partners had that job, and they asked related questions. They could either record their voices or act out the interview in the

classroom. The second tasks were also graded out of 20 points similar to the first one, and they were the second set of data to be used for the first research question. Both of the tasks were graded by the ratings of the participant teachers as they evaluated an end product that did not have a specific answer key but a rating scale. Rating scales are a valid kind of scoring, and holistic scoring, which is "the assignment of a single score … on the basis of an overall impression," has the advantage of rapid evaluation, giving the teachers in this research the opportunity to grade the student performances right away in the classroom (Hughes, 2003, p. 95). Therefore, a holistic performance evaluation rubric (see appendix B) was used to achieve reliability in all groups. This was the original rubric designed by the curriculum and testing unit of the institution to evaluate tasks requiring oral performance in B, B+, C, and C+ level groups. At the beginning of each academic year, the rubrics were collectively tested under the supervision of the curriculum and the testing unit to enable intra-rater and inter-rater reliability. The two teachers in the control groups also used the same rubrics to evaluate their students. The task grades appointed by the teachers in both groups were compared and evaluated as a quantitative data unit in this study.

Final exam speaking grades

At the end of the period, students had a final examination, and 25% of the total score of this final exam was appointed for speaking performances. The speaking exam procedure consisted of two sections. In the first part, students were asked two general questions on a particular topic to share their opinions or experiences without any preparation time, and the section lasted for approximately two minutes. In the second part, the students were given a statement to agree or disagree with. This time,

however, they were allocated one minute for preparation, and two minutes to speak and share their opinions in an organized speech.

Two random teachers simultaneously evaluate the speaking performances in two sections separately, and the average of their scores, on the condition of a low discrepancy, is the final speaking grade of students. In a similar way, reliability is maintained through the use of two holistic rubrics for the two sections of the speaking exam (see appendix C). Similarly, this rubric was also put to the collective test of all the teachers in the institution each academic year to achieve intra-rater and inter-rater reliability. The speaking exam grades of both the experiment and control groups were also compared and evaluated as another quantitative data unit. However, as mentioned in the limitations section of the fifth chapter, there are too many variables in the syllabus that have direct impacts on the speaking performances of the students. Therefore, the final speaking grade scores do not have the same validity levels as the speaking task grades for the generalizability of this study to the target population.

Digital storytelling attitude survey

As this was the first time the participant students were exposed to the technique of digital storytelling to learn English, their attitude towards the treatment was as important as the results of it to see the success of the research. To this end, a *Digital Storytelling Attitude Survey* (see appendix D) was used to collect data from the experiment group students. There are 12 items on the survey and all of them were designed by the researcher to see if students believe they were able to develop their speaking skills via digital storytelling tasks; if they found it challenging or not; and

finally if they would like to have similar digital storytelling tasks in the following periods.

The 12 statements in the survey were designed in a Likert scale type, and students were given the five options of strongly disagree, disagree, not sure, agree, and strongly agree to choose for items such as: *7. I believe Digital Storytelling helped me improve my speaking skills.*

The reliability analysis of these 12 items yielded a high internal reliability result (α= .83). All items were prepared as simply as possible so as for students to understand every one of them and to decrease item nonresponse. The participant teachers were informed that they could help the students with puzzling items during the application of the survey in the classroom.

Interview with the experiment group students

To secure the results of the quantitative data obtained via speaking scores, speaking attitude surveys, and digital storytelling attitude surveys, 12 students from the experiment group (6 from one classroom and 6 from the other) were interviewed about their speaking skills and attitude towards digital storytelling. In total, there were 6 open-ended questions all designed by the researcher (see appendix E). The questions intended to assess if students believed they were able to develop their speaking skills; if they were on good terms with technology; if digital storytelling contributed to their speaking and presentation skills; and finally, if they had a positive attitude towards digital storytelling.

Task evaluation sheet

The final data collection tool was a *Task Evaluation Sheet* (see appendix F) designed by the researcher to evaluate the effectiveness of the two digital storytelling tasks particularly created to serve the purpose of this study. The sheet, used to seek answers for the third research question, was made up of two sections. The first section contained 29 criteria regarding the effectiveness of a material for teaching a foreign language. The main titles in the form of a checklist were taken or adapted from Al Jadei (2018) who shared on a blog the end products of a seminar, which were derived from Tomlinson (2013) and McGrath (2013). Checklists are used for various types of inspection and Vainio-Larsson (1990) states that the focus of a checklist is "to obtain a concise and coherent description of the system in terms of objects, attributes, functions, relations between objects as well as between objects and functions, dialogue states, selections and estimated usability" (p. 325). The participant teachers were provided with two scales next to each criterium: "meets the criteria" and "needs further improvement" with a checkbox beneath. The second part of the evaluation sheet contained three open ended questions requiring comments on the strengths of the tasks, comments on the weaknesses of the tasks, and overall student reaction to the tasks. The answers to this written interview were used to support to support the quantitative results of the scales in the first section of the task evaluation sheet.

Data collection process

Since the study is intended to be carried out in the preparatory school of a state university and a number of data collection methods and tools were used in the research process, permission grant by the Ethics Commission of the university and

written consent of the School of Foreign Languages of the institution were obtained. The data collection process was spread over an eight-week duration comprising the entire first period of the first semester from the end of September to the beginning of November in 2018-2019 academic year. As the students were quite new to the preparatory school of English along with the university atmosphere, no data collection tool was applied during the first week of the period. The experiment and control groups were randomly assigned by the researcher, and the teachers in four different classes were informed about the process, and their written consent was obtained before the study began. The digital storytelling tasks used as a treatment in the experiment group conveyed no physical or psychological harm to the participant students or teachers.

In the second week, the students were given speaking attitude surveys to assess their attitude towards the skill of speaking before the treatment. The surveys were filled by both experiment and control group students. The fourth week was when the students met the concept of digital storytelling through the video presentation, and the teachers assigned the first digital storytelling tasks. They were given one week for their preparations, and then they presented what they prepared in the classroom in the fifth week. The teachers evaluated the presentations in the classroom after each student performed (out of 20 points). Following the first stories, the students were assigned their second tasks and given another week for the preparation process. In the seventh week, they performed for the second time and narrated their imaginary stories in the classroom. Again, teachers evaluated the performances after the performance (out of 20 points), and the students got their two oral performance

scores to be added into their total portfolio grades. These scores were also the main quantitative quorum of the study.

At the end of the seventh week, the students in both groups were given the speaking attitude surveys to assess their reactions after the treatment and compare the results with the ones from the first surveys to see any meaningful difference. The experiment group students were also given the digital storytelling attitude survey to see if they found the treatment useful or not and support the qualitative results from the speaking grades. Both the speaking attitude surveys and the digital storytelling attitude surveys first presented the aim of the study making the assurance that learners can withdraw from the study in any moment of the process, and they asked for their written consent for voluntary participation. The items in the surveys contained no statements constituting a discrimination in terms of age, parental status, disability, gender, political belief, race, or religious belief.

The teachers of the experiment groups chose 6 students from each class (12 in total) to be interviewed by the researcher. Each interview lasted approximately 6 minutes, and the conversations were recorded with the oral permission of the interviewees. In the transcripts of the interviews done with students, code names were used instead of real names so as to protect the identity of the participant students.

In the eighth week, the teachers who taught in the experiment groups filled out the task evaluation sheets to share their personal reflections on the success of the digital storytelling tasks and overall student reaction. All the participant students took the final exam of the period, and their grades from the speaking section (25 out of 100).

These scores were also added into the qualitative data collected along with the speaking task scores.

Method of data analysis

The quantitative data obtained by the Likert scale-type survey answers, the two task grades, and the final speaking grades of both groups were analyzed by using IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics version 25, comparing the results in terms of experiment and control groups. As quantitative methodology was applied, different hypotheses were tested to answer the research questions. To answer the first subsidiary question of the first research question (1.1), the hypotheses generated were as follows:

The hypotheses for the first speaking task scores were:

H_0: There is no statistically significant difference between the means of the first task scores of the experiment group and the control group.

H_1: There is a statistically significant difference between the means of the first task scores of the experiment group and the control group.

The hypotheses for the second speaking task scores were:

H_0: There is no statistically significant difference between the means of the second task scores of the experiment group and the control group.

H_1: There is a statistically significant difference between the means of the second task scores of the experiment group and the control group.

The hypotheses for the final speaking exam scores were:

H_0: There is no statistically significant difference between the means of the final speaking exam scores of the experiment group and the control group.

H_1: There is a statistically significant difference between the means of the final speaking exam scores of the experiment group and the control group.

To answer the second subsidiary question of the first research question (1.2), the hypotheses generated were as follows:

The hypotheses for the experiment group were:

H_0: There is no statistically significant mean difference between the pre-test and post-test survey results of the experiment group.

H_1: There is a statistically significant mean difference between the pre-test and post-test survey results of the experiment group.

The hypotheses for the control group were:

H_0: There is no statistically significant mean difference between the pre-test and post-test survey results of the control group.

H_1: There is a statistically significant mean difference between the pre-test and post-test survey results of the control group.

In order to test the hypotheses for the first subsidiary question of the first research question (1.1), independent samples *t*-tests were used with the speaking scores from all three assessments belonging to two different grouping variables (experiment and control groups) and a test variable (speaking scores). The first assumption of normal

distribution of the test variable is not met; however, as the sample size is quite large (N=124), independent samples t-test might still have generated quite accurate p values in cases with violation of normality assumption as this test is robust to non-normality (Green & Salkind, 2005; Lund Research, 2013). Also, students in the experiment and control groups are representative of the population and all the speaking scores assigned for each participant student are independent of each other. Finally, the variances of the normally distributed scores for the first speaking task scores, the second speaking task scores, and the final speaking exam scores are equal with values of p= .426, p= .833, and p= .069 respectively.

In order to test the hypotheses for the second subsidiary question of the first research question (1.2), paired samples t-tests were used for each student's average scale from all the 19 items in the speaking attitude surveys as they were done twice in a repeated-measures design. The assumption of representativeness of the population and independency of the answers were met for both pre-test and post-test surveys, and when calculated, the average of the survey grades for each student was observed to be distributed normally. Besides, descriptive statistics were also reported to show frequencies of the answers and percentages of the attitudes.

To analyze the student answers to digital storytelling attitude survey, descriptive statistics were consulted to compare the frequencies of the answers and percentages of the attitudes. Tiemann (2015) states that descriptive statistics can be viewed "as ways to describe the picture of a population, the distribution" (p. 7). These statistical findings were also evaluated under the light of the qualitative data collected from the students during the oral interviews. Coding was used to group the common answers

that were uttered by more than one student. Some student replies were quoted as evidence to survey results.

Finally, availability rating was applied for the teacher evaluations of two digital storytelling tasks, and they were reported according to the percentage of the criteria met and ones that needed further improvement. Athappily and Galbreath (1986) point to the fact that Boolean and classificatory values could be obtained from checklists, and the most common way to evaluate this type of data is availability rating, with the employment of yes/no (or maybe true/false) Boolean values. Additionally, the teachers' comments on the strengths, weaknesses, and overall student reaction were given by listing of common and diverging themes stated by these teachers in their open-ended answers.

Conclusion

This chapter introduced the research design woven around the research questions, the context of the study, the participant students and teachers, the tools that were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data for the research, the data collection process, the means for analyzing all the data collected, and finally some ethical considerations and how they were addressed by the researcher. The next step is to present the results of data analysis and their implications.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

In this chapter, the main findings of the analysis results for the speaking grades and the surveys assessing attitude towards both the skill of speaking and digital storytelling are presented under the frame of research questions. The findings from the quantitative data are supported with student answers in the interviews. The common themes significant in the interviews with the experiment group students are also briefly mentioned. Finally, the teacher evaluations of and comments on the two digital storytelling tasks are presented in detail.

Major findings

How does the use of digital storytelling tasks influence the learners' performance in spoken production?

This research question was aimed at being answered under the light of two subsidiary questions (question a and question b below) which were intended to address the questions of performance and attitude separately. They were investigated via two different quantitative data sets that were supported by the qualitative information obtained from one-to-one student interviews.

a) Is there a significant difference between the speaking performance of the control group and the experiment group?

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the speaking performance of students who produced digital storytelling tasks and students who did not.

For the first speaking task, a visible mean difference was observed in the scores of students performing with digital storytelling *(M=17.99, SD=2.59)* and the students who performed without digital storytelling (*M*=15.53, *SD*=2.89); the Levene's test revealed that the homogeneity of variances assumption was met, *p*= .426.

Table 3
Levene's and *t*-test for experiment and control groups' scores from the first speaking task

Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
0.637	.426	-4.802	114	.000

In this frame, a two-tailed independent samples *t*-test assuming equal variances showed that there was a statistically significant mean difference between the control and experiment groups; *t* (114) = -4.80, *p*= .000. Therefore, the null hypothesis for the first speaking task is rejected, and digital storytelling helps students perform better in oral production.

The second speaking task also reflected a slight mean difference in the scores of the students who prepared digital storytelling presentations (*M*=18.22, *SD*=1.86) and the students who did not prepare digital storytelling presentations (*M*=17.48, *SD*=1.75).

Table 4
Levene's and *t*-test for experiment and control groups' scores from the second speaking task

Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
0.045	.833	-2.208	114	.029

The assumption of homogeneity of variances was met, *p*= .833, and a two-tailed independent samples *t*-test carried out based on equal variances assumed revealed that there was a statistically significant mean difference between the control and

experiment groups; t (114) = -2.21, p= .029. So, the null hypothesis for also the second speaking task is rejected, and digital storytelling contributes to the oral competency of the participant students.

Student perceptions in the interview support the statistical result with sufficient confirmations. In the interview, the first question asked these students if and to what degree they were able to improve their speaking skills in the 7-week instruction in the first period. All the students replied positively stressing their speaking abilities improved a lot. Then they were asked if the two digital storytelling tasks helped them improve their speaking skills and if yes, in what sense. All of them gave affirmative answers to this question similar to the first one. One of the students, Kadir, explains that the preparation process helped him improve his speaking as follows:

> Err, when we are having a speaking task, normally, not a storytelling, we have to think about the topic, and we have to tell something, but the both, when they are together, speaking and thinking, it's really difficult. But when we prepare before the telling, like this, err, those parts are separating, and we have time for telling our story at the classroom. And we don't make panic, and this help me to improve my speaking skills.

Kemal, another student, stated that the opportunity to improvise was what helped him develop his speaking skill, believing especially the first task to be more productive. Besides, the interaction with the teacher and peers during the presentation was a kind of lever for improvement for him.

> **…** because I mostly improvise, so it was very efficient work for me. And the other one is half remember - I did my work for the presentation. I prepared, you know, the (an unintelligible word) myself, most importantly when I present my work, at the same time students and the teacher asked me some questions on this work, I think most important improvement of the work for my speaking.

Sinem, on the other hand, confessed that she was more hesitant to speak before the digital storytelling tasks due to anxiety issues. However, she said in the interview that she felt stronger to speak:

> So much, because, err, if you don't start talking, you will never, you can never speak. Before these tasks, I had never speak before, and I was so nervous when I was doing these tasks. But when I finished these, I felt more powerful and strong. It was good, I think.

The analysis of the speaking final scores with an independent samples *t*-test resulted in a reverse mean difference which was in favor of the control group which was not exposed to digital storytelling (*M*=20.85, *SD*=2.91) compared to the experiment group which was taught digital storytelling (*M*=19.72, *SD*=3.86).

Table 5
Levene's and *t*-test for experiment and control groups' scores from the final speaking exam

Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
0.045	.069	1.779	115	078

Levene's test revealed that the homogeneity of variances assumption was met, *p*= .069, and so, a two-tailed independent samples *t*-test assuming equal variances showed that there was no statistically significant mean difference between the control and experiment groups; *t* (115) = 1.78, *p*= .078. Consequently, the null hypothesis for the speaking final scores cannot be rejected, and digital storytelling does not create any significant difference in the students' performance in the final exam oral production.

b) How does digital storytelling affect the learner attitude towards the skill of speaking at the end of the intervention?

The speaking attitude survey consisted of 19 items in total. For the experiment group, there was a significant change in the means of pre-test averages (*M*= 2.7, *SD*= 0.44) and the post-test averages (*M*= 3.03, *SD*= 0.72) when the paired samples statistics (Table 6) were thoroughly inspected.

Table 6
Experiment group students' paired samples *t*-test results for speaking attitude survey

	Paired Samples Statistics				Paired Differences			
Test	Mean	n	Std. Dev.		Mean	Std. Dev.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test	2.71	55	0.44		-0.33	0.79	-3.086	54	.003
Post-test	3.03	55	0.72						

To analyze further, a paired samples *t*-test was conducted and a statistically significant mean difference was observed between the experiment group students' pre-test and post-test average scales.

According to the paired samples *t*-test results, the null hypothesis predicting no statistically significant mean difference between the pre-test and post-test survey results of the experiment group is rejected, and the treatment could have helped the students have a more positive attitude towards the skill of speaking, *t*(54) = -3.086, *p* = .003.

In the interviews, the students made some expressions that pointed to this change in the attitude. Anxiety was a recurring theme within the speaking attitude survey, and the items 1, 5, 6, 13, and 19 (see appendix A) were related to the negative feelings of worry, embarrassment, anxiety, and. In the interview, Sinem shared how digital storytelling helped her overcome her feeling similar to a kind of stage fear:

> Erm, I think before this, I had never present something. And you, I don't know, my English isn't enough for this question, I think. … because when you go to stage, when I go to stage, my hands were shaking. After that help, teacher helps me, and there were my friends, and it helped to beat that feeling.

The participant learners could also have improved their attitude towards speaking by improving their social relations in the classroom. The items 2 and 3 were about the social aspect of their attitude, and through digital storytelling, they might have better relationship with their peers. What Umut said in the interview actually complements this inference with concrete wording that emphasizes socializing and peer support: "It is beneficial. Before the speaking tasks, I have not self-confidence, but now, I am more social, and everybody support me. I am better than before."

A group of items, which are 7, 10, 11, 14, 15, and 17, were inquiring the students' self-confidence levels in speaking activities or lessons before and after the treatment. Some student answers from the interview suggest that digital storytelling might have had a constructive impact on their self-confidence during their performance in speaking activities. In the interviews, Kadir said: "Err, maybe pronunciation, and I don't know. Maybe self-confidence. I believe in myself more." Umut verified what Kadir said by quoting: "Yes. Speaking tasks are really help me. Now, I can speak more confident, and I have a self-confidence. It is beneficial for students … before the speaking tasks, I have not self-confidence, but now …" Finally, Kemal remarked:

> Err, I think with the presentations, of course we developed some speaking skills, but mostly I developed my self-confidence, and err, you know, some skills about talking in front of the people. Err, it's useful but sometimes I thought that we can use more efficient works for improve.

The remaining items of 4, 8, 9, 12, 16, and 18 could be grouped under the keyword of learner satisfaction. Digital storytelling might have uplifted their motivation to

speak in English more, switched their viewpoints regarding to what degree they were content with various components of the skill such as difficulty of the tasks, making mistakes, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. One of the interviewees, Lara, quoted: "… after these assignments, I, err, tried lots of times at home, and, err, I made lots of mistakes, but I learnt my mistakes, and I tried to not do them again." Merve also supported Lara's remarks by saying:

> When you start to speak, you can speak more, and it's important because it can develop your grammar and speaking, and how you pronounce that word, because the teacher is like this is like that, this like, and you will learn from your mistakes. That's a good thing.

The pre-test and post-test result of the control group were also analyzed via paired samples *t*-tests. However, when the paired samples statistics (Table 8) of pre-test averages (M= 2.99 SD= 0.56) and the post-test averages (M= 2.97, SD= 0.47) were examined, it was possible to observe a slight decrease in the mean of the post-test results.

Table 7
Control group students' paired samples *t*-test results for speaking attitude survey

	Paired Samples Statistics			Paired Differences				
Test	Mean	n	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test	2.99	53	0.56	0.02	0.55	-.248	52	.805
Post-test	2.97	53	0.47					

To analyze further, a paired sample *t*-test was conducted and no statistically significant mean difference was observed between the control group students' pre-test and post-test average scales, *t*(52) = .248, *p* = .805. Therefore, the null hypothesis predicting no statistically significant mean difference between the pre-test and post-test survey results of the control group could not be rejected, and there was

no statistically measurable change in the control group students' attitude towards the skill of speaking.

What are the students' attitudes towards digital storytelling as a technique to improve their speaking skills?

The students in the experiment group answered 12 items in total in the digital storytelling attitude survey (see appendix D) assessing their attitude towards digital storytelling as a means of developing their speaking abilities.

Table 8
Frequencies of the experiment group answers for digital storytelling attitude survey

Item	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	1	1.8	5	8.9	4	7.1	33	58.9	13	23.2
2	0	0	4	7.1	15	26.8	26	46.4	11	19.6
3	3	5.4	8	14.3	6	10.7	21	37.5	18	32.1
4	0	0	3	5.4	17	30.4	27	48.2	9	16.1
5	1	1.8	5	8.9	27	48.2	14	25	9	16.1
6	1	1.8	3	5.6	11	19.6	28	50	13	23.2
7	0	0	2	3.6	5	8.9	27	48.2	22	39.3
8	1	1.8	1	1.8	4	7.1	28	50	22	39.3
9	0	0	3	5.4	12	21.4	21	37.5	20	35.7
10	3	5.4	6	10.7	16	28.6	21	37.5	10	17.9
11	21	37.5	28	50	3	5.4	3	5.4	1	1.8
12	23	41.1	29	51.8	3	5.4	1	1.8	0	0

In total, the students seemed to have a positive perspective towards the digital storytelling tasks. They mostly tended to choose the scales of "Agree" and "Strongly disagree" for the 10 normal items and "Disagree" and "Strongly disagree" for the 2 reversed items (Table 8).

Table 9

Experiment group descriptive statistics for digital storytelling attitude survey

Item	n Valid	n Missing	Mean	Std. Error of Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	Min.*	Max.*
1	56	5	3.93	0.12	4.00	0.91	1.00	5.00
2	56	5	3.79	0.11	4.00	0.85	2.00	5.00
3	56	5	3.77	0.16	4.00	1.21	1.00	5.00
4	56	5	3.75	0.11	4.00	0.79	2.00	5.00
5	56	5	3.45	0.12	3.00	0.93	1.00	5.00
6	56	5	3.87	0.12	4.00	0.89	1.00	5.00
7	56	5	4.23	0.10	4.00	0.76	2.00	5.00
8	56	5	4.23	0.11	4.00	0.81	1.00	5.00
9	56	5	4.03	0.12	4.00	0.89	2.00	5.00
10	56	5	3.52	0.14	4.00	1.08	1.00	5.00
11	56	5	1.84	0.12	2.00	0.89	1.00	5.00
12	56	5	1.68	0.09	2.00	0.66	1.00	4.00

Note *= Scales: 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Not sure, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

Nearly two thirds of the students (69.6%) stated it was the first time they were learning speaking via digital storytelling. Cem confirmed this by saying: **"Yes, it could improve my skills because I spoke in front of class and it's the first time for me, and I think it was good,"** and Kadir remarked: "Err, in high school, we didn't have something like that. I know using some programs, but it was not about the school. This is my first experience, err, but it was good. It was funny."

When the items are evaluated separately, it can be observed that 58.9% of the students agreed that they liked reading and listening to stories in English (M=3.93, SD= 0.91). Another 46.4% agreed that writing or telling stories in English were enjoyable (M=3.79, SD= 0.85). Approximately half of them (48.2%) agreed that it was enjoyable to prepare Digital Storytelling tasks (M=3.75, SD= 0.79), and Kadir's remarkable quote supports this finding as follows:

> Err because as I told you before, it was funny, and it helped me to improve my English more. And I like to tell my story to people. Err, when we make presentation, maybe we can tell something like graphics, or datas, err, but in

this task, we told about our story, and it make me believe in myself that I can tell to other people about my story.

Most of them stated Digital Storytelling helped them improve their speaking skills, with 48.2% agreeing and 39.3 totally agreeing (*M*=4.23 *SD*= 0.76). In the interviews, five of the students stated they were able to improve their pronunciation while three thought their vocabulary skills developed and two students developed their grammar skills. According to three students, they were more self-confident while speaking in English, and one student stated she learnt to think in English more in this process. This is how Kadir explains his advance in vocabulary:

> Err, vocabulary, especially vocabulary because when we want to tell a story, we have to make a research about the words that we can use in our story. But in other speaking exams, we don't use dictionary, and when we don't know the word that we want to put it in our story, we can't use dictionary, and I can't learn new words, but when we prepare a story to tell like this, we have a chance to search new words, and learn it.

Kemal mentions that vocabulary and pronunciation were the areas that advanced most through digital storytelling:

> I think they affect mostly my vocabulary and pronunciation because I need to speak right in front of the people, so I need a good, at least enough pronunciation for people. And, err, another vocabulary, another words for explain myself more correctly.

Sinem was able to develop her spoken grammar with the help of the digital storytelling tasks:

> I think it affect our grammar because if you present something, you should use true words and use, you should speak, I don't know how to say, you should use correct sentences. So you be careful, you have to be careful. So, it improve our …

An exact half of the experiment group agreed Digital Storytelling helped them overcome their speaking anxiety (*M*=3.87, *SD*= 0.89). another half of the students (48.2%) also agreed that they felt relaxed while presenting Digital Storytelling tasks (*M*=3.45, *SD*= 0.93). Half of the participant students (50.0%) agreed and a great number of them (39.3) totally agreed that Digital Storytelling helped them improve their presentation skills (*M*= 4.23, *SD*= 0.81).

The interview question "Do you think Digital Storytelling tasks affected your presentation skills?" was answered by various students, and Kemal quoted: "Of course! It's most efficient work I have done so far. Err, that's best way for presentation skills. That's why I am talking right now, so, how can I say, clearly." Similarly, Eda said: "Yes, because I, err, I'm in front of my friends, and I talked very comfortably, yes," and Lara stated: "Yes, err, because it's a kind of speaking exercise, I think. Err, and I am at classroom, err, I know all of people, so I am relax." With a similar attitude, Naz remarked: "Mm, I am very excited person. When I show my presentation, I'm very excited, so I try to beat my feelings, yes," and Merve commented: "Of course it do. Every time you try to present something, it helps you because it will be from your experience. That's a good thing." Lastly, Emre specified: "Because I'm listening, and maybe the teacher ask me question about these stories, and I'm telling about it, and it improve my two skills, listening and speaking."

Two students also stated that they could benefit from skills gained through digital storytelling in their departmental studies, and even in their future careers. Kadir, a

law student, believes that he could use these presentation skills as a lawyer in the future:

> … I'm going to be a lawyer, and lawyers not only defend their clients at the court, err, they might have clients like companies, and they have to show something to their clients, and I can use my presentation skills at my job like this.

Most of them also enjoyed listening to their classmates' Digital Stories, with 37.5% agreeing and another 35.7% totally agreeing (*M*=4.03, *SD*=0.89). More than one third of the students (37.5%) agreed that they would like to prepare more Digital Storytelling tasks in the next level (*M*=3.52 *SD*=1.08). Finally, only 1.8% of the students stated Digital Storytelling did not help them much improve their speaking skills (*M*=1.68, *SD*= 0.66).

What are the comments of the teachers of the experiment group on the two digital storytelling tasks?

The first task seemed to have left quite a positive impression on both teachers in the experiment classes. One of the teachers thought that the task met all the criteria (success rate: 100%) in the task evaluation sheet (see appendix F) while the other found it lacking in terms of four criteria (success rate: 86.21%) on the sheet which are placing an emphasis on review, focusing on learning outcomes, perception by learners as relevant and useful, and finally, presenting a variety of styles and genres of language. Therefore, the average success rate of the first task is 93.11%. In the comments sections, some expressions by both teachers that can be grouped as positive are going beyond the traditional ways of language learning, the freedom of expression, and the colorfulness of the visuals. One of the teachers put all these qualities into a sentence as follows:

> Use of visuals and easy-to-use tool raised the students' interest in the task, made it easy for them to express their emotions and individuality, and rendered the task colorful. Visuals produced by the students were very expressive, relevant, modern, and in context.

The weaknesses of this task perceived by the teachers were minor and related to the students themselves and the tools used to create the tasks. Three significant qualities that can be labeled negative are present as well. For some students, the task seemed like a competition, and they aimed perfection, which made the preparation process a bit challenging. Also, for students who were not as good at using their imagination and creativity as some of their friends had difficulty in preparing their digital stories. Finally, the limited features of the web application that could be activated only in premium accounts was an obstruction for the participant students. One of the teachers commented: "Some students felt that they have to complete the task in a serious way and haven't used a lot of their imagination and/or lack creative imagination," and the other remarked: "The system only allowed cartoons to be produced once for free."

According to the observations and impressions of the teachers, the participant students also enjoyed the first task. Both teachers mentioned that the task was effective because it allowed students to use their imagination, creativity, and self-expression to the fullest, three labels which also point to the positive outcomes of the task. One of the teachers commented as follows:

> They loved the task. Each student displayed his/her individuality and unique point of view by coming up with original drawings and perceptions of their first day at school. Some students manipulated the contents of the task by high jacking it to a different topic, motivated by their enthusiasm for self-expression and storytelling. Students loved the tool to produce their own visuals, and even shyer students performed amazingly well.

The second task, however, did not seem to have been as successful as the first one according to the evaluation by the teachers. One of the teachers judged that the second task was unable to meet seven of the criteria (success rate: 75,86%) on the evaluation sheet. These were encouraging students' collaboration, consistency in difficulty level, placing an emphasis on review, focusing on learning outcomes, perception by learners as relevant and useful, taking learners' needs into account, and presenting a variety of styles and genres of language. The other teacher was also not sure that the second task met eleven of the key criteria (success rate: 62,07%) on the evaluation sheet which were providing a stimulus to learning, helping learners to develop confidence, encouraging students' collaboration, consistency in difficulty level, encouraging learners' autonomy, placing an emphasis on review, perception by learners as relevant and useful, allowing experienced teachers to go beyond the lesson, exposing the learners to language in authentic use, presents a variety of styles and genres of language, and lastly, integration of skills work. Consequently, the average success rate of the second task is 68,97%. Three positive labels used by the teachers in the comments section were autonomy, independence, and creativity. Both teachers implied that the task gave students a great deal of credit in terms of autonomy and independent learning. They used their creativity and could shape the content of the task accordingly. One teacher stated: "Another strength is that is requires students to do research and by doing that they can realize that there is a lot they can do by themselves in order to improve and work on their language skills." The other teacher said: "The task allowed the use of creativity and exploration of choices in shaping the response."

The task also had a weakness that evoked in students a feature that is a disadvantage in terms of creativity, which is memorization. The required the students to imagine themselves as a celebrity and tell their stories form the point of view of that celebrity. However, according to what the teachers reported, some of the students just downloaded ready-made biographies or autobiographies of these celebrities and presented them as their own work. One of the teachers made a key comment on how the task was misemployed by the Turkish students due to one of their characteristics of rote memorization:

> It gave the students the opportunity to rely on memorization and standard formats, which killed their creativity. This is not so much due to the task itself, which could have been exploited in a creative way, but the Turkish students' habit of rendering a task mechanically, if possible, to play it safe.

Finally, one of the teachers thought overall student reaction was positive towards this one just like the first task. However, the other teacher believed they were not as successful in this task as they were in the first task due to readily-downloaded information and memorization:

> The students were not as creative and enthusiastic in responding to this task, as they were in executing Task 1. Students mainly memorized an autobiography downloaded from the internet and did not become creative in content or structure. That's because they perceived the task as factual and easy to manipulate to their advantage.

Conclusion

This chapter listed the results of the quantitative data gathered to answer the research questions in the study. The comparisons of the two digital storytelling task scores and final speaking scores were given by the use of independent samples t-tests. The results of pre-test speaking attitude surveys and post-test results were compared via paired samples t-tests, and the descriptive statistics regarding the results of the digital

storytelling attitude surveys were given. The answers of selected students to the interview questions were briefly presented, and the teacher comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the tasks were reflected. The major findings are discussed in detail in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

Speaking is one of the most neglected areas of English language teaching field, and learners usually tend to have a negative attitude towards this skill, which hinders their oral performances. The quasi-experimental study presented in the scope of this study targeted at answering the research questions laid out in chapter one, built to find out if digital storytelling could promote learners' success in oral production and change their negative attitude towards the skill of speaking into a positive and constructive one.

The student attitude towards digital storytelling tasks was also examined during the study to view if the treatment had any possible impact on the participant students as a way of practicing their speaking skills. Finally, the teachers of the experiment groups shared their reflections on the conduct of the digital storytelling tasks and evaluated them as language learning material.

Overview of the study

The research was carried out with the English preparatory school students of a Turkish state university in an eight-month period in 2018-2019 academic year from the end of September to the beginning of November. Four upper intermediate level classrooms were chosen for the study, and two of the classes were treated as the experimental group while the other two were the control group. The experiment classes prepared two digital storytelling tasks using online and offline software whereas the control group stack to the usual speaking tasks in the curriculum. The

speaking scores of both groups were compared and their attitudes towards speaking skill were measured through the pre-test and post-test attitude surveys. The experiment group's perspective towards the treatment was also studied via another attitude survey. The teachers in the experiment group evaluated the tasks as material and shared their written reflections on the process. The quantitative data collected was processed by using IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics version 25 for independent sample t-tests, paired sample t-tests, and descriptive statistics.

Major findings

Improvement in speaking skill

The first subsidiary question (1.1) of the first research question was answered by the evaluation of two speaking task performances and the speaking section of the final examination. Students at the same level had been allocated to their classes randomly by the computer at the institution, so at the beginning, all four groups had students with random and mixed proficiencies in English. This was important in terms of a case such as a strong experiment group versus a weak control group which would negatively affect the reliability of the scores.

When the statistical results obtained from the analysis of scores in SPSS were taken into consideration, it could be seen that digital storytelling seemed to contribute to the participant student's oral production as there were significant mean differences in the two speaking task scores of the experiment and the control groups. All four teachers evaluated their student's performances in the speaking tasks according to the criteria in the rubric (see appendix B), and the results suggested that the students in

the experiment group might have performed significantly better than the students in the control group. The findings at this point are totally parallel to the ones reached by Wahyuni and Sarosa (2017) in their action research aiming to see whether students could have better digital literacy and speaking skills via digital stories in a Project-Based Learning scheme. The research found out that digital storytelling helped students become better speakers of English with more fluency and less grammatical errors. Other studies (Afrilyasanti & Bashtomi, 2011; Kim, 2014) also supported the idea that digital storytelling contributed to the oral proficiency of EFL learners through active participation.

On the other hand, there was no significant mean difference in the speaking scores of the control and the experiment groups in the final examination and what is more, the control group had a higher mean than the experiment group had, though not statistically significant. At this point, it is crucial to mention the fact that digital storytelling was the only controlled variable in the research design, and apart from that, all four teachers were free to follow the period syllabus in whatever methodology and with whatever material they wanted. Therefore, even if the students in the control group did not do well in the speaking tasks, they might have prepared for the final speaking exam with a more effective strategy with more relevant material than the students in the experiment group had.

Furthermore, Brown (1988) mentions four main types of extraneous variables that could negatively impact the interpretation of statistical results in a research related to language learning: environment issues, grouping issues, people issues, and measurement issues. Especially the latter two might have had an effect on this

particular study. People issues is related to the Hawthorne effect, which happens when participants of a study are aware of the fact they are observed, and halo effect, which is when a research subject tends to do well to affect the result of the study. As the experiment group students in this research knew they were included in a study related to digital storytelling, they may have been under pressure to do well knowing they are observed closely. A measurement issue is also highly possible as the design of the digital storytelling tasks and content of the final speaking examinations, and the rubrics used to evaluate these performances were different from each other.

Change in the attitude towards speaking skill

This second subsidiary question (1.2) was examined by the speaking attitude survey (see appendix A) which was applied in a pre-test/post-test order. The students both in the experiment and control groups were given the survey at the beginning of the period to see their initial attitudes towards the skill. After the treatment was applied in the experiment group, the same survey was given to the students at the end of the period to look for a possible change in the attitude.

The statistical analysis presented in chapter four revealed that for the students in the experiment group tended to have a statistically significant change in their attitudes, and the student replies in the interviews suggested that this change was in the positive direction. For example, eight of the 12 students mentioned increased self-confidence in the interviews. They stated that they felt more confident in speaking in English during classes and felt less nervous during speaking tasks and exams. As Kubo (2009) states in his research, learner failure in speaking is related to lack of fluency and self-confidence, which stems from the fact that they do not have enough

speaking practices outside the classroom. As students in this study found a novel way of practicing their speaking skills, this might have had a booking effect on their self-confidence, which in return might have contributed to their proficiency in speaking as proved by the qualitative data.

It was obvious from the interview results that the experiment group students felt more satisfied with their performance in speaking activities, and they preferred speaking in their mother tongue less rather than English with their classmates. Interestingly, they also believed that after the treatment, they had better relationships with friends through speaking. In their study, Shufen, Eslami and Sophia Hu (2010) affirm that peer support is a crucial element of language learning due the fact that the school time keeping them together is never a negligible amount, and learners may deal with the same hardships as their peers do. Along with social support, peers can provide support in terms of learning such as peer feedback, peer correction, and various other peer-based strategies for learning a language. What makes peer support a great contribution to learning and development is the equal social grounds occupied by the students (Cauce, Felner, & Primavera, 1982; Hartup, 1989; Wentzel, 1994).

Learner attitude towards digital storytelling

The statistical results of the digital storytelling attitude survey revealed that the learners had a positive view towards the treatment as a way of enhancing their speaking skills. Just as in the action research conducted by Wahyuni and Sarosa (2017) pointing to the fact that students appeared to have gained self-confidence in their oral presentation skills, participant students in this study believed digital storytelling helped them improve their presentation skills along with increasing their

self-confidence. The fourth questions asked if they saw themselves as good oral presenters, and if digital storytelling helped them improve their presentation skills. All 12 students confirmed that they were better presenters after the digital storytelling tasks. Digital storytelling was a way of more speaking practice for students, and since they did presentations in front of their peers, they believe they gained self-confidence. Besides, it was a kind of experience they did not have in the high school, so some of the students did classroom presentation for the first time in their education life in this period. To improve their oral production skills, learners need to participate in spoken activities and create chances for themselves to apply what they have learnt in academically and social real environments (Williams & Roberts, 2011). Studies done to analyze the relationship between presentation and language learning point to the fact that presentation has an impact on the way learners think, and Živković (2014) emphasizes that "the quality of presentation actually improves the quality of thought, and vice versa" (p. 469). What is more, they can also develop their skills in communicating and presenting through watching their peers perform and analyzing their performances in terms of strengths and weaknesses (Girard & Trapp2011).

Brooks and Wilson (2014) list the fundamental advantages of oral presentations in classroom practices as student-centeredness, requirement for the use of all four skills, provision of realistic language tasks, bearing value outside the classroom, and enhancement of learner motivation. In terms of these benefits, digital storytelling tasks in this study were bearing resemblance to oral presentations; and as the major findings indicate, they were great practices for students to improve their presentation skills. Especially the last benefit, enhancement of learner motivation, proves to be

particularly significant in this study as the students had a more positive attitude towards the skill of speaking after being introduced to digital storytelling, they embraced the speaking activities in the classroom more due to the increase in their motivation for speaking.

Digital storytelling as classroom material

Lastly, the major findings of the study reveal that the two teachers in the experiment groups found the digital storytelling tasks as successful language teaching materials. Considering the participant students are digital natives of the twenty-first century, it is a natural strategy to integrate technology into the classroom environment. Teachers can benefit from various aspects of technology in different phases of their lesson plans, and digital storytelling is only one of those tools than can be wielded. According to Tomlinson (2009) and Genç Ilter (2015), the main strengths of computer and technology-based activities are that they supply learners with fast input and proper learning material. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011), added to that, draw attention to the fact technology is vast and ideal channel through which teachers can easily take authentic material into the classroom and further increase learner interest and motivation.

Robin (2016) discusses that digital storytelling addresses certain learner characteristics successfully, and it provides a great opportunity to support these characteristics. Learning through inductive discovery is one of these characteristics, and digital storytelling is a technique that strengthens this feature as it is a kind of hands-on activity providing learners with experiment. This is greatly important for creating autonomous language learners who "understand what is being taught and the

purpose of pedagogical choices; formulate their own learning objectives; select and make use of appropriate learning strategies; monitor their use of these strategies; self-assess, or monitor their own learning (Dickinson, 1993, pp. 330-31)." The study done by Kim (2014) aimed to investigate the possible effects of digital storytelling on helping learners gain autonomy for oral proficiency. Five ESL participants recorded, practiced, and listened their own digital stories outside the school once a week, and they received online feedback from their teacher. The analysis of the results showed that there was a significant development in the participants' vocabulary, pronunciation, and sentence complexity while there was no improvement in grammar and discourse. The students were also content with the technique as they could assess their own performances. One student commented "autonomous learning was very flexible and convenient since she could record her speaking many times as well as monitor it, thus helping to improve her speaking" (Kim, 2014, p. 26).

The teachers in the experiment group both commented that the first task was more successful than the second one, which could have stem from the fact that the students narrated their own real stories in the first task while they had to act like someone else and make up an interesting story. However, another reason for this unequal success rate could be novelty effect, which Kock, von Luck, Schwarzer, and Draheim (2018) describe as "an increased motivation to use something, or an increase in the perceived usability of something, on account of its newness" (p. 3). Also, Clark and Sugrue (1988) argue that better performances could be delivered when students are more attentive, but when the students are acquainted with the new construct, the performance could deteriorate.

Within this frame, it is possible to conclude that the participant students performed well in the first task as it was the first time the encountered the technique of digital storytelling, and this new approach provided them with a novel and unique way to express themselves. However, when they were assigned the second task, they knew they were supposed to carry out the same procedure, so they felt more self-confident that they would perform well as they did before, and they did not put as much effort as they did during the first task.

Implications for practice

This study was carried out with the knowledge that all participant students had access to computers and the internet as they were required to use online and offline software to prepare their digital storytelling tasks. However, it should be one of the main concerns if this research design is to be replicated. The state school where the study was conducted has an independent learning center where learners can use computers with internet connection against their student identity cards for their various study purposes. Therefore, they had no trouble in preparing their digital stories even if they did not have personal computers at home or in their dormitories. The second question in the oral interview was about their relationships with technology, and they all confirmed that they had a good relationship with technology and benefited from it in their English learning process via different type of strategies such as watching television series and movies in English, using online dictionaries on their personal computers and mobile phones, or talking to people from all around the world via their social networking website accounts. Teachers and researchers might make sure that students have access to all necessary technologies, and most importantly, they are all digital natives.

The preparation process for the two digital stories included the making of the story, watching the instructions on how to use the tools and then produce their own original work, doing enough practice for the classroom presentation, and finally presenting the story in the classroom. For the study itself, this organized preparation process is not a big issue, but student with a very busy workload might find the process challenging. The participant students in this research normally prepare an extensive and meticulous portfolio with their written and oral performances. Therefore, the workload created by preparing digital stories might have constituted another variable that affected the result of the study. One of the questions in the oral interview asked the students if they had any difficulty in preparing the digital storytelling tasks, and which phase of the preparation especially challenged them. All the students stated that it was not really difficult to prepare the tasks, but they experienced minor challenges in some phases. One student complained about the money aspect as some of the online and offline tools required paid premium accounts to benefit from all the features. Another participant stressed that he had found it difficult in terms of pronunciation. For one of the students, it was a challenge to find new and original ideas and find related pictures on the internet. Finally, one of them said she spent quite a lot of time and effort to prepare the slides. For these reasons, students' study workload could be taken into consideration while assigning digital storytelling tasks.

Similar to that, presenting the tasks in the classroom, especially the second one which required students to ask questions after their peers are done presenting their stories, occupies a considerable amount of the instruction time in the classroom. As stated in the research limitations section, the syllabus of the eight-week period is already busy with many objectives to be completed, and achieving these objectives is

crucial for the content validity of assessment. Still, the final interview question aimed at finding out if the participant students wanted to have digital storytelling tasks again in the following periods. Eleven students replied to this question affirmatively, but only one of the students was not sure about if she wanted or not as she would like to focus more on grammar studies in the coming level. Besides, the participant teachers in the experiment group made no complaints about digital stories trespassing on their instruction time and making it difficult for them to cover the period objectives. However, along with considering students' workload, busy content of curricula and tight syllabi need to be taken into account when using digital stories as language learning materials.

The digital nativity of the participant teachers is another factor that could contribute to the effectiveness of the use of digital storytelling as technique to teach English. In the scope this design, the researcher provided both the teachers and the students with guiding videos on the description of digital storytelling and the use of the necessary software with detailed instructions. However, the students could still need the support and guidance of the teachers on immediate matters, and some studies done in Turkey revealed that teachers experience some minor and major problems with technology (Atasoy & Özdemir, 2009; Şad & Özhan, 2012; Somyürek, Gursul, & Tozmaz, 2010). This study shows that the digital literacy of the teachers is also of utmost importance to get the maximum benefit from digital storytelling in the language learning classroom.

Similar to other studies (Dinçer & Yeşilyurt, 2013; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Woodrow, 2006), this study revealed that anxiety was a major block for students that

hindered their oral proficiency in classroom practices and oral assessments. However, digital storytelling proved to be useful in helping students overcome negative feelings such as anxiety, worry, and embarrassment helping them to perform to their fullest. For teachers who think that students in their classes are experiencing difficulties in their speaking skills stemming from anxiety-related issues, digital storytelling might be a useful tool to support their students in terms of overcoming speaking anxiety and boosting self-confidence.

Implications for further research

Researchers aiming to design a similar research on the effects of digital storytelling on speaking should definitely handle the limitations hindering the results of this study. Instead ready-made classes, the researchers should allocate the roles of experiment and control groups arbitrarily so as to ensure randomization. Also, similar studies could be carried out within a teaching setting where all the aspects of the syllabus are controlled so that the exact impact of digital storytelling can be observed. This way, some extraneous variables such as the measurement issues could be diminished, and more valid results could be obtained.

Increase in learner self-confidence in oral production was a significant finding in this study. It is obvious that learners believe they speak better when they feel confident, and the significant increase in task grades prove this learner belief. Tok (2009) points to the fact that lack of self-confidence is a big factor that hinders Turkish learners' performance in English speaking skill. In the light of this major finding, it would be advisable for further inquiries to design a research scheme so as to find out of there are any correlations between digital storytelling and language learners' self

confidence levels. In returns, any relevant findings might encourage more researchers to look for a possible causation stemming from a possible causation. This research tried to assess the quality of digital storytelling as language learning material. However, data was collected from only two teachers, the quantitative data was only in the form of a scale with two options. Therefore, further research that may aim to evaluate digital storytelling tasks from a similar point of view may collect more quantitative data from a larger number of samples of English teachers with different amounts of experience and from various contexts of teaching.

The results of this research show that students had a more positive attitude towards the skill of speaking after being introduced to digital storytelling. Some other studies encompassing the use of technology in learning also emphasize the change of attitude in learners (Abaylı, 2001; Kırkgöz, 2011; Shenton & Pagett, 2007). Taking this into consideration, possible future studies could investigate whether digital storytelling has an impact to change language learners' attitudes towards other skills of listening, reading, and writing and the systems of grammar, vocabulary, and phonology as well.

This particular study was carried out with the participation of university prep school students mostly aged between 17 and 19 and whose proficiency levels were upper-intermediate. Age and level are two important variables that can yield different results in different profiles. This research revealed that digital storytelling is a successful technique to teach English to upper-intermediate young adults/late adolescents. Replicate studies can further inquire if the case depends on the age and

level of the participants, and if particular age and level groups have different tendencies.

One of the major findings of the study was students believed they were able to improve their presentation skills with the help of digital storytelling, which is also a positive development in terms of their spoken proficiency in English. Therefore, further research could be carried out to see the exact contributions of digital storytelling to presentation skills of language learners. This significant in terms of literature because the CEFR has a language proficiency criterion under the title of *ADRESSING AUDIENCES* and the B2 band descriptor, for example, says:

> Can give a clear, systematically developed presentation, with highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail. Can depart spontaneously from a prepared text and follow up interesting points raised by members of the audience, often showing remarkable fluency and ease of expression. (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 22)

Limitations

The first and the foremost limitation of the research is the fact that the students in the control and experimental groups are not allocated randomly. Randomization is one of the sampling techniques to ensure that each one of the samples has an equal chance of being under treatment or not, the goal of which is to distribute the features of the samples equally among different groups (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2013). However, in a typical preparatory school the students are already randomly or systematically assigned to their classes at the beginning each term or semester, and it is logistically not possible to rearrange the classes randomly reallocate students for research purposes. Besides, the only controlled variable in the study is digital storytelling, and all the other variables and factors affecting the performances of the groups are neither controlled nor incorporated into the discussion on the results. This is mainly

because the syllabus of the term is already busy with lots of units to be covered, extra topics, other tasks, assignments, and these make it difficult for one researcher to control all the variables in different classes where teachers might sometimes diverge from the regular syllabus to manage classroom time efficiently.

Conclusion

The fifth chapter presented a brief outline of the research design prompting the main aims of the study and listing the data collection tools and data analysis methods. The major findings of the study were discussed in detail: digital storytelling contributes to the spoken performances of EFL learners, and they have a more affirmative attitude towards speaking after the digital storytelling tasks. Both the students and the teachers find digital storytelling an effective way of learning English, though with minor flows in the task design. Some implications for practice and also for further research were compiled so as the shed light on the way to continuous research on the use of digital storytelling to enhance speaking skill. Lastly, the limitations hindering the validity of the research were rearticulated.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Student Attitude Survey

Dear Learner,

This survey aims to determine learners' attitude towards the skill of "Speaking." This is to request your participation in the research study, which is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. The information and answers you provide in the survey will be kept confidential. Only the researcher will see the completed forms. Your name will not be used in any reports of this study. If you have any questions regarding the survey or the study, please do not hesitate to contact me at the following address.

E-mail : esen.metin@outlook.com

I will be glad to share the results of the study if you write to me at the above address. Thank you in advance for sparing some of your precious time for this research.

Sincerely,

Metin Esen

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions outlined above.

Name: ………………………….

Signature: …………………….

BACKROUD INFORMATION

Gender	
Male	Female

Age			
17 – 19	20 – 22	23 – 25	26 or over

ATTITUDE TOWARDS SPEAKING

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Speaking in English anywhere makes me feel worried.					
2. Speaking in English helps me to have good relationships with friends.					
3. When I hear a student in my class speaking English well, I like to practice speaking with him/her					
4. I am not satisfied with my performance in speaking activities.					

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5. I am not relaxed whenever I have to speak in my English class.					
6. I feel embarrassed to speak in English in front of other students.					
7. I like to practice English the way native speakers do.					
8. Frankly, I study speaking just to pass the exams.					
9. I cannot apply my vocabulary and grammar knowledge in my speaking.					
10. In my opinion, speaking English is difficult and complicated to learn.					
11. I prefer speaking in my mother tongue rather than English with my classmates.					
12. To be honest, I really have little interest in speaking activities.					
13. I don't get anxious when I have to answer a question in my English class.					
14. I feel proud when speaking in English inside and outside the classroom.					
15. Speaking in English during classes makes me feel more confident					
16. I look forward to the time we spend for speaking activities.					
17. Speaking in English makes me have good emotions (feelings).					
18. Speaking is a difficult skill of learning English.					
19. I usually feel nervous during speaking tasks and exams.					

APPENDIX B: Holistic Rubric for Speaking Performance Evaluation

Score over (10 PTS)	Delivery / Fluency (Clarity of speech and meaning: +/- pauses)	Topic Development (Purpose, relevance, transitions, connections)	Language Use (Grammatical and lexical usage and variety)
OUTSTANDINGLY ACHIEVED 10 9	* Well-paced flow of ideas * Speech is clear and highly intelligible * May include minor pauses or hesitations with minor difficulties in pronunciation, which does not hinder overall intelligibility	* The response is sustained and well-developed and focuses on the purpose of the task *Relationships and connections between ideas are clear and coherent	* The response displays effective range and control of grammar and vocabulary, demonstrates syntactic variety and appropriate word choice (to the level) * It may have minor lexical and grammatical errors; mistakes in use of language do not hinder clarity and meaning
NOTABLY ACHIEVED 8 7	* Speech is clear and generally intelligible *Minor noticeable pauses or pronunciation difficulties are possible, which may require effort on the listener's part to comprehend, but does not affect overall intelligibility	* The response is generally sustained and focuses on the purpose of the task. * Connections between ideas may lack clarity and coherence * The response conveys relevant ideas and information though overall development is somewhat limited	* The response displays fairly effective range and control of grammar and vocabulary, demonstrates syntactic variety and appropriate word choice *It may have minor noticeable lexical and grammatical errors. Mistakes in use of language may affect fluency, but it does not interfere with the conveyed message.
SUFFICIENTLY ACHIEVED 6 5	* Speech is clear and basically intelligible though it may require listener effort because of pauses and occasional unclear meaning	* The response is connected to the purpose of the task though development or amount of ideas is limited *Connections between ideas may not be very clear and coherent because of limited elaboration of details and support.	* The response displays limited range and control of use of language; mainly simple structures and vocabulary are used with simple, unclear connections. * It may have a few lexical and grammatical errors; mistakes in grammar and usage may affect fluency, but do not seriously hinder overall meaning.
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT 4 3	Speech is generally unclear and hardly intelligible, fragmented with pauses and hesitations.	* The response is limited and irrelevant to the purpose of the task. *It generally lacks expressions of very basic ideas and details.	* The response displays severely limited range and control of use of language. * It displays numerous errors in the use of language, syntactic variety and appropriate word choice. These lexical and grammatical errors may cause misunderstanding in fluency and meaning.
RESPONSE UNINTELLIGABLE OR REFUSAL TO SPEAK 2 1	Speech is unclear and unintelligible with consistent pauses ad lapses.	* Response is severely limited and irrelevant to the purpose of the task; includes weak connection of ideas and details. * Speaker may not be able to complete the task and may depend highly on repetition and listener assistance	* The response displays serious and frequent errors in the use of language, syntactic variety and appropriate word choice

- **No Answer / Refusal to speak - 1 pt.**

APPENDIX C: Holistic Rubrics for the Final Speaking Exam

RUBRIC FOR ANALYTIC SCORING OF SPEAKING PART I
MIDTERM EXAM (FOR ALL GROUPS)

OUT OF 10 PTS	NA	1-2 Does Not Meet (Inadequate)	3-4 Partially Meets (Limited)	5-6 Does Not Fully Meet (Average)	7-8 Meets (Adequate)	9-10 Exceeds (Effective)
Coherence	Not attended	Does not understand the questions, and responses are not clear No attempt to respond	Has serious problems in understanding the questions, and responses are not very clear	Has some problems in understanding the questions, and responses are somewhat clear	Correctly understands the questions, and responses are quite clear	Correctly understands the questions, and responses are perfectly clear
Fluency & Pronunciation	Not attended	Has long pauses and serious pronunciation difficulties causing considerable listener effort No attempt to respond	Has long pauses and consistent pronunciation difficulties May require significant listener effort	Speaks somewhat fluently with some short pauses and exhibits minor difficulties with pronunciation May require some listener effort at times	Speaks fluently with some short pauses and response May exhibit minor difficulties with pronunciation Overall intelligibility remains good	Speaks fluently with no pause and response may include very few difficulties with pronunciation Overall intelligibility remains high
Grammar & Vocabulary	Not attended	Has very low-level responses relying on severely limited range and control of vocabulary and grammar No attempt to respond	Has limited expression of relevant ideas due to limited range and control of vocabulary and grammar	The response may exhibit some inaccurate or limited use of vocabulary and grammar, which do not seriously interfere with meaning	The response demonstrates fairly automatic and effective use of vocabulary and grammar	The response demonstrates good control of complex grammar structures and contains effective word choice

REFUSAL TO SPEAK – 0 PT.

RUBRIC FOR SCORING OF SPEAKING TASK II (LEVELS B, B+, C, C+)

Score over (15 PTS)	Delivery/Fluency (Clarity of speech and meaning: +/- pauses)	Topic Development (Purpose, relevance, transitions, connections)	Language Use (Grammatical and lexical usage and variety)
OUTSTANDINGLY ACHIEVED **15** **14** **13**	Well-paced flow of ideas Speech is clear and highly intelligible May include minor pauses or hesitations with minor difficulties in pronunciation, which does not hinder overall intelligibility	The response is sustained and well-developed and focuses on the purpose of the task Relationships and connections between ideas are clear and coherent	The response displays effective range and control of grammar and vocabulary, Mistakes in use of language do not hinder clarity and meaning
NOTABLY ACHIEVED **12** **11** **10**	Speech is clear and generally intelligible Minor noticeable pauses or pronunciation difficulties are possible, but does not affect overall intelligibility	The response is generally sustained and focuses on the purpose of the task. Connections between ideas may lack clarity and coherence Overall development is somewhat limited	The response displays fairly effective range and control of grammar and vocabulary Mistakes in use of language may affect fluency, but it does not interfere with the conveyed message.
SUFFICIENTLY ACHIEVED **9** **8** **7**	Speech is clear and basically intelligible though it may require listener effort because of pauses and occasional unclear meaning	The response is connected to the purpose of the task though development or amount of ideas is limited Connections between ideas may not be very clear and coherent	The response displays limited range and control of use of language; mainly simple structures and vocabulary are used with simple, unclear connections. Mistakes in grammar and usage may affect fluency, but do not seriously hinder overall meaning.
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT **6** **5** **4**	Speech is generally unclear and hardly intelligible, fragmented with pauses and hesitations.	The response is limited and irrelevant to the purpose of the task. Lacks expressions of very basic ideas and details.	The response displays severely limited range and control of use of language. Lexical and grammatical errors cause misunderstanding in fluency and meaning.
RESPONSE UNINTELLIGABLE **3** **2** **1**	Speech is unclear and unintelligible with consistent pauses ad lapses. **NO RESPONSE / REFUSAL TO SPEAK**	Response is severely limited and irrelevant to the purpose of the task; includes weak connection of ideas and details. Depend highly on repetition and listener assistance	The response displays serious and frequent errors in the use of language, and in appropriate word choice
NA	**NOT ATTENDED**	**NOT ATTENDED**	**NOT ATTENDED**

REFUSAL TO SPEAK – 0 PT.

APPENDIX D: Digital Storytelling Attitude Survey

DIGITAL STORYTELLING IN THE ELT CLASSROOM: MAKING USE OF DIGITAL NARRATIVES TO PROMOTE THE PRODUCTIVE SKILL OF SPEAKING

Dear Learner,

This survey aims to determine learners' attitude towards Digital Storytelling to find out if they believe digital storytelling helps English learners in realizing their true potential for spoken production during lessons. Although speaking is widely covered in the ELT classroom, students are usually more reluctant during the speaking sessions than during other skills' sessions. A solution to this problem could be digital storytelling, which is a process combining the elements of traditional storytelling and personal digital equipment such as cameras, computers, microphones, or voice recorders. As we can describe a majority of the current student population as "digital natives," it is a good idea to guide them in utilizing technological facilities to create narratives for oral production while supporting speaking. This is to request your participation in the research study, which is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. The information and answers you provide in the survey will be kept confidential. Only the researcher will see the completed forms. Your name will not be used in any reports of this study. If you have any questions regarding the survey or the study, please do not hesitate to contact me at the following address:

E-mail : esen.metin@outlook.com

I will be glad to share the results of the study if you write to me at the above address. Thank you in advance for sparing some of your precious time for this research.

Sincerely,

Metin Esen

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions outlined above.

Yes	No

ATTITUDE TOWARDS DIGITAL STORYTELLING

The survey items below intend to determine your attitude towards Digital Storytelling and its contributions to the speaking skill. Please mark the relevant grade in the scale below between "Strongly disagree" and "Strongly agree" considering the validity of the statements on your side.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	I am not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I like reading and listening to stories in English.					
2. It is enjoyable to write or tell stories in English.					
3. This is the first time I am learning speaking via Digital Storytelling.					
4. It was enjoyable to prepare Digital Storytelling tasks.					

5. I felt relaxed while presenting my Digital Storytelling task.					
6. I believe Digital Storytelling helped me overcome my speaking anxiety.					
7. I believe Digital Storytelling helped me improve my speaking skills.					
8. I believe Digital Storytelling helped me improve my presentation skills.					
9.I enjoyed listening to my classmates' Digital Stories.					
10. I would like to prepare more Digital Storytelling tasks in the next level.					
11.I do not like reading and listening stories in English.					
12. I think Digital Storytelling did not help me much improve my speaking skills.					

APPENDIX E: Interview Questions

1. Do you think you were able to develop your speaking skill during these 7 weeks in the B+ level? If yes, can you explain how much your speaking has improved?

2. Do you have a good relationship with technology? How do you usually integrate technology into your language learning?

3. Do you think Digital Storytelling has helped you improve your speaking skill? If yes, especially which element of speaking (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency) improved best thanks to Digital Storytelling?

4. Do you think you are good at oral presentations? How have the Digital Storytelling tasks affected your presentation skills?

5. Do you think Digital Storytelling tasks are difficult tasks to prepare? Especially which part (research, text writing, editing, presentation) was challenging for you?

6. Would you like to have more Digital Storytelling tasks in the next Period? Why or why not?

APPENDIX F: Task Evaluation Sheet

The task designed:	Meets the criteria	Needs further improvement
Provides a stimulus to learning.		
Helps learners to develop confidence.		
Encourages students' collaboration.		
Allows learners to develop learning skills, and skills in learning.		
Is clear and systematic but flexible enough to allow for creativity and variety.		
Is consistent in difficulty level.		
Is informed by second language acquisition theory.		
Includes a lexical understanding of the language.		
Encourages learner's autonomy.		
Places an emphasis on review.		
Focuses on learning outcomes.		
Is perceived by learners as relevant and useful.		
Provides the learners with opportunities to use the target language to achieve.		
Is assigned in comprehensible language with natural instructions.		
Is clear and not ambiguous.		
Is visually engaging and appealing		
Includes the culture of the target language.		
Is localized according to the teaching context.		
Gives enough instructions for novice teachers.		
Allows experienced teachers to go beyond the lesson.		
Is connected to learners' context.		
Takes learners' needs into account.		
Encourages learners to apply their developing skills to the world beyond the classroom.		
Exposes the learners to language in authentic use.		

Presents a variety of styles and genres of language.		
Gives learners opportunities to use the content or reflect it in productive activities.		
Locates language learning in the world and its complexity.		
Integrates skills work.		
Takes the levels and age of learners into account.		

Comments by Teacher Observation

Comments on the Strengths of the Task:

Comments on the Weaknesses of the Task:

Overall Student Reaction: