T.C.
FIRAT UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DETERMINING THE ROLE OF DIGITAL LITERACY IN EFL TEACHING IN REGARD TO THE VIEWS OF TURKISH EFL TEACHERS

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MASTER'S THESIS DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

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MASTER'S THESIS

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January 2022

ELAZIĞ

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I wrote this Doctoral Thesis titled "Determining the Role of Digital Literacy in EFL Teaching in Regard to the Views of Turkish EFL Teachers" in consistent with the thesis writing guide of the Graduate School of Social Sciences, Firat University. I also declare that all information in it is correct, that I acted according to scientific ethics in producing and presenting the findings, cited all the references I used, express all institutions or organizations or persons who supported the thesis financially. I have never used the data and information I provide here in order to get a degree in any way.

11 Jan 2022

Kwestan Hussein AHMED

PREFACE

I am very grateful to Almighty Allah for giving me the chance to complete this study. Without His graces and blessings, this study would not have been completed. Working full-time, raising three children, and dealing with many life challenges, while working on this study was not easy. Allah held my hand and settled my soul when I felt like I absolutely could not do it all together.

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ABSTRACT

Master's Thesis

Determining the Role of Digital Literacy in EFL Teaching in Regard to the Views of Turkish EFL Teachers

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Digital technologies facilitate interaction with individuals, family, and friends continuously, due to the busy barriers nowadays, individuals can not communicate directly and meet each other. Therefore, digital literacy (DL) is considered as one of the fundamental abilities in the 21st century and in this modern era for working as well as living properly. Since the influence and implementation of novel digital tools are shifting the education system rapidly and continuously, it has opened a new gate for teachers to overcome the complexities and achieve efficient results in their instruction. Accordingly, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers have a very essential role in this digital world and they are required to have enough competence in utilizing kinds of current digital tools related to their instruction. So, the utilization of digital technology is a capability that must be obtained, maintained, and improved constantly by individuals and mainly EFL teachers.

With the significance of this issue, this study aimed to be conducted through qualitative research and focus group discussion (FGD) collecting data tools, to determine the role of digital literacy in EFL teaching in regard to the views of Turkish EFL teachers.

In line with the aim of this study, the research questions are the following:

1. What does digital literacy mean to (secondary & high) school EFL teachers?
2. How does the digital literacy level of (secondary & high) school EFL teachers affect their teaching?
3. What are the facilities of using digital tools in (secondary & high) school level of EFL teaching?
4. What are the challenges of using digital tools in (secondary & high) school level of EFL teaching?

The present study was conducted with eighteen EFL teachers that they participated voluntarily, (9 from secondary and 9 from high) school worked at different state schools in Elazığ. They were selected randomly to meet the trustworthiness of the study. Accordingly, Nvivo 12 software was used to analyse the data.

The obtained results indicated noteworthy information about secondary school (SS) and high school (HS) Turkish EFL teachers' digital literacy practices. For the first research question, both groups of participating teachers defined digital literacy as their different points of view. Related to the operational definition which was the study's model it was found that although they were sufficient of using digital devices, some of them did not have enough information about professional digital literacy. The second research question proved that the level of SS teachers was higher than the HS teachers one of the possible satisfactory explanations of the HS teachers that they did not feel competent enough was due to the ever-changing technologies of nowadays. Findings for the third and the fourth research questions noted that even though digital tools facilitate EFL teaching in some ways as the teachers confirmed, they faced many challenges while using digital tools in their instruction. Finally, based on the results of the current study some recommendations are given.

Keywords: Digital literacy, EFL, the role of digital literacy, technological teaching tools, teachers' views

ÖZET

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Görüşlerine Göre Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretiminde Dijital Okuryazarlığın Rolünün Belirlenmesi

Kwestan Hussein AHMED

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Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatları Anabilim Dalı

İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bilim Dalı

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Dijital teknolojiler, bireyler, aile ve arkadaşlar ile sürekli etkileşimi kolaylaştırmakta, günümüzde engellerin yoğun olması nedeniyle bireyler doğrudan iletişim kuramamakta ve birbirleriyle tanışamamaktadır. Bu nedenle dijital okuryazarlık, 21. yüzyılda ve bu modern çağda düzgün yaşamak ve çalışmak için temel yeteneklerden biri olarak kabul edilmektedir. Yeni dijital araçların etkisi ve uygulanması eğitim sistemini hızlı ve sürekli olarak değiştirdiğinden, öğretmenlerin zorlukların üstesinden gelmeleri ve öğretimlerinde verimli sonuçlar elde etmeleri için yeni bir kapı açmıştır. Bu durumda, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğretmenleri dijital dünyada çok önemli bir role sahiptir ve öğretimleriyle ilgili güncel dijital araç türlerini kullanma konusunda yetkinliğe sahip olmaları gerekmektedir. Bu nedenle, dijital teknolojilerin kullanımı, bireyler ve özellikle İngilizce öğretmenleri tarafından sürekli olarak sahip olunması, sürdürülebilmesi ve geliştirilmesi gereken bir yetenektir.

Bu konunun öneminden hareketle, bu çalışma, dijital okuryazarlığın İngilizce öğretiminde rolünü belirlemek için İngilizce öğretmenlerinin görüşlerini nitel araştırma yöntemiyle ve odak grup tartışması tekniği yoluyla almayı ve değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Çalışmanın amacı doğrultusunda araştırma soruları aşağıdaki gibidir:

1. Dijital okuryazarlık (ortaokul ve lise) İngilizce öğretmenleri için ne anlama gelmektedir?
2. İngilizce öğretmenlerinin (ortaokul ve lise) dijital okuryazarlık düzeyi, öğretimlerini nasıl etkilemektedir?
3. İngilizce öğretiminde (orta ve lise) okul düzeyinde dijital araçları kullanmanın sağladığı kolaylıklar nelerdir?
4. İngilizce öğretiminde (orta ve lise) okul düzeyinde dijital araçları kullanmanın yarattığı zorluklar nelerdir?

Bu araştırma, Elazığ'da farklı devlet okullarında görev yapan dokuz ortaokul ve dokuz lise olmak üzere 18 İngilizce öğretmeninin gönüllü katılımı ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Katılımcılar araştırmanın güvenilirliğini sağlamak için rastgele seçilmiştir. Verilerin analizinde Nvivo 12 yazılımı kullanılmıştır.

Elde edilen sonuçlar ortaokul ve lise düzeyinde görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin dijital okuryazarlık uygulamaları ile ilgili önemli bilgiler ortaya koymuştur. İlk araştırma sorusu kapsamında her iki katılımcı öğretmen grubu da dijital okuryazarlığı farklı bakış açıları ortaya koyarak tanımlamışlardır. Çalışmaya model teşkil eden işlevsel dijital okuryazarlık tanımına dair İngilizce öğretmenlerinin dijital cihazları kullanma konusunda yeterli olmalarına rağmen, bir kısmının profesyonel dijital okuryazarlık hakkında yeterli bilgiye sahip olmadığı tespit edilmiştir. İkinci araştırma sorusu dâhilinde ortaokul öğretmenlerinin dijital okuryazarlık düzeyinin lise öğretmenlerinden daha yüksek olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Lise öğretmenlerinin kendilerini yeterince

yetkin hissetmemelerinin olası nedenlerinden biri günümüzde sürekli değişen teknolojilerden kaynaklanmaktadır. Üçüncü ve dördüncü araştırma sorularına ilişkin bulgular incelendiğinde dijital araçların İngilizce öğretimini bazı yönlerden kolaylaştırmasına rağmen İngilizce öğretmenlerinin öğretimlerinde dijital araçları kullanırken birçok zorlukla karşılaştıkları belirlenmiştir. Son olarak, mevcut çalışmanın sonuçlarına dayalı olarak bazı önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dijital okuryazarlık, İngilizce yabancı dil, dijital okuryazarlığın rolü, teknolojik öğretim araçları, öğretmen görüşleri

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

COVID-19	: Coronavirus Disease 2019
DL	: Digital literacy
EBA	: Eğitim Bilişim Ağı
EFL	: English as a Foreign Language
F	: Finding
HS	: High School
HT1	: High school teacher number one
ICT	: Information Communication Technology
IQ	: Interview question
IQ1	: Interview question one
P21	: Partnership for 21st Century Skills
SS	: Secondary School
ST1	: Secondary school teacher number one

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

The general structure of this study takes the form of five chapters, including the introductory chapter, literature review, methodology, result, and finally discussion and conclusion part.

The introductory chapter gives general information on the present study about the role of digital literacy (DL) in EFL teaching in regard to the views of Turkish EFL teachers. In particular, this chapter consists of six sections including the background of the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, assumptions, and limitations of the study.

1.2. Background of the study

The use of technological innovations in the workplace, educational institutions, and homes are widespread and have become an integral part of everyday life. Daily tasks have been influenced by communication technologies. Individuals need to use information communication technologies (ICT), along with the internet and computers as well, to discover and improve their DL in this digital world.

There is a need for being digitally literate, which is reinforced by the extensive improvement and usage of modern ICTs. So digital technologies need to be focused on by the consumers, essentially by EFL teachers. In reality, DL has indeed been considered to be a fundamental learning priority for everybody. The use of mobiles for contact with families, relatives who are living far away, like writing and also reading text messages, is rapidly spreading even among poor rural communities whereby literacy levels are considerably lower. The growth of modern ICTs recently enhanced during distance education and has made it easier for students to access teachers. Accordingly, organizations can interact at state, international and regional levels via networks, e-mails, and so on. The progress of such technological advancements including the use of television, computer, mobile, smartphones, and tablets, expand the opportunities to learn and the exchange of information and resources on individuals' literacy strategies (Arnone & Wagner, 2011; Linda, 2008). In certain modern industrial countries, innovations of technologies, such as personal computers and internet availability, have become almost widespread for foreign language teaching (Golonka et al., 2014).

Accordingly, classrooms can be somewhat limited and inflexible if computers and digital tools do not use as an alternative tool for teachers compared to the traditional teaching tools. Teachers need to search for books and resources in libraries and spend much more time, for these reasons, the internet and computer are easier and faster resources for language teachers. In this digital era, so many useful tools, platforms, and applications are available that language teachers have managed to use via computer and smartphone in their instruction (Warschauer & Healey, 1998).

Nowadays new technologies, including digital apps via tablets and mobile phones, have been used in the scope of education, especially in teaching language classes (Kukulska-Hulme et al., 2017). Likewise, instructors are expected to be familiar with the current technological tools and investigate them effectively. The use of smartphones effectively covers the opportunity for a better learner-centred setting. Thus, it can not be ignored how mobile phones and digital devices manage educational activities inside and outside the classroom. In addition, it can cause dissatisfaction if instructors are unable to handle their classes, particularly those that have numerous students (Al-Shehab, 2020).

1.3. Statement of the problem

First of all, because of COVID19 (a pandemic that started in china Wuhan city and spread in a short and unlimited time to so many countries around the world) (Backer et al., 2020; He et al., 2020), that made side effects in all sectors of everyday life, especially the education field, the whole world moved towards online education which it may continue for years as it is heard from the media. Since the teachers need to be online with their teachers, so, schools have faced some challenges. Accordingly, people nowadays especially teachers are not sufficient enough in using digital tools, so the researcher wanted to reveal whether the Turkish EFL teachers can use digital tools in their instruction sufficiently or whether they need further training. As well as their DL level affects positively or not into their instruction. Finally, there is a gap in the literature about EFL teachers' DL

Although some research has been carried out, there are few empirical investigations about the level of EFL teachers' DL. Nowadays, DL is considered to be crucial in EFL classes. Thus, EFL teachers should have more information about modern technologies in the digital era of the 21st century (Peachey, 2017). Today's classroom appears to be distinct from the classes of twenty, ten, and even five years ago. The 21st Century classroom holds numerous technologies from interactive flat-screen displays, laptops, tablets, and smartphones, all easily interconnected via Wi-Fi or Bluetooth and enabled by a variety of applications. So, the days of a solitary desktop PC in the centre have passed, and the new generation of digital teachers and students, are becoming more autonomous in the classrooms (Lortie, 2020).

The investigation of two different databases (Web of Science and SCOPUS) for indexing articles has shown that there are few studies on EFL teachers' DL during the last ten years. Figure 1 (a) shows the publication years from 2010 to 2020 indexed by Web of Science, and Figure 1 (b) shows the publication year of SCOPUS during the last ten years until 2020 searching with keywords "EFL teachers' DL". Despite the importance of it, so far, very little attention has been paid to the DL levels of EFL teachers. As it has also shown in Figure 2, the publication year of SCOPUS from 2010 there are only three studies, searching the title of "EFL teachers' DL".

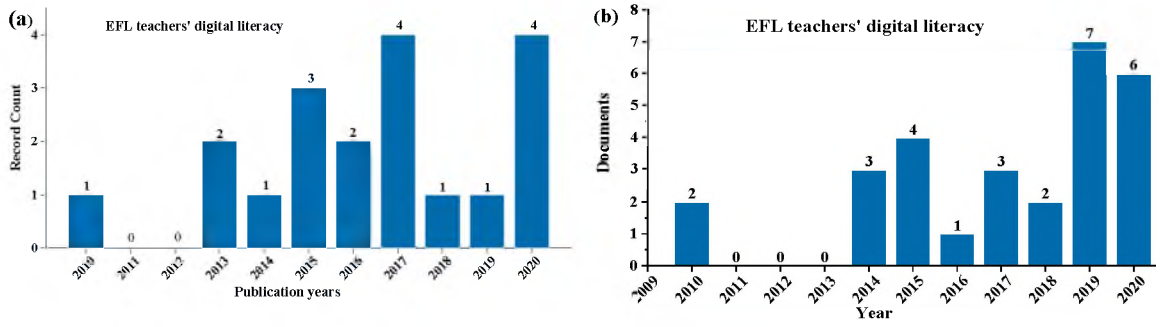

Figure 1. (a & b) Source "SCOPUS" and "Web of Science" accessed on 5th Feb 2021, Keywords "EFL teachers, digital literacy"

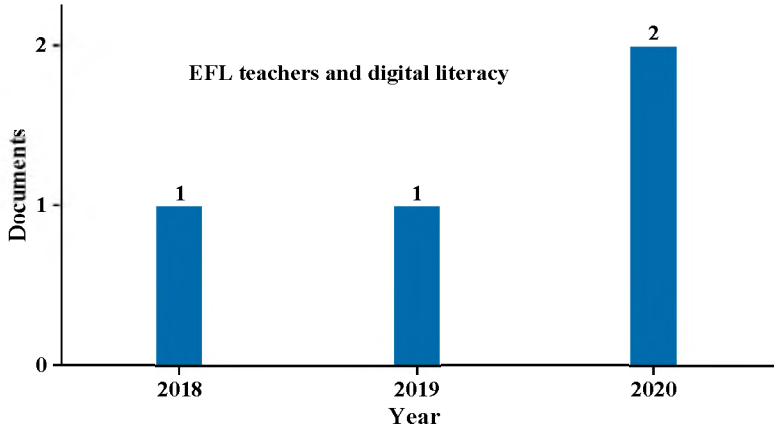

Figure 2. Source SCOPUS accessed on 5th Feb 2021, title "EFL teachers and digital literacy"

1.4. Purpose of the Study

First of all, this thesis intends to find out EFL in-service (HS and SS) teachers' views on the role of DL in their EFL teaching. Second, to reveal the level of EFL teachers' DL level and its effect on their teaching. Accordingly, to understand the facilities of the digital tools and challenges in their instruction. To the best knowledge of the researcher, few studies are addressing the views of EFL teachers in terms of the importance of DL. The absence of such studies led the researcher to investigate it, with the aim to contribute to the field and seek to obtain data that will help to address these research gaps.

This study aimed to address the following research questions:

1. What does DL mean to (SS & HS) EFL teachers?
2. How does the DL level of (SS & HS) EFL teachers affect their teaching?
3. How does the DL level of (SS & HS) EFL teachers affect their teaching?
4. What are the challenges of using digital tools in (SS & HS) level of EFL teaching?

1.5. The significance of the study

Since the DL of in-service SS and HS Turkish EFL teachers has not been studied properly, this study can fill a gap and contribute to the literature. Accordingly, the vital role of DL in education makes the study more relevant. Moreover, online education, due to the coronavirus, makes the study more important, as instructors need to be sufficient in using novel digital tools. Figure 3 displays the importance of DL in the last ten years in many fields, but especially in the field of education compared to the other fields. As a result of the developments in technological life in today's society, using directly or indirectly technological tools in all aspects of life has been affected by an essential change. Every day, a new technological advancement will be incorporated into our lives.

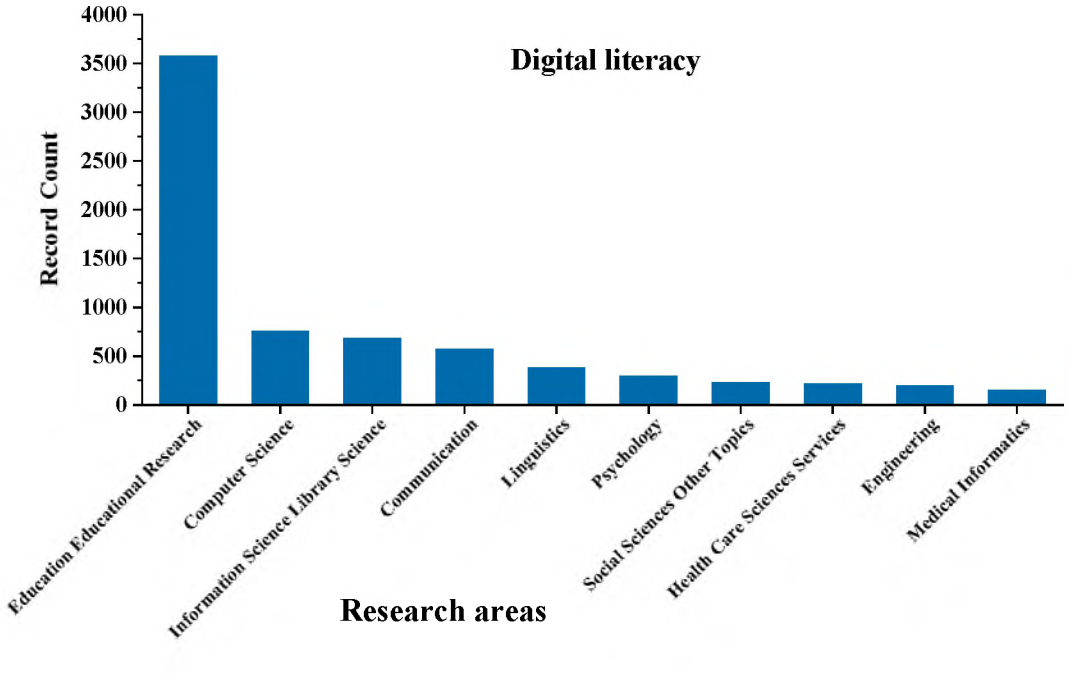

Figure 3. Source Web of Science 5th Feb 2021, the keyword "Digital literacy"

1.6. Assumptions

The sample of the study consisted of SS and HS EFL teachers, who have relative experience in using digital tools. They answered the interview questions (IQs) based on their experience and knowledge. Their responses are assumed to reveal their opinions about DL and technological tools, so their views reflect their specific thoughts and experience.

1.7. Limitations

The present study has some limitations that need to be announced. First of all, the number of teachers was relatively insufficient and limited to eighteen Turkish EFL teachers. The second one is that the study only examined the teachers of EFL working in state schools. The third one is that the study could only have a chance to examine EFL teachers in SS and HSs in Elazığ an eastern city of Turkey. Therefore, the findings from this study might not be strictly generalized to Turkey and EFL teachers as a whole.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter begins by examining the literature review about DL. The first section gives an overview of the recent history of DL and its definition. The second section examines the essential elements of DL. The third section deals with the basic principles of DL development. Section four involves digital education. Section five is investigating DL and EFL teachers. Section six marks the importance and the benefits of DL and digital tools in EFL. The last section highlights the related research about DL in EFL classes and the Turkish context as well.

2.2. Digital literacy

Broadly speaking, DL is discussed in relation to its precursor media literacy, which started in the UK and US in the 1930s and 1960s specifically as a result of the propaganda of war and advertisement increasing issues at that time. After that, educators started to enhance media literacy learning so as to educate people on how to perceive and interpret the messages that they were getting from the media (Boyd, 2014). Thus, individuals needed to improve digital and media literacy competence to effectively assess digital and media messages. Also, Boyd emphasizes the relevance of essential media literacy, mainly for teenagers, Boyd believes that developing vital media literacy abilities is the initial phase in recognizing biases in media information such as digital or printed advertisements. Considering that, individuals with technological experience and understanding of computer applications may also help to evaluate knowledge on their own and others. Yet, obstacles for learning technological proficiency and computer literacy limit an individual's ability to fully engage in the digital age (Boyd, 2014). DL has known as the skill to read and write online, of course, the abilities to read and write are essential and are at the centre of DL, but being a professional with the ever-changing technological innovations to utilize and communicate information, involves a variety of wider skills that must be addressed by individuals (Liana, 2016) Accordingly, Kress assisted that with the wide range of technological, economical, as well as social factors, there is no need to think about literacy in isolation of just reading and writing (Kress, 2003). Based on the views of the aforementioned scholars about DL, it can be said that DL does not take place in the classical ways of literacy, but it can improve and extend the essential capabilities of the classical literacy styles (Jenkins, 2009).

DL is recognized as a growing concept in Paul Gilster's seminal, "Definitions of Digital Literacy (1997)". Bawden (2001), argued that Gilster was not the first to introduce the term DL, it had already been used by a variety of writers during the mid-1990s to refer to the capability of reading and comprehending knowledge components. He also assisted that it was used to explain the altering existence of reading and writing via internet. Gilster described DL as the ability to comprehend and utilize information in various ways (Gilster, 1997). Gilster's interpretation optimizes digital media, which involves a range of alternative information along with text, sound, video, and images together simultaneously. Similarly, Belshaw (2012), explained that the term which had extensively been developed over the 1990s, was focused on further the contexts of visual, technological, computer, and information literacy (Belshaw, 2012). In addition, DL involves various literacy abilities (Shariman et al., 2012). Hence, in the education field based technology, there are sub-discipline parts of DL including information literacy, computer literacy, media literacy, communication literacy, visual literacy, and technology literacy (Covello & Lei, 2010; Goodfellow, 2011; Ozdamar-Keskin et al., 2015; Simsek & Simsek, 2013). In general, the term DL can be assumed as the sum of all these above-mentioned literacies (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003).

There is a distinction between perceiving DL known as skills or deeper understanding competence-related matter. These two opposing viewpoints are the product of the same polarization in the discussion on the existence of competencies (Lankshear & Knobel, 2008). Competencies can be seen as more than a selection of abilities or capabilities. It is worthy to incorporate the skills and abilities revealed in the production work as well as the achievements, so, in terms of competence, DL is a balance between purely behaviourist and progressive viewpoints of individuals (Hager & Beckett, 1995).

The DL term, like other terms of information literacies, has been defined and introduced by former scholars, such as (Bawden, 2001, 2008; Belshaw, 2011, 2012; Hockly, 2012; Knobel & Lankshear, 2006; Martin, 2005; Martin & Grudziecki, 2006), in different educational contexts over the last twenty years. They have tried to write a comprehensive review of the concept of DL and its link with other terms of literacies. As Bawden (2008) points out, there is significant progress from early contributions to computer literacy to the eventual implementations of modern types of literacies such as information literacy, online literacy, and DL. Likewise, for being digitally literate, an individual should access a wide variety of activities and contextual knowledge that s/he can adapt to the digital devices.

Biezā (2020), defined DL as the capability to utilize information in the digital age. Similarly, DL is the capacity to access digital technology professionally and ethically to obtain, analyse, develop, and interact with relevant knowledge by individuals (ECU, n.d.). According to (Hasse, 2017), technology literacy means to manage, utilize, evaluate, as well as understand technology properly. Continuous advancements in technological tools for instruction put the requests on instructors who must make everyday assessments about where, when, and importantly how to apply technology in their teaching procedure. DL is also considered as the expertise, attitudes, and various abilities that are necessary to find out whether and what information is required (Agim & Azolo, 2019; IFLA, 2014). Osterman, (2013) maintained that, as technology becomes more integrated into our daily routines, the desire to manage and complete duties using technology increases. He also claimed that if a teacher works in elementary, SS, or HS, should have certain skills and abilities to interact via technology in daily, and educational activities (Osterman, 2013). Furthermore, (Jones-Kavalier & Flannigan, 2008; Lee, 2014) argued that DL means acquiring the abilities you need to

live, educate and perform in a world where digital innovations such as online sites, social networks, and also digital apps are progressively used to interact and access knowledge. Moreover, it is an individual's experiences and abilities to use ICT, which is the capacity to conduct a range of complicated activities in the digital world and utilize them reliably and effectively. Instructors are now approaching the modern generations that are more familiar with technologies and development strategies than the previous generation of students (Chik, 2011; Gee, 2007; Kundanis, 2003; Lankshear & Knobel, 2007). Martin, (2005) proposed some key meanings for DL (Table 1), lists the key meanings of DL

Table 1. Some key meanings of DL, retrieved from (Martin, 2005)

Digital literacy	DL means being ready to implement appropriate digital activities integrated into contexts of life that could involve education, studying, entertainment, and other aspects of daily life. DL will be changed depending on an individual's specific living conditions, and it will be a permanent process that progresses as the life experience of the person develops. Compared to ICT, DL is wider, which may contain aspects from a range of similar literacies, including media literacy, information literacy, as well as visual literacy. DL may contain information, strategies, behaviours, and personal values learned and used effectively. Also, it requires the capacity to organize, implement and assess digital actions in aspects of life management and needs the skill to emphasise the advancement of an individual's DL.

The practice in several areas of society and most of the individual activities now is reinforced by digital technologies and services. This does not indicate that society has been reshaped by digital technologies, but it can be said that the facilities of the technologies might only develop current activities to make them easier and faster (Martin, 2005). On the other hand, education is increasingly implementing technological sources more than other sectors. Also, the development of e-learning technologies has been followed and prompted by a fundamental change in learning and teaching methods. Digital devices are now seen as crucial variables in achieving educational settings by progressing into student-centred and constructivist learning styles. The proficiency of the instruments thereby is now the student's privilege for being an effective learner (Martin, 2005).

The aforementioned information and definitions reveal a significant fact that DL is more than the capacity to interpret words alone or utilize digital tools. It also involves a wide range of diverse mental, cognitive, sociological, and interpersonal abilities that users require to deal with them to work properly (Eshet, 2004; Mantiri, 2019). Thus, it is highly essential to have the required expertise to perform in the modern age, which directly has an impact on education. In this regard, students and teachers need to be prepared well to diagnose DL skills and accept this modern digital world. Using several online platforms can be enhanced via interaction and communication. New requirements and responsibilities for everybody come with all these limitless perspectives (Nocar et al., 2019, p. 7585). Since technological tools progress every day, so much more DL skills are needed. Consequently, DL instruction in content fields is not about being popular or just seeking to include learners in classroom instruction, but also about recognizing the evolving dynamics of relevant awareness and realizing that teenagers require different sorts of abilities experience, and comprehension in order to improve their knowledge experiences (Hague & Payton, 2011).

DL can be linked with the learners' skills to identify and prefer reliable and effective information through nowadays complex network environments. Therefore, a digitally literate individual should be aware of the latest appropriate and reliable strategies for obtaining the knowledge that s/he receives. So, understanding how to choose and implement emerging technology when and where for a specific reason is referred to as a DL skill (Gilster, 1997; Ozdamar-Keskin et al., 2015).

Moreover, Martin (2008) determined that DL might be perceived at three levels for the improvement of DL such as digital competence, digital usage, and digital transformation (Martin, 2008), (See Figure 4). In addition, he clarified that level 1 "digital competence is a requirement for and precursor of DL, but it can not be described as DL" (Gallardo-Echenique et al., 2015; Martin, 2008). It denotes the effective usage of digital media in life settings, which are the concepts, skills, attitudes, and approaches. Level II, which is digital usage refers to the implementation of digital proficiency in a particular setting, for instance in schools or educational institutions. The third level which is digital transformation indicates innovation and creativity in the digital area (Chan et al., 2017; DLCCA, 2015; Martin, 2008).

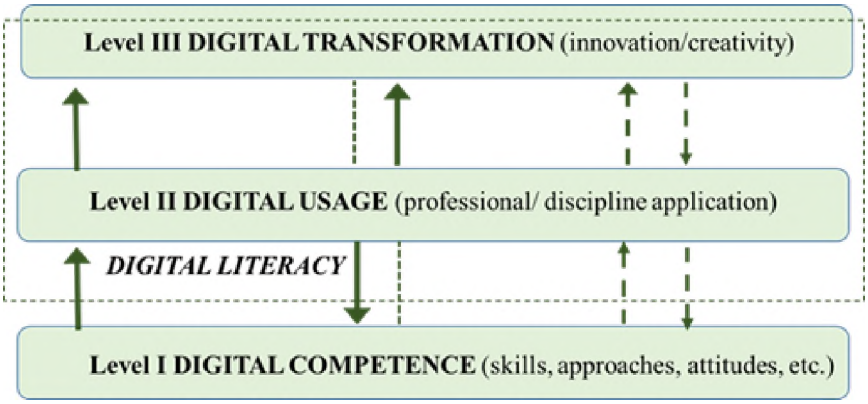

Figure 4. Levels of DL (Martin, 2008).

Accordingly, Hobbs (2010) explained a further model for DL (see Figure 5) and provided a strategy of actions to carry a series of expertise in concentrate. In addition, she announced that DL is a collection of existing abilities that are required for proper involvement in saturated media and, easy access to social information. These consist of the ability to do the following:

1. Analyse and evaluate; (understanding issues of representations), analysing messages in some ways by categorizing writers, purposes, and perspectives, and assessing the value and reliability of the content (Hobbs, 2010). Also, evaluating and arranging the information objectively once it has been obtained (Agim & Azolo, 2019).
2. Create and collaborate ;(authorship and creative competencies), proceeds social action by sharing and addressing issues in home, office, and society, both personally and collaboratively via interaction as an individual of the society (Hobbs, 2010).
3. Use and share; (tools that are used and access the skills) which means creating content in multiple forms with the use of language, sound, image, and new digital tools and technologies. Finally, an individual may have the ability to share this information with other members of society (Hobbs, 2010).

4. Apply ethical judgment; (online social responsibility & digital citizenship) implementing social accountability and moral values on personal identity and existing familiarity, relationship behaviour (Hobbs, 2010), and use it in an ethical way (Agim & Azolo, 2019). Likewise, understanding individual privacy, and cognitive properties (Ungerer, 2016).

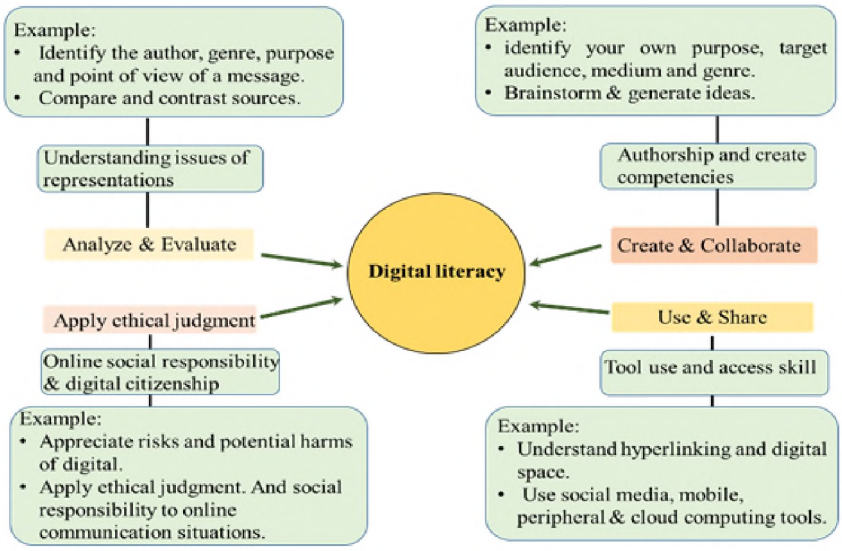

Figure 5. DL retrived from (DLCCA, 2015; Hobbs, 2010).

2.3. The elements of DL

DL consists of several elements. The main elements have been suggested and argued by various scholars and experts. For example, Eshet suggested five types of literacy, including photo-visual literacy, reproduction literacy, branching literacy, information literacy, and socio-emotional literacy (Eshet, 2004). Calvani et al. proposed four dimensions of digital competence such as technological dimension, cognitive dimension, ethical dimension, and integration between the three dimensions (Calvani et al., 2008). Hague and Payton suggested eight components of DL, such as functional skills, e-safety, effective communication, the ability to find and select information, collaboration, cultural and social understanding, critical thinking and evaluation, and creativity (Hague & Payton, 2011; Payton & Hague, 2010). Also, Ferrari proposed five areas of digital competence, including information, communication, content creation, safety, and problem-solving (Ferrari, 2013). Moreover, Jisc provided seven elements of digital literacies, including media literacy, communications, and collaboration, career & identify management, ICT literacy, learning skills, digital scholarship, and information literacy, which have been claimed by (Jisc, 2014). In addition, Son recommended five elements of DL as, information search and evaluation, creation, communication, collaboration, and online safety (Son, 2015). Finally, Belshaw (2011) made a framework of DL, in which he identified 8 essential elements including cultural, cognitive, constructive, communicative, confident, creative, critical, and civic.

DL remains a crucial role in supporting private, social, and working in public places, in the modern age of the 21st century. Several years after the DL framework publishing, the goal was to guide English and other language teachers to prepare their learners to interact properly with the

communicative, constructive, and innovative requirements and possibilities of this modern age (Dudeney et al., 2013). It is being utilized, to update many European learning language programmes (Pegrum et al., 2018).

As mentioned before, many elements have been suggested by various researchers. The present study highlighted the eight essential elements by Belshaw because the researcher wanted to use them as the study's model to find out how much information do they have about DL.

2.3.1. Cultural

The Cultural element deals with knowing how to act and utilize the internet and digital technologies such as language, history, traditions, and values. Accordingly, it is also significant to understand and consider various online contexts and how one can interact with them in an appropriate way. Also, identifying the distinction between professional and private use (Belshaw, 2012; Dudeney, 2015; Hockly, 2012). In digital literacies, the Cultural aspect is mostly about exploring approaches to provide individuals extra understanding and to recognize the world better and how to behave in the digital world (Belshaw, 2011).

2.3.2. Cognitive

Cognitive is understanding the power of thinking in evaluating the content and how to do it (Widana, 2020). This element integrates what we consider as computer literacy or information technology expertise. An overview of the main principles of Cognitive is that getting the flexibility to use a variety of computers, frameworks, and software applications, understanding common elements across digital platforms like lists, configurations, and accounts, and knowing the notions include sharing, tagging, and hashtags. Cognitive is focused on aptitude and significant awareness compared to any kind of technological tool (Belshaw, 2014).

2.3.3. Constructive

This element is referring to content strategy that is more participative and correlative to the idea of making something new whether it is a remix or original (Dudeney, 2015). In particular, Constructive means an individual's ability to copyright creation (Widana, 2020). As claimed by Knobel et al. (2006), literacy refers to reading, writing, and constructing something, so it's a test for literacy (Knobel & Lankshear, 2006). Similarly, Martin (2005) extends this idea by saying that the use of technological resources for constructive social activity is essential for literacy in a digital environment (Martin, 2005). Expanding the element of Constructive in DL means having enough knowledge about how and for what reasons the content could be assumed, reused, and remixed, and how to use it properly. Furthermore, it is dealing with how to incorporate the work of others in diverse and fascinating ways and the perception of the disparity between the physical and digital world (Belshaw, 2014).

2.3.4. Communicative

In this digital era communication, properly means network understanding and having competence of communication (Widana, 2020). The Communicative element is more related to what individuals do on the internet, mostly as a person shifts into the invention side, and involves helpful

features of networked settings. Therefore, this element refers to one's capability how to communicate in this digital era successfully (Belshaw, 2012; Dudeney, 2015).

2.3.5. Confident

In terms of DL, the definition of Confident is to engage confidently in online platforms. Therefore, it needs to understand the significance of the online world, which is different from the offline world. Accordingly, interactivity in an individual's education in digital spaces and becomes a member of a society of social media (Pewhairangi, 2015). In addition, it denotes feeling confidence as well as good negotiation by technologies (Dudeney, 2015).

2.3.6. Creative

The Creative element basically means doing and creating new things in a new technique. Since it signifies new items that bring benefit, the concentration would be more on constructing value, not just making new things. Consequently, knowing how to perform items via utilizing digital tools in a novel way. Thinking imaginatively and creatively on how an individual uses technology to build and exchange information. Accordingly, having information about how digital information can be designed and made to develop worth for consumers, is the fundamental of creativity in DL (Belshaw, 2014; Pewhairangi, 2015).

2.3.7. Critical

This element denotes the research process and information literacy as well as how to evaluate in the digital settings. It is also related to evaluating digital tools, content, and platforms, knowing how to search in an effective way, and having the ability to differentiate between trustworthy and less trustworthy sources (Pewhairangi, 2015). Belshaw indicated that individuals have to know, organize, and critically understand the opportunities they discover. In other words, "Becoming more advanced in the Critical element of digital literacies involves thinking about your own literacy practices" (Belshaw, 2011).

2.3.8. Civic

The last one is the Civic element, which means people with the experience and the capacity to access modern technologies to organize themselves; to participate in a process that is more extensive than themselves. For instance, identifying an individual's digital rights and requirements, to participate in community actions or internet democracy, to plan for full participation in society. In this element, the emphasis is on literacy tasks that promote the civil progression of society (Belshaw, 2014; Pewhairangi, 2015). Figure 6 describes the framework of the eight essential elements of DL.

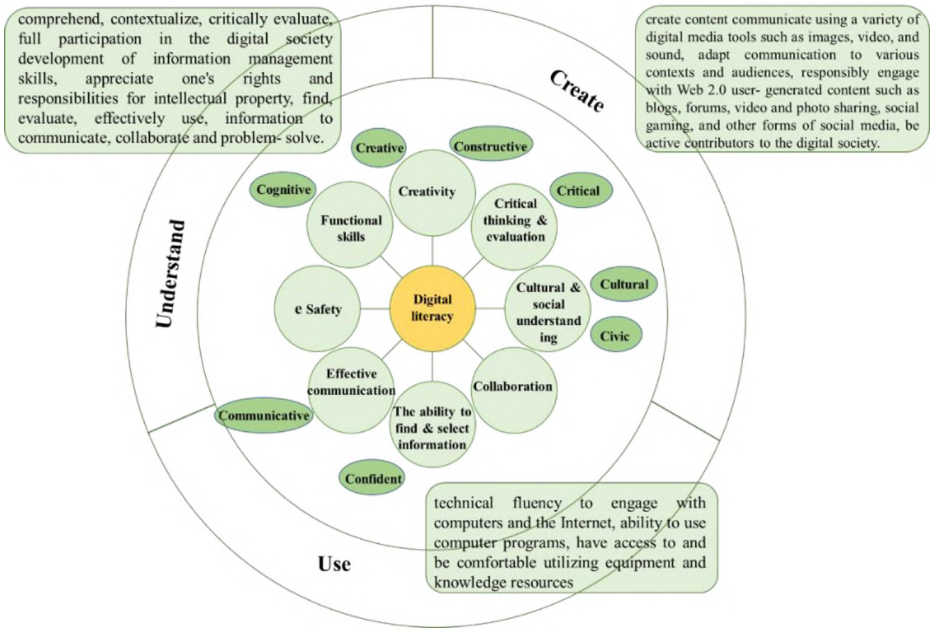

Figure 6. The eight essential elements of DL. Adapted from (Belshaw, 2011; DLCCA, 2015)

The operational definition for DL in this study is; DL can be seen as a survival skill in this digital era because it contains a collection of competencies and techniques that individuals can adapt in the digital settings. It is not just about how technology can be used, rather it is related to progress across various digital settings and how to engage them effectively. Therefore, DL can get more meaning than only the ability of using a computer. For instance, to switch a computer on, an individual demands a basic degree of DL, but one needs various abilities to search and navigate online work applications.

2.4. Basic principles of DL Development

As stated by UNESCO, DL is an integral source for understanding information, technology, and transmission tools. For instance, ICT Literacy relates to technological aptitudes that encourage members of the society to actively participate in the general advancement of digital-based facilities. The four fundamental principles of DL that are examined below need to be observed in this digital life (Basharat, 2019 October 22) see Figure 7.

2.4.1. Comprehension or (understanding):

In order to be digitally literate, one must be able to obtain, assume, and categorize the information and facts from the media (Asriyah, 2018; Basharat, 2019; Kurniawan, 2020).

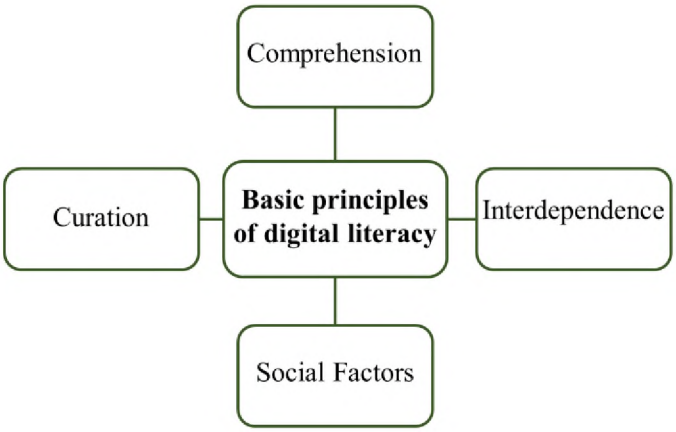

Figure 7. Basic principles of DL retrieved from (Basharat, 2019)

2.4.2. Interdependence

Interdependence in DL is described as how a media form potentially, metaphorically, ideally, and literally communicates with others. Small quantities of media were produced in the past so that they could be conveniently divided and transmitted. Regardless of the abundance of media, modern media forms are supposed to complement each other rather than just being together (Asriyah, 2018; Duriawati et al., 2020; Heick, 2013 January 17).

2.4.3. Social Factors

The process of sharing in social media does not just refer to display or to show an individual's identity or publishing information, also it can be used to make a distinct meaning. Accordingly, the achieved information who shares to who is significant, who is given the information. Therefore, it can form an organized system for searching, sharing, and storing information and lastly reforming media (Asriyah, 2018; Basharat, 2019; Kurniawan, 2020).

2.4.4. Curation

The ability of the information saving process, such as "save to watch or read later" to save posts or videos in social media like YouTube, Pearltrees, Facebook, etc.…, is a type of literacy as the user has enough information on how to save and store the information for later watching (Heick, 2013 January 17). Similarly, it is the capability to comprehend and store the significance of information, that is why it would be more reliable and count as an advantage of the long-term process (Asriyah, 2018; Basharat, 2019 October 22; Heick, 2013 January 17; Kurniawan, 2020).

2.5. Digital Education

Since developing technology continuously has an impact on the education field, incorporating technology into the classroom in a well-developed system, exposes students to a lot of skill practices named multi-literacies. Also, institutions and universities have established and extended DL initiatives to maintain that learners can incorporate digital resources and how to access and produce a range of information creatively (Becker et al., 2017),p. 24). Hence, the term "digital education"

means utilizing digital technology in teaching and learning processes and the applications of digital technology into education (Bayne & Ross, 2011; Emejulu & McGregor, 2019; Goodfellow, 2011; Selwyn, 2011). It is also the teaching and learning framework for incorporating digital technologies. Teachers face the demand to use and educate learners for their role in the globalized digital environment through digital technology innovations. Accordingly, it encourages learners to become digital person by allowing them to learn navigation and digital competencies in this modern era. Thus, education management by the use of emerging technology, plays a vital role, because innovations control all the work of officials, students, families, educators, and EFL teachers (Sadiku et al., 2017). Digital teaching, which means digital media in the virtual platform on a Web application, enables students to learn efficiently. Email, digital audio, multimedia applications, and the online management system involve common digital education tools. The purpose is to make the exchange of educational materials profitable. Moreover, Cloud technology allows for the incorporation of these tools and it offers a high-performance learning experience for learners (Jiang & Xu, 2016). The scientific advances in learning online educational platforms such as Web 2.0 tools, completely allow language teachers to manage their instruction and make it more interesting via these attractive tools and they can increase motivation in students (Monje, 2014). One of the studies conducted by Kayar (2019), highlights the most common Web 2.0 tools that are used by EFL teachers, particularly Turkish teachers which are Kahoot, Quizizz, Google Classroom, Edmodo, Duolingo, Padlet, StoryJumper, Quizlet, Mentimeter, iTalk, etc…, and wikis, Podcasts, Blogs (Özel, 2013).

Continuously, educational institutions are attempting to update their curriculum strategies for ongoing along with the speedup of technological progress. These strategies consist of utilizing computers in the classes, using educational software to instruct their syllabus. Regularly Wikipedia and Google are well-known as the most common websites which are used by learners for daily life searches. Moreover, it can be said that these two fundamental educational tools make modern education easier (Head & Eisenberg, 2009). So, digital technologies have affected the way materials are taught in traditional classrooms. Along with the increased utilization of technology recently, teachers are changing the classical ways of instructing to provide class content on DL principles (Greenhow et al., 2016). Teachers' digital competence will indeed begin during basic teacher preparation and extend during the training, in order to enhance educational development through the use of digital technologies (Silva et al., 2019). Finally, the digital profession is considered to be an important issue in the education process, as well as the successful implementation of new technologies does not just facilitate technological knowledge, but also it can shift teaching practices. Therefore, teachers need to be careful about the potential of resources and integrations via digital technologies and instructional facilities (Srivastava & Dey, 2018).

2.6. DL and EFL Teachers

Umberto Eco says, "If you want to use television to teach somebody, you must first teach them how to use television" (Eco, 1979). With regard to Umberto Eco's speech, teachers are required to do not only teach their students via technologies, but also they need to teach them how to use these digital tools and be digitally literate learners. He proposed that digital technologies should not be viewed as only teaching facilities for learning rather, rather they should be perceived as a necessary requirement for education via digital technologies.

Teachers as a crucial part of the teaching and learning process, are influenced by the modern revolution that has already been produced by technology in this digital age. So, DL would be an essential competence of today's instructional methods. An EFL teacher assumes some responsibilities to establish competence in students (Basharat, 2019). In addition, this digital era has created numerous learning dimensions that were not available in the classical education system. Therefore, education in the twenty-first century is much more challenging compared to the classical one as it requires different abilities that the students and teachers must gain (Suwartono & Aniuranti, 2018). Moreover, teachers' role has been affected by these challenges and complexities in the instruction process. They are demanded by promoting the advancement of technologies, to perform their roles as advisor, manager, and facilitator (Trilling & Fadel, 2009, p. 155). For these reasons, a 21st-century instructor is distinct, and it is unlike a 20th-century instructor. In today's modern world, the presence of an instructor is no longer seen solely. Teachers are required to be ready to develop and be creative, since, today's students no longer receive the teaching process as it was in the 1980s (Fitria & Suminah, 2020). Moreover, technology integrated into the teaching process highlights the fact that every teaching goal requires the use of these technical aspects, but the significant point is that it should be acknowledged that the implementations of the technologies must be guided by well-organized programmes along with the teaching and instruction period (Dockstader, 1999).

Besides, EFL teachers are often faced with a number of limitations in many EFL class settings, such as lack of institutional support, a restrictive school curriculum, and imperfect resources (Zheng & Borg, 2014). A review from the UK claimed that teachers were depressed by some obstacles they tackled with the use of technology, including lack of technological support by the institutions, lack of confidence and certainty in the advantages of using technological tools for their instruction (Jones, 2004). Despite the requests for current English teachers to provide good DL competence, it has been confirmed that digital training in the English teacher education systems has not received real attention (Hubbard, 2008; Kessler, 2006).

In addition, if the teacher does not apply technology in the context it was expected to operate, s/he may not achieve the advantages of the technological expertise in consideration to fulfil his or her academic objectives (Teo & Zhou, 2017). Therefore, teachers need to improve their DL in order to perform their existing responsibilities effectively. Since they feel enough digitally literate instructors, they can instruct students to access searching engines properly. Likewise, they can direct students to be perfect digital individuals, and reduce the digital gaps in their students. Furthermore, they can inspire their students to utilize new platforms, and recommend suitable apps or resources for educating and strengthening their teaching quality (Ghosh, 2020 May 31).

2.7. The importance and the benefits of DL in EFL classes

DL is worldwide required recently in terms of academic achievement, social interaction, and professional attainment, and becoming more progressive in the coming years (Martin, 2006; Murray & Pérez, 2014). It has positively impacted education in general and specifically in EFL teaching classes. Since language classes in the 21st century are no longer grammar-translation or learning from memorization, therefore, there is a need for integrating technology into EFL teaching (Eaton, 2010; Parvin & Salam, 2015). As a result, software apps and technological devices such as computers, smartphones, smartboards, and tablets, have brought many advantages for the instruction process and are more prevalent currently. Digital technologies make teaching EFL classes more attractive, fun, and permanent with its massive and limitless number of interactive software, apps, and tools.

Accordingly, these devices and platforms facilitate and save time, which the teachers can engage lots of students in a short time and can make the lessons active and excited using such technologies (Rodinadze & Zarbazoia, 2012). Also, using technologies in EFL classes can motivate students towards language lessons (Dunkel, 1990), while fun apps and games are integrated into the classroom (Lee, 2000). So, it can be said that fun is a significant advantage in language classes as students need more interesting and fun teaching materials (Galavis, 1998; Warschauer & Healey, 1998). Furthermore, the development of emerging technology and new generations' familiarity with such technologies in the classes will strengthen students' enthusiasm and interest in completing their assignments and activities during and after the lessons (Costley, 2014; Riasati et al., 2012). Another advantage of technology implementation in classes is the reinforcement of teamwork and can communicate together in the learning activities. In addition, (Murphy, 2006), argued that the internet and technological tools can be used both as a resource of knowledge and as a method of interaction linked to the world outside of the classroom. Therefore, the relation between DL and advancement of a professional society, in web-based education strategies or face-to-face, and formal and informal settings will have a vital role in the next coming years (Jeffrey et al., 2011; Kivunja, 2015; Meyers et al., 2013; Prior et al., 2016; Santos & Serpa, 2017). EFL teachers can help students acquire DL skills as part of their language learning process by incorporating technology into tasks and activities. On the other hand, it assures the teachers' goal, which is the students' successful outcomes with the DL skills for being a competent and digitally literate learner. Thus, they maintained that pre and in-service instructor education curriculum will be aimed to understand the significance of novel technologies as well as how to utilize them in their EFL instruction. Teaching and planning lessons take time for teachers, but being competent in DL makes the job easier for them (Dudeney & Hockly, 2016). The tools that can be used to combine specific skills are important, so DL abilities are expected to create efficient use of digital tools namely tablets, laptops, smartphones, or desktop computers (Barltrop, 2018).

To increase the advantages of digital technology for language learning, language learners and teachers need to improve DL skills and techniques (Son et al., 2017). Godwin-Jones, (2016), argued that student training in the implementation of technology is essential that it should be addressed (Godwin-Jones, 2016, p. 5). So, it is crucial for language teachers to teach their students to understand the way of navigating digital tools and facilities for the purpose of language learning efficiently, and knowing how to identify and manage technological devices for learning strategies. Likewise, (Mega, 2020), assumed that abilities and proficiencies are vital to maximizing the advantages of digital technology in education. Basharat, (2019), stated that DL is beneficial for, increasing students' attention, improving academic achievement, and schools' competitiveness will progress as a result of DL (Basharat, 2019). In addition, learning DL offers imperative strategies for practices of technology that can help both instructors and learners advance the skills necessary for the 21st-century (Council, 2000). Vidosavljević & Vidosavljević, (2019), conducted a review article about the importance of teachers' DL. They maintained that DL is significant for teachers in the current environment which is highly surrounded by technologies. Another study was investigated by Soifah et al., (2021), in one of the open-ended questions by the researchers that asked the teacher participants, claimed that teachers were using DL for some factors including, teaching language skills pre or post-class activities, and also for the purpose of listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills. Additionally, they thought that DL is beneficial for providing reliable materials, students' motivation towards learning, and also for having better outcomes of the teaching process (Soifah et al., (2021).

2.8. Review of Related Research about DL in EFL Classes

Recent developments in the teaching and learning process, in which technology has become a basic instructional tool, have led to an improvement in the number of studies on how instructors deal with the obstacles, how is their level of DL, and in what way their level can be developed. Although in the literature, there are studies about integrating DL and ICTs in the field of education, particularly in the EFL context, few studies have been conducted about the role of DL in EFL classes, and most importantly there are insufficient studies on EFL in-service teachers. Only there are certain studies on EFL pre-service teachers.

One of the previous studies by Machmud, (2011), conducted a qualitative study on the issues and challenges in teaching English as Foreign Language (EFL) in Gorontalo, Indonesia. The results indicated that many teachers who have accessibility to technology did not use it because many teachers did not know how to use technological devices and were not inspired to know a lot about digital tools. So, they indicated that they are happy with their classical teaching approach and are unwilling to learn a new approach, including the use of technology in teaching; they did not have enough time to dedicate themselves to the sort of the best teaching reinforced by technological tools (Machmud, 2011). Similarly, Srivastava and Dey (2018), studied the teachers' challenges and problems to examine their perceptions towards the implementation of digital tools in their instruction. It is worth mentioning that their results claimed that teacher participants revealed some obstacles such as lack of internet access, lack of technological supports, lack of instructors' competency, and limited time. Also, they found that females' experience of digital tools was lower compared to the male teachers (Srivastava & Dey, 2018).

Garcia-Martin et al. (2017) conducted a study on 483 pre-service teachers to reveal their perceptions of different dimensions of DL skills in psychological and educational activities. The findings of their study claimed that the views of pre-service teachers regarding the usage of Web 2.0 resources and digital tools in their instruction were positive (Garcia-Martin et al., 2017).

Accordingly, Cote & Milliner (2018) examined the DL of 42 English teachers working at a private Japanese university. In general, their research claimed that teachers in their English curriculum were very confident in promoting their teaching in and out of classes by using digital technology. Also, participants identified the value of improving DL and strongly requested progressive skills (Cote & Milliner, 2018b). Similarly, Albirini (2006) conducted a study on EFL HS teachers' attitudes toward information and communication technologies. The findings of the study cleared that teachers had positive attitudes toward digital tools and using ICT in education (Albirini, 2006). Additionally, (Mollaei & Riasati, 2013), examined the EFL teachers' perceptions of the utilization of technology in their instruction as well as factors that affect integration in Iranian Language Institutes. Their study's outcomes revealed that instructors showed positive viewpoints towards using technology in their EFL teaching. What's more (Chik, 2011; Suwartono & Aniuranti, 2018), Conducted their studies to identify teachers' attitudes and perceptions about DL.

On the other hand, in the Turkish context, there are some studies on attitudes and perceptions of EFL pre-service teachers, however, rare studies bout in-service EFL teachers' DL levels and the role of technological tools in their instruction. Among the studies that have recently been done on EFL teachers' attitudes towards DL and 21st-century skills, can be addressed, as (Şahin & Han, 2020; Üstündağ et al., 2017; Yılmaz et al., 2017). Yukselir and Yuvayapan conducted a study on EFL students' and instructors' perceptions of DL to understand their perceptions towards using digital tools in English language classrooms. Their findings showed that English students and educators'

perceptions of DL focused on a variety of concepts. Their EFL participant students considered DL skills as a tool to reach and analyse information on the internet, whereas these skills serve as a means of social interaction and communication for EFL instructors (Yukselir & Yuvayapan, 2019). Similarly, another study was investigated by Şahin & Han about EFL Teachers' Attitude Towards 21st Century Skills. Their study aimed to investigate EFL teachers' attitudes towards 21st-century skills in one of the cities located in Turkey. The results of their study revealed that EFL teachers had positive attitudes towards P21 skills and implementing technological tools into EFL classrooms (Şahin & Han, 2020). Likewise, Çelik & Aytın investigated Teachers' views on digital educational tools in English language learning. They conducted interviews with 6 HS teachers. Their results revealed that, in contrast to much of the existing research, the participants felt generally confident about their level of technological skills in applying the properties. Furthermore, they found digital tools to be motivated to improve students' attitudes toward language learning, as well as increase their proficiency (Çelik & Aytin, 2014).

Akayoglu et al., (2020), studied Turkish pre-service EFL teachers' practices of DL. Their results stated that pre-service teachers were conscious of various digital tools and consider themselves as sufficient for the private, professional, and academic usage of these digital tools. Their perception of DL was seemed to comprise several levels from information to collaborative, creative, and critical utilization (Akayoglu et al., 2020).

As mentioned before there are few studies on in-service EFL teachers' understandings, views, and thoughts about the role of DL in EFL teaching, so the present study contributes to the literature by providing more information about the importance of DL in EFL instruction. Some characteristics distinguish this study from previous studies. First, this is one of the studies that is done with in-service EFL SS and HS teachers, but in previous studies, they examined pre-service EFL teachers, not with in-service teachers. Second, this study was conducted via online interviews due to the pandemic, while some of the studies mentioned before were conducted via face to face or surveys. Third, the number of the current study's sample is limited to eighteen EFL HS and SS teachers who worked in state schools, while many of the studies mentioned were conducted with private EFL school teachers.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter represents the methodology that was used for this study. Likewise, this chapter gives information about the research design of the study, respondents who have attended the study, data collection tools, data collection technique, and data analysis process will be discussed in detail.

3.2. Research Design of the Study

This study was designed to determine the role of DL in EFL classes with regard to the views of Turkish EFL teachers. Accordingly, to reveal their levels of DL as well as challenges and facilities of using digital tools in their instruction.

As a result, examining a problem demanded certain important steps in order to write proper answers to the research questions. Several key actions are highlighted below in Figure 8 in terms of making it simpler.

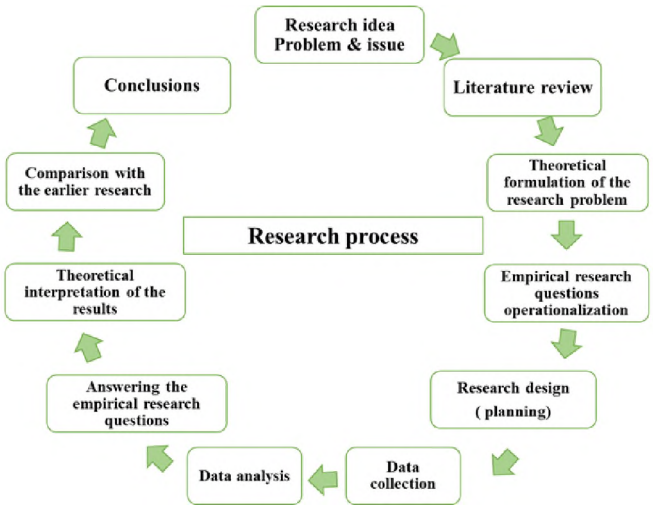

Figure 8. Schematic diagram of the research process in this study retrieved from (TÜMEN AKYILDIZ & AHMED)

Concerning the significant role of qualitative studies in social sciences, the qualitative method was chosen to conduct this study. As quantitative research may not offer the whole understating of the participants' perspectives and opinions about a selected topic. Accordingly, the researcher wanted to improve some research questions which required a depth explanation of the issue (Tümen Akyıldız & Ahmed, 2021). Thus, for achieving depth insights of a group of teachers of having experience related to the selected topic qualitative research was chosen for the present study which is supported by (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Levitt et al., 2017: Manu, 2018)

3.3. Sample of the Study

The sample of the present study were (eighteen Turkish EFL teachers) 9 teachers working in secondary state schools, and 9 teachers working in high state schools, randomly chosen in Elazığ, a city located in the East Anatolian Region of Turkey. They were teaching from 5th to 12th grade. For the SS discussion, 9 teachers (8 females and 1 male) participated in a Zoom meeting for one hour and a half. 9 HS teachers (7 females and 2 males) participated in an online Zoom meeting for one hour and a half. The sampling method used in this study is non-probability and convenience sampling. Due to the coronavirus, the researcher didn't have a chance to collect more than this limited eighteen EFL Turkish teachers, that is why convenience sampling was the most suitable one to collect the sample for the study.

3.4. Data Collection Instrument

As focus group discussion (FGD) seeks to obtain and discover participants' opinions, views, and knowledge about the selected topic. Accordingly, to explore the role of DL and aims for using digital tools, facilities, and challenges in EFL teaching, which may be difficult to achieve in responses to direct IQs, such as personal interviews, this is supported by (Kitzinger, 1995; Krueger, 2014; Krueger & Casey, 2000; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). In the light of the above scholars' points of view, the FGD had been chosen and the data was collected via two Zoom meetings FGDs. One of the FGD contained 9 EFL SS teachers. The other FGD contained 9 EFL HS teachers (see Appendix 3) shows the invitation of the EFL teachers for the Zoom meeting participation.

The FGD interviews were thought to be proper and the participants were able to freely express their opinions without being forced to say or not to say any ideas (Morse et al., 2002). It was also attractive and enjoyable for the participants (Dawson et al., 1993). The FGD also had facilitated the researcher to reach a variety of interaction styles that individuals use in their daily life, like stories, jokes, and debates, so this study's FGDs contained interesting and exchanging opinions between the participants (Krueger, 2014).

The moderator of the present study who managed the Zoom meetings FGD was aware of how to conduct and control the discussion in a very proper way and the participant was very comfortable expressing whatever they want to say about the selected subject. The interviews were held in the Turkish language, the reason for conducting in the Turkish language was to create a more comfortable atmosphere for the sample of the study to express themselves freely. Last and most importantly, the moderator was aware and acknowledged how to be respectful enough and friendly with the respondents as Morse and his colleagues (2002) suggested.

After determining the way of data, a question pool was created to investigate the related literature. Then the questions were consulted by two academics in the Education Faculty to ensure their scope and their appropriateness to the research. Having their suggestions, the questions were

revised accordingly. Finally, the last form of the questions was prepared (see Appendix 4). It was made up of respondents' demographic information and nine main interview Zoom meeting questions aimed to discover EFL teachers' to determine the role of DL in their teaching.

3.5. Data Collection Procedure

Having the research ethics approval from Firat University Social Sciences Ethics Committee (see Appendix 2), and necessary permission obtained from Elazığ National Education Directorate to administer the interviews (see Appendix 1) the researcher started to collect the data.

Two FGDs were held via online Zoom meeting with the participation of the researcher, her supervisor, and a moderator to meet the reliability of the study. The time when this study had been conducted, was the Coronavirus period, so the FGDs were held via online Zoom meetings (Lowenthal et al., 2020), which is a free HD application for meeting online, where the participants can not be together face to face. Similarly, Zoom could be a well-developed alternative for collecting the participants in real-time to discuss the topic (Gunawan et al., 2021). Moreover, two different WhatsApp groups were arranged for both SS and HS teachers, there the researcher informed all about the topic and the group discussion time arrangement to feel free for participating in the exact time and proper for them all. Then for each group, two different times and dates were chosen. After that, the Zoom meeting invitations were sent via the aforementioned WhatsApp for each of the participants' groups (see Appendix 3). Accordingly, the interviews were carried out in the Turkish language to let the respondents feel free to express their perspectives and opinions. Furthermore, the Zoom meetings of the focus group interviews were recorded and stored for providing trustworthiness of the present study as Krueger and Casey (2002) recommended (Krueger & Casey, 2002).

3.6. Data Analysis Procedure

The content analysis was chosen to analyse the obtained data, as it has a vital and has a long history in social science studies (Krippendorff, 2004).

The data analysis process began after the interview. First, the respondents' speeches were converted into text form and reviewed by the supervisor. The supervisor then sent the data to two other academics in the department to meet the reliability of the study. Next, the Turkish context was proofread by three native speakers (see Appendix 5). Comments of respondents' texts were then sent to ensure the reliability of the original data and recordings; this process is supported by Morse et al., (2002). Finally, the data was translated to English and sent to three other academics to review and readiness for inclusion in the study.

The software application used in the present study was Nvivo 12, which enables researchers to organize and analyse a wide range of the data, such as records, pictures, audio, video, questionnaires, and web/social media contents (Edhlund & McDougall, 2019). Moreover, this software computer Programme makes the analysis process easily, methodically, and attentively. In addition, to improve the quality of the research this Programme was chosen (Hilal & Alabri, 2013).

4. FINDINGS and RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter provides the results of the current study for each of the research questions for both SS and HS EFL teachers respectively.

4.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

For each research question, related IQs were analysed and then categories and codes were labelled regarding the frequencies in the content analysis provided by NVivo12. For the privacy of the respondents, personal details are not provided. Instead, the abbreviations were set for the name of the respondents as the first SS teacher (ST1), the second HS teacher (HT2), and it continues respectively to the rest for both groups of respondents.

4.2.1. Findings Related to the First Research Question

RQ1. What does DL mean to EFL teachers?

The analysis of the data for the first research question discovered the views of the Turkish SS and HS EFL teachers about DL. In addition, it provided notable information about the digital tools that they used, the purposes, and the duration of using such digital tools in their instruction.

IQ1. a. *What does DL mean to SS EFL teachers?*

Figure 9 shows the results of the first IQ for the SS teachers, including the categories and codes. Two main categories were created for the definition of DL as stated by the findings of the data analysis. The categories for the definition of DL, according to the Nvivo 12 programme, are 'Digital literacy experience' and 'Digital literacy information'. For the first category digital experience, two codes were assigned (f=5), which are 'using information properly' (f=3) and 'analysing and transmitting information effectively' (f=2). Also for the second category digital information, three main codes were observed (f=9) including 'accessing information' (f=3), 'producing information' (f=3), and the last code 'finding & understanding information' (f=3).

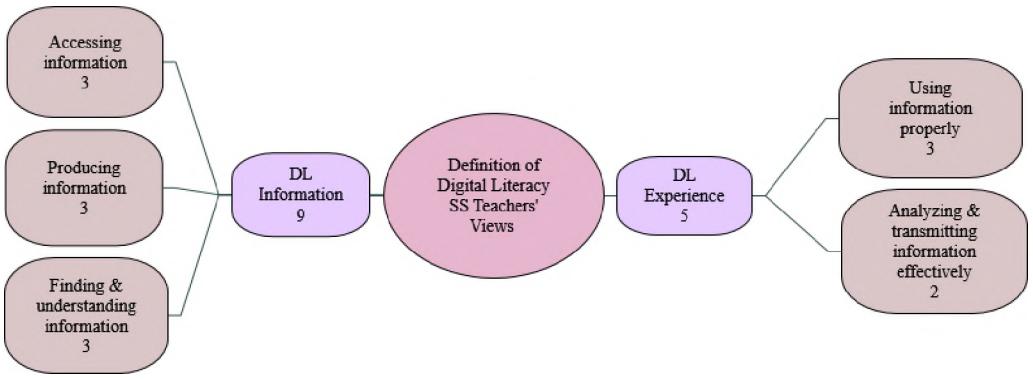

Figure 9. SS Teachers' Definition of DL

Based on the results, some of the SS EFL teachers who participated in the present study defined DL as a 'DL experience', they believed that a digitally literate person is someone who has experience with digital innovations. For instance, ST1 defined DL as *"DL refers to the use of technological*

elements in the acquisition, sharing and transmitting knowledge. In fact, in my point of view, it is important how we use technologies in our life which is called DL. Of course, first, we think about getting information, but how well we use it properly is also significant for us". ST9 insisted that *"DL means the ability to use information in the digital environment, to understand, to grasp, and at the same time to create content. When I think digitally as a teacher, I can think of using digital media efficiently".* Accordingly, ST5 revealed that *"DL is dealing with accessing and using information with technological tools, which means that we can use all kinds of technological devices with the development of technology. Accordingly, how well we can use them is important, and this is not only for computers but for tablets, phones are also available in a variety of digital tools".*

Some of the SS teacher respondents of the present study also focused on 'DL information'. ST5 defined DL as "*DL is dealing with accessing and using information with technological tools, which means that we can use all kinds of technological devices with the development of technology. Accordingly, how well we can use them is important, and this is not only for computers but for tablets, phones are also available in a variety of digital tools*". ST6 as well as declared that DL is "*I can describe DL as accessing or sharing information with others through technological devices. The important thing is how skilled you are at obtaining and sharing the information you have achieved. That is one of the requirements of this century. In fact, since we are in the age of technology, so we need to be digitally literate*". Moreover, ST7 also defined DL as "*I think that DL is the ability to produce, share, and maintain information with the use of technological tools along with their use*". Two of the teachers insisted that DL is as important as normal literacy, e.g. ST3 mentioned that "*For me, DL referring to one of the needs of the 21st century. I can say that DL is a set of knowledge and skills that enable us to live in this increasingly digitalized world, to be a part of this new life, to develop ourselves in this digital life, to learn, to establish cause-effect relationships, and to produce. And this skill is as important to literacy as we know it right now*". Also, ST8 said "*I think that DL is as important as normal literacy, because in the changing and developing world. Technology is everywhere in our life, therefore, it is required for us to use technological tools such as computers, tablets, and phones to access and share information*".

IQ1 b. *What does DL mean to HS EFL teachers?*

On the other hand, Figure 10 provides an overview of the HS teachers' points of view about the definition of DL. According to the results obtained from the data analysis of the definition of DL by HS teachers (f=22), two main categories were created including 'DL experience' and "DL information". For 'DL experience' (f=12) three codes were created according to the results such as 'analysing information' (f=3), 'implementing & using information properly', and 'transferring & sharing information' (f=3). Besides, for the second category, 'DL information' (f=10), four main codes were discovered, including 'accessing information' (f=2), 'entering and finding safe information' (f=4), 'producing information' (f=2), and 'understanding information'.

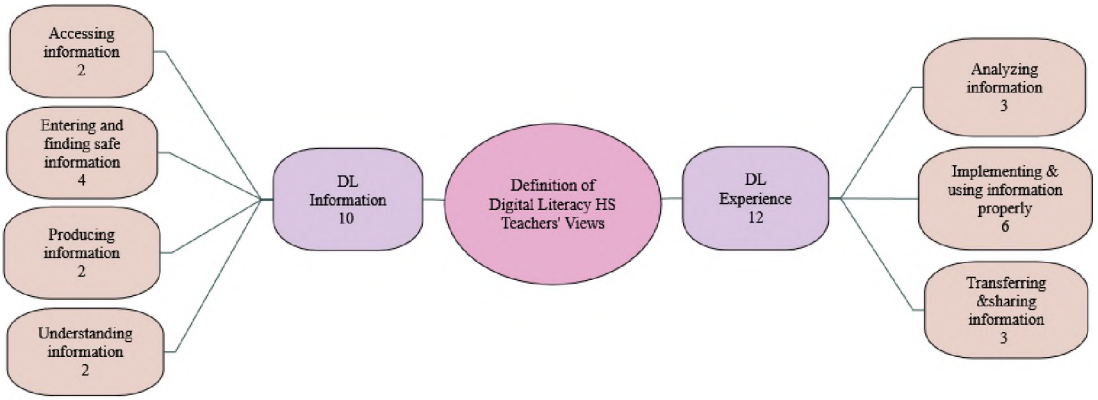

Figure 10. HS Teachers' Definition of DL

Most of the HS teacher samples of this study were insisted on the DL experience and having information rather than just reading and writing online. As specified by HT1 *"DL is the ability to use and utilize devices with internet connectivity such as smartphones, tablets, computers, and to find, understand and share much different information with the help of these devices. Finally, actively transfer them to students in order to share information"*. As also claimed by HT3 *"In my opinion, DL means being able to understand and use the information in digital environments and to implement it effectively. Although we were not born in a digital environment, we are currently trying to be digitally literate. In summary, I can define DL as obtaining and using information correctly through a tablet, phone, computer, and Web 2.0 tools"*. HT5 *"In my opinion, DL means using and analysing all technological tools in this digital age, and to be able to integrate the more useful ones into everyday life and education system". HT8 "DL is very important for us to be able to transfer the information in the digital environment to our students in the best way. Since so much information is available on the internet or from other Google search engines, I can sort them in the best way and distinguish which ones are useful for our students and which ones are not, and accordingly, I can define them by transferring the information in the best way"*.

Answers for digital information (f=10), ten comments were perceived as believed by some of the HS teacher respondents. HT2 "*in my opinion DL means the ability to make effective use of digital tools in our distance or face-to-face education, and also, to be aware which digital tool we can use for which skill. Most importantly, to be able to choose the sufficient and necessary tool according to the capacity and perception of our students*". HT4 "*In parallel with technological developments, all of these smart devices that we currently use like the ability to produce, find, analyse or use information together with all of them*". HT6 *"I can define DL as access to use Web 2.0 tools, smartphones, computers, tablets, etc. Since all the devices are connected to the internet and entered into our lives quickly and rapidly with this distance education and coronavirus period. Therefore, we have to develop the ability to understand internet devices correctly in the teaching process. Moreover, we need to teach our students how to use these digital tools safely and properly for the learning purpose"*. As claimed by HT7 DL is *"DL can be described as the ability to access, analyse, produce, and share information with all kinds of smart devices in a proper way. In fact, for me, DL sounds like the Noah's Flood in the education field. In other words, it is like a process that we are starting to go back completely from the first point. As it's clear, digital technologies are advancing so we need to practice more, and sometimes I feel foreign for some innovations so we are trying to progress ourselves to be digitally literate teachers"*. The last definition according to HT9 for DL is

that *"DL means to be able to enter safely in virtual environments and use it most beneficially. Likewise, finding the right information is so important in this digital era"*.

IQ2. a. *What kind of digital tools do SS use in their EFL instruction?*

Figure 11 reveals the findings related to the first IQ for the SS teachers, the categories, and the codes. Observing the answers of the SS teacher respondents of the study about the kinds of digital tools used by the SS teachers, two basic categories were designed including 'interactive learning digital tools' (f=9) and 'digital devices' (f=9).

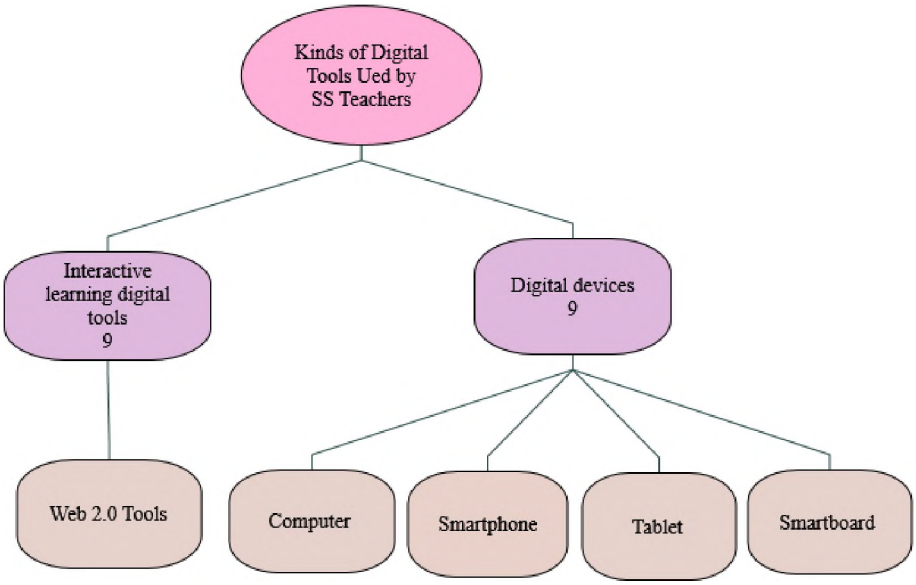

Figure 11. Kinds of digital tools used by SS teachers

The SS teachers employed four different kinds of digital devices, including computers, smartphones, tablets, and in school smartboards. All of them were claimed that they use various kinds of digital tools, but mostly they used their phone for daily assignments in their instruction. They also proclaimed that they used interactive digital tools such as web 2.0 tools. ST3 highlighted *"I can say that the rate of using digital tools in my lessons increased and diversified during the pandemic period. I can say that the tools I could use in face-to-face training such as PowerPoint or Prezi, and various tools provided by the smartboard were classical. However, due to the fact that their children are at home and our lessons are completely digitalized, I used different tools for 1 year. I started using different websites with games and exercises in my lessons. I use all the tools of WhatsApp or Telegram for voice recording, image, and video. In Zoom, I use the Chatbox actively; I use YouTube for video purposes and a site called Wooclap for open-ended questions, multiple-choice questions, surveys, and word cloud preparation works. There are also online trial preparation sites for 8th grade"*. ST4 noted *"At the point of accessing information, I use the computer more than the phone, but that in school there are drawing tablets alongside smartboards and computers. I try to use some of the content and then I prepare in digital drawing and show it to students in the form of animation. Generally speaking, in the classroom environment; I use devices such as smart boards and projectors. During the lesson, I use interactive games, puzzles, etc. I also use Web 2.0 tools"*. ST7 assisted *"I am not on the computer, but rather with my phone. I do all my work, and, online classes, by phone in terms of reaching information and spreading information. So I do not use the Computer*

much. At school, we teach lessons completely by smartboard". ST9 *also claimed "for online classes, I use mostly my computer. However, it depends on situations, for example, when my students' respond to assignments or send homework, I use my phone to check them out".*

IQ2. b. *What kind of digital tools do HS teachers use in their EFL instruction?*

Figure 12 shows the findings related to the first IQ for the HS teachers, the categories, and the codes. Two fundamental categories were developed based on the responses of the HS teacher respondents of this study to the IQ about the types of digital tools utilized by HS teachers: 'interactive learning digital tools' (f=9) and 'digital devices' (f=9).

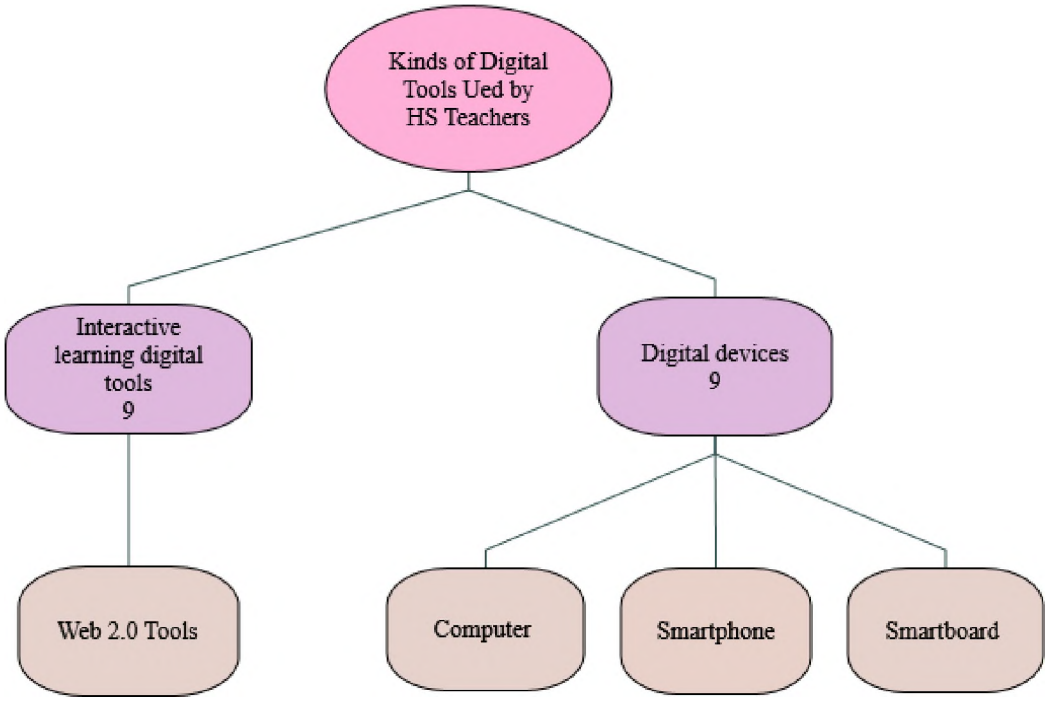

Figure 12. Kinds of digital tools used by HS teachers

The HS teachers of the study also stated that they are using digital devices such as smartboards, computers, and smartphones but mostly they used computers in their instruction. The teachers said that they use computers mostly because it's easier for sharing purposes, especially when they use interactive tools like Web 2.0 Tools, which include many games and interesting and beneficial platforms for English language teaching. For instance, HT2 noted *"I am using Web 2.0 Tools in particular. I prefer the ones that have fun elements to get students' attention. Sometimes, my students love Kahoot very much, and at the end of each lesson they ask me "let's open", "let's, open teacher". Moreover, my students are HS and young who love fun more, so what makes them fun I try to choose it to practice. We always make the decision together with my students because the students in our age group are big and their awareness is high. Therefore, we can study our lessons more comfortably and easily using these tools".* HT3 *"we mostly try to prepare and prepare interactive materials during this pandemic period and in case of excessive use of digital tools. Mostly, in my instruction, I use Web 2.0 tools, such as Kahoot, Quizizz, Google forms, Google docs, Mentimeter, Edpuzzle, Edmodo, and Padlet".* HT5 as well highlighted *"I use to use Web 2.0 Tools more, including Quizizz, Kahoot, Google forms, Google docs, Mentimeter, Edmodo, Edpuzzle, and Padlet, etc... Because they are in a wide variety of genres, and when we try to use them one by one, students can prepare content*

in a very different way and solve the questions easily using these Web 2.0 Tools. Even Web 2.0 Tools alone can be sufficient, so in my own perspective, I can state that the most active and replacement tools are web 2.0 Tools". HT6 proclaimed *"I would like to introduce some digital tools that I use for teaching in my EFL classes. I always use Web 2.0 Tools in my instruction including the following; Writing; StoryJumper, Google presentation, Padlet, Awwapp. Speaking; Chatterpix. Listening: live worksheet.com. Songs from the site. Reading: reading passages of the book. Feedback and teach: Kahoot and quizzes. I can also add that Kahoot and quizzes are very useful and beneficial for speaking via dialogue. So in my opinion, Kahoot & quizzes work really properly for grammar and vocabulary. Furthermore, for sending assignments I use WhatsApp. In summary, playing Kahoot allows writing simultaneously, checking their writing, and teaching the subject with fun".* HT9 *"Web 2.0 tools, because I think these tools are what we need more in our classes. I try to learn about new programmes, and I participate in professional in-service training. Finally, we need to overhead at slightly higher levels. That's why we do a lot with the Web 2.0 Tools, including Quizzes, Kahoot, Quizlet, Edpuzzle, Google forms, Google docs, etc.…"*

IQ3. a. *For what purposes do SS teachers use digital tools in their EFL instruction?*

Figure 13 shows the results of the SS teachers' third IQ, the categories, and the codes. According to the teacher respondents of this study for this IQ, two main categories were formed which are 'linguistic purposes' (f=11) within 4 codes, and 'pedagogical purposes' (f=17) within five codes.

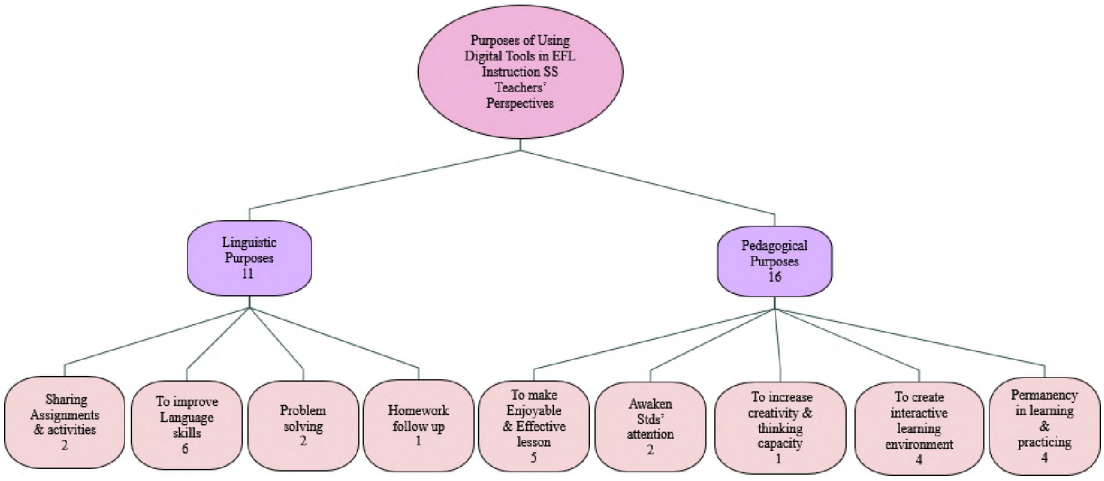

Figure 13. Purposes of using digital tools by the SS teachers

Regarding the SS teachers' answers for the first category 'linguistic purposes', eleven comments were prepared. They indicated that their purpose of using such digital tools was for 'linguistic purpose' (f=11). Most of the teachers insisted that they used digital tools for improving students' language skills. ST2 stated *"I use the digital tools for the purpose of teaching skills and making the lesson enjoyable. Sometimes I use it as an attention-grabbing tool at the beginning of the lesson, and sometimes for practise throughout the lesson, also occasionally for reinforcement after the lesson is over".* ST6 declared "*In my opinion, especially since we are language teachers, children can always understand what we are saying. That's why we can show the visual materials on the smartboard to the students while practising words. We know from presentations or watching videos. We can still use digital tools while doing listening activities. I frequently use videos and slides so*

that the lessons progress more interactively and the materials appeal to all sense organs. The language lesson is a more challenging lesson for students because they witness unfamiliar structures and conversations. Nowadays, thanks to digital tools, it is easier for students to become familiar with the language. Visuals and music play an important role in achieving this goal. ST7 proclaimed *"I use it mostly for listening purposes to ensure permanence with visuals, such as YouTube, additionally, I use it for watching videos, and I do not completely rely on MEB's book".* ST8 stated, *"I use it for various skills, including listening, grammar, and reading".*

The second code for linguistic purposes was sharing assignments and activities. ST1 "*I use digital tools to design educational contents, share materials and activities that I work on, share and control assignments, plan and share those plans, and organize students*". ST9 declared "*I use digital tools such as my phone to send those assignments or their home works and activities which is easier than before for us to share everything in a minute*".

Another code for this linguistic purpose category was problem-solving (f=2). ST7 demonstrated that one of the purposes of using digital tools was for problem-solving, *"Sometimes, I can also use it in terms of problem-solving, and usually with demonstrating pictures".* Also, ST8 stated, "*I usually use it in more lessons, for 8th-grade students, more specifically for solving problems together".* The final code for linguistic purposes was homework follow-up (f=1), which was only indicated by one of the samples of the study. ST5 insisted that *"I use it for presentations and homework follow-up. There are some websites where students can do their homework. So, as a teacher, you can see how many people have done that test or that homework, or you can see how right and wrong the person doing it. I just send a link to the student, that's how I do it in homework follow-up. I usually use it for word and topic repetition as well".*

The second category of the purposes of using digital tools by the Turkish EFL and SS teachers was 'pedagogical purposes' (f=16), within five different codes.

The majority of the teacher respondents of the study stated that they use digital tools to 'make enjoyable and effective lesson' (f=5). ST2 claimed, *"I use digital tools mostly for the goal of making the lesson more enjoyable and effective for my students to make them like and participate with joyful".* ST4 stated, *"I use it to reinforce learning, and use the tools to make it more effective and permanent".* ST9 declared *"I use such digital tools because they make the lesson more fun and effective, and also I use it to make it more specific because these tools are very suitable for language lessons in my viewpoint".*

The second code for the pedagogical purposes was 'awakened student's attention' (f=2). For that, ST2 stated, "*I use it as an attention-grabbing tool at the beginning of the lesson to awaken them and make them attend the lesson actively*". ST3 claimed, "*I use digital tools to get students' attention, awaken their interest, diversity, make the lesson being extraordinary, and make students more creative*". Another code was 'to increase creativity and thinking capacity' that was highlighted by one of the teachers, ST3 who claimed, "*I always use digital tools to make students more creative, because of their individuality and flexibility, these digital tools provide freedom for students in the learning process. It can also make the student more productive or creative*".

Another code was 'to create an interactive learning environment and reinforcement' (f=4). Four comments were formed for this code in accordance with the teacher respondents of the study. Therefore, T1 stated, *"I use these tools mostly to prepare materials before the lesson, and I use such games, songs, videos as activities to make the lesson more interactive".* ST2 claimed, *"Sometimes I use it as an attention-grabbing tool at the beginning of the lesson, and sometimes for practise*

throughout the lesson, also occasionally for reinforcement after the lesson is over". ST4 stated, *"I use it to reinforce learning, and use the tools to make it more effective and permanent".* And ST6 declared *"We can still use digital tools while doing listening activities. I frequently use videos and slides so that the lessons progress more interactively and the materials appeal to all sense organs. The language lesson is a more challenging lesson for students because they witness unfamiliar structures and conversations. Nowadays, thanks to digital tools, it is easier for students to become familiar with the language. Visuals and music play an important role in achieving this goal".*

The last code for the main category of pedagogical purposes was to ensure "permanency in learning and practicing words" (f=4). Thus, ST4 stated, *"I can say I use digital tools in my language classes to ensure permanency in students' learning and to make it more effective because there are various new technological tools that are useful for us as an English language teacher".* ST7 declared, *"I use it mostly for listening purposes to ensure permanence with visuals, such as YouTube, additionally, I use it for watching videos, and I do not completely rely on MEB's book".* ST2 stated, *"I use different kinds of digital tools for practising, especially for practising words, which are beneficial for students learning language vocabulary".* ST6 remarked *"Yes, especially since we are language teachers, children can always understand what we are saying. That's why we can show the visual materials on the smartboard to the students while practising words. We know from presentations or watching videos. We can still use digital tools while doing listening activities".*

IQ3. b. *For what purposes do HS teachers use digital tools in their EFL instruction?*

Findings concerning the third IQ for the HS teacher respondents of the present study are revealed in Figure 14. It is illustrated the HS teachers' answer for the purposes of using digital tools in their instructions. Accordingly, two main categories were shaped as 'linguistic purposes' and 'pedagogical purposes'. Observing to linguistic purposes (f=13) and at the same time pedagogical purposes (f=13).

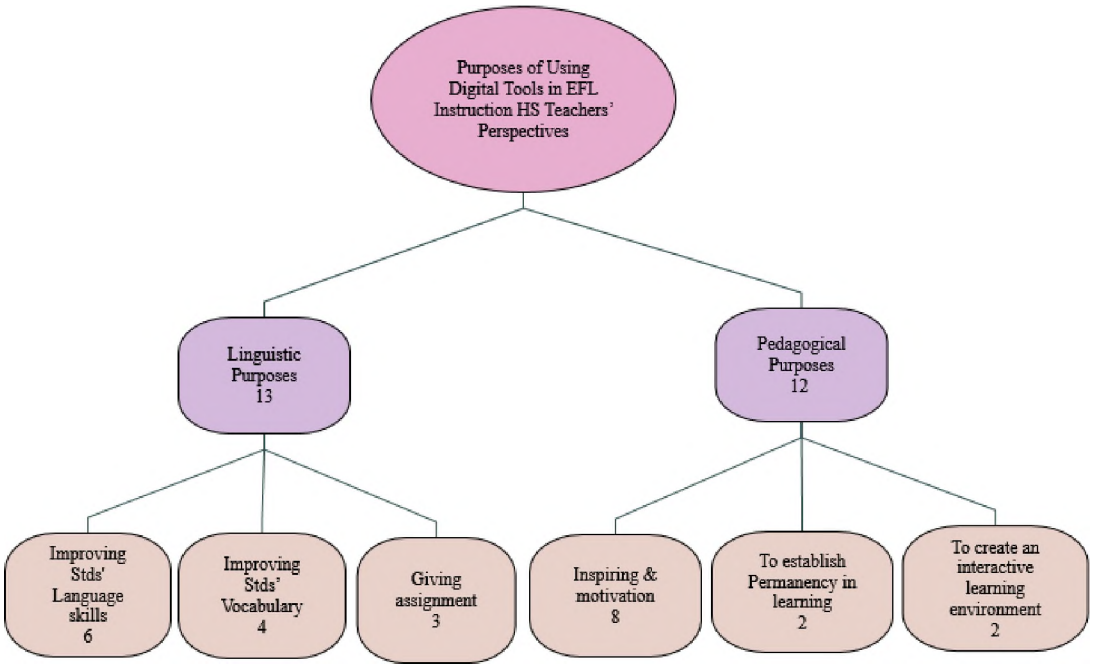

Figure 14. Purposes of using digital tools by the HS teachers

Thirteen comments (f=13) were arranged for the HS teachers' answers for the first category linguistic purposes, and three primary codes were generated for this category responding to their answers. More than half of the HS teachers who took part in the study said that they used digital resources to help their students improve their language abilities (f=6). HT1 stated, *"I use digital tools for certain purposes, including making it easier and more enjoyable for the student to learn the language, as it is clear nowadays there are lots of interesting digital tools that make students learn with fun"*. HT3 asserted, *"I use the digital tools to reinforce and measure vocabulary, grammar, speaking, listening, and reading skills, and brainstorming"*. HT6 revealed, *"I always use the Web 2.0 Tools in my instruction including the following; Writing; StoryJumper, Google presentation, Padlet, Awwapp. Speaking; Chatterpix. Listening: live worksheet.com. Songs from the site. Reading: reading passages of the book. Feedback and teach: Kahoot and quizzes. I can also add that Kahoot and quizzes are very useful and beneficial for speaking via dialogue"*. HT9 communicated, *"I use Kahoot and Quizlet tools for learning words and quizzes. For grammar and vocabulary, I use Edpuzzle, Edpuzzle, and videos because I can edit and send them and ask questions. Through the online education, I use Google form for writing purpose"*.

The second code is to 'improve students' vocabularies' (f=4), according to the HS teachers' views. For this, HT3 stated, *"I use the digital tools to reinforce and measure vocabulary"*. HT6 declared, *"I use digital tools for students' improving vocabulary, and I can say, Kahoot and quizzes work really properly for grammar and vocabulary learning that I always use them in my language instruction as an English language teacher"*. HT7 insisted that *"one of the purposes of using kinds of digital tools is to increase students' vocabulary. Furthermore, I highly recommend Kahoot!, the application which I think it's so beneficial for learning and improving vocabulary"*. HT9 revealed, *"in my opinion, digital tools are beneficial for grammar and vocabulary, personally, I use Edpuzzle, and videos because I can edit and send them, also I can ask questions easily"*.

'Giving assignments' (f=3) is the third and final code for 'linguistic purposes'. Therefore, HT2 declared, *"I use digital tools for reinforcement of topics giving my students' assignments, sometimes I will send them assignments via WhatsApp and other digital tools"*. T6 stated that *"they used digital tools such as WhatsApp for sending assignments to their students, which makes it easier to send assignments via digital tools than the traditional instruction"*.

Thirteen comments (f=13) and four codes were formed in accordance with the instructional aims. The first code is 'inspiring and motivation' (f=8) which was mostly recommended by the HS teachers of the study as a way to inspire their students and motivate them to learn the language using digital tools. HT2 stated, *"Some of the digital tools work very well while some others do not. Each class does not have a unique environment, which makes it to be different from the other classes, so I can say that even each student's perception is different. So we as language teachers have to find specific digital tools to motivate our students and inspire them to participate in the lesson eagerly"*. HT3 declared, *"I think, using digital tools is very effective in increasing students' learning language in a fun way and increasing their motivation"*. HT5 revealed, *"I especially use the digital tools to motivate them to learn the language while they specifically use these tools. They have the digital devices at their disposal and extremely motivated them to learn, therefore, we try to motivate those students who use more tools for educational purposes than social purposes. We try to focus more on the beneficial tools in our instruction"*. HT8 highlighted, *"I usually try to use interactive teaching methods to make the lesson effective and increase students' motivation to learn the language via beneficial tools"*.

The second code conferring to the pedagogical purposes of the teacher respondents answer is 'to establish permanency in learning' which is (f=2). HT4 claimed that *"I use different kinds of digital tools to make the information more permanent by making the lesson fun and attractive"*. HT7 supported that *"One of the purposes that I use the digital tools in my language class is to make the subject and content of the lesson permanent and to learn by having fun with the using of these tools"*

The last code related to the respondents' answers to this IQ is 'to create an environment'. HT1 stated, *"Personally, I can claim the fact that I use digital tools to avoid boredom and to create an interactive learning environment for my students in the classroom"*. HT8 declared, *"I usually try to use interactive teaching methods to make the lesson effective and make an interactive learning environment. Generally speaking, I use interactive methods in my language teaching"*.

IQ4. a. *How many hours do SS teachers spend using digital tools?*

Findings related to the fourth IQ for the SS teachers of the present study. Figure 15 simplifies SS teachers' duration and purposes of using digital tools. Two basic categories were discovered after analysing the data. Examining the SS teachers' answers, the first category was recognized as 'general duration of using digital tools' (f=9) and the second recognized as 'purposes of the duration of using digital tools' (f=9).

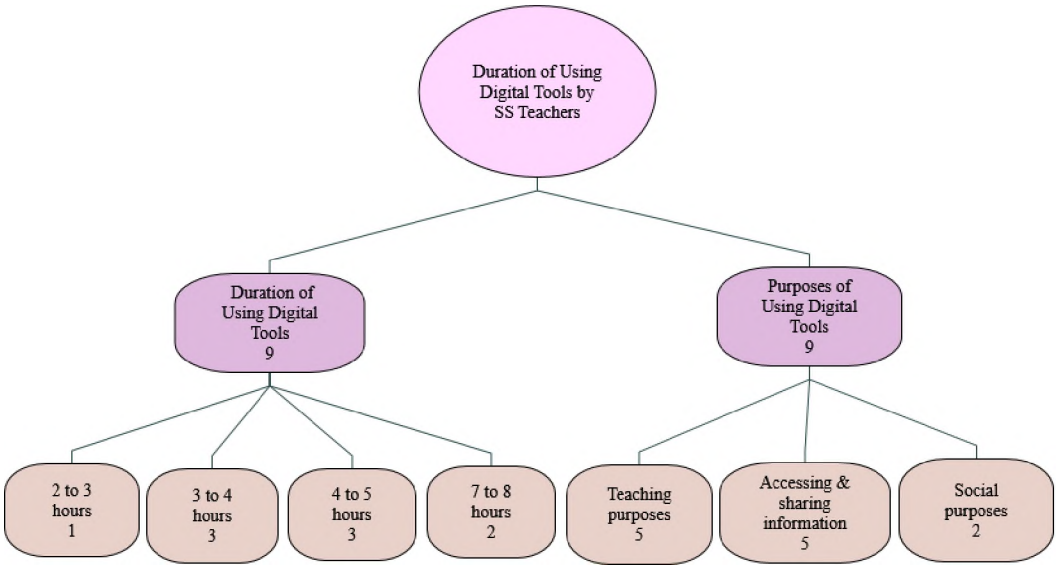

Figure 15. Duration of using digital tools by SS teachers

According to the answers of the SS teachers, two main categories formed, including 'the duration of using digital tools' and 'the purpose of that duration of using digital tools' via the samples of the study. ST3 noted *"I can say at least 3 hours, but this period can be changed from day to day. I give an example; this was longer during my thesis writing period because I had to search constantly. In addition, these 3 hours are mostly for accessing or sharing information. Since I am not someone who uses technology for leisure or entertainment purposes, I use all tools for research, news, and learning"*. From three to four hours T9 confirmed, *"I can say I spend 3 or 4 hours per day. On weekdays, a little less than two and a half hours. This gets even more intense over the weekend. Generally, I use it in the sense of acquiring and sharing information, but there are times when I use it socially"*. From four to five hours ST2 declared, *"I am not a very active user of social media, and I try to limit the use of the phone and computer as much as possible because as a teacher most of my*

time is spent in online classes using the computer. In addition to the lecture phase, I need to spend time in front of the computer in preparation and material procurement". ST6 stated, *"During the pandemic and throughout the online classes, this period increased to 4-5 hours per day. This time is increased according to my daily schedule. In addition to the execution phase of the lesson, the preparation phase for the lesson is also included in this period. It takes extra time and effort to bring our materials online. This increases the time we spend with digital tools. Apart from my teaching process, I also use digital devices for my graduate courses. We actively use technological devices while reading or preparing for lessons"*. From six to seven hours two of the teachers used digital tools between six to eight hours for instance ST4 assumed, *"I spend nearly 8 hours, for accessing information, my own interest and because of the commission participation I mentioned recently. Sometimes 8 hours, it's taking too long for me"*. ST7 noted, *"I think I use it for an average of 6 to 7 hours, but I can say 3 hours on average for achieving information. So it's the same at school and home, and I use almost all of it to access information and online lessons. Because I do not make extra unnecessary applications, I only use them for information purposes"*.

IQ4. b. *How many hours do HS teachers spend using digital tools?*

Figure 16 simplifies the findings relating to the fourth IQ for the HS teachers of the present study. They revealed the duration and purposes of using digital tools. Two basic categories were discovered after analysing the data. The first category was identified as 'general duration of using digital tools' (f=9), while the second was identified as 'purposes of the duration of using digital tools' (f=9), based on the HS teachers' responses.

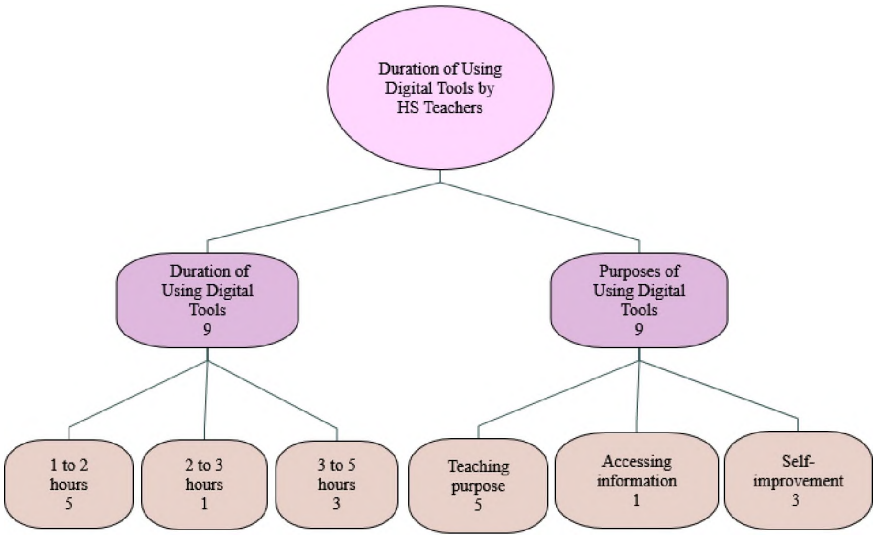

Figure 16. The duration of using digital tools by HS teachers

In the line with the answers of the HS teachers, the general duration of using digital tools was between one and six hours. Three codes formed as 'teaching purposes' (f=5), 'accessing information', and 'self-improvement'. The teachers' answers about one to two hours a day (f=5) are as follows: HT2 claimed, "*I use the digital tools about an hour a day to search for the information and needs of my students*". HT4 announced, "*I can say 1 hour a day. I use this as a preference, not in language teaching, but as an investment in self-development. So at least 1 hour a day*". HT7 stated, "*I believe it is not something we do regularly every day. In other words, it changes sometimes when*

we look at each day or even weekly schedule in our daily life, but generally, I can say one hour. 1 hour for information about the language instruction or language learning and teaching process". HT8 notified, "*I can say that I spend 1 to 2 hours researching the needs of students. Likewise, I search a lot of YouTube channels to teach my students effectively, also provide lessons through PowerPoint presentations for more impact. And I spend some hours with Zoom meetings for online lessons*". For the second code, two to three hours a day (f=1) HT1 proclaimed, *"I can say that I spend 2 to 3 hours a day, but this time is not always the same, it depends on what I want to investigate daily. I spend an average of 1 hour accessing and sharing information, and sometimes that changes and takes more than one hour"*. The third code for three to five hours per day (f=3), HT5 revealed, "At least 4 hours. For informational purposes and teaching purposes only, I do say so myself". T6 stated, *"I spend 3-5 hours, including 3 hours online lessons such as researching digital tools, explaining the tasks to the students, and the rest for educational purposes as well. I am also trying to improve myself"*. HT9 declared, *"Overall 4 hours. I do a lot of work such as meetings and lectures and projects such as external, media, and I become more familiar with the digital tools in this process. So there is very little time left to spend on social media. I can say 1 and a half hours for both learning and improving myself"*.

4.2.2. Findings Related to the Second Research Questions

4.2.3. RQ2. How does the DL level of (SS & HS) EFL teachers affect their teaching?

IQ5. a. *What is the DL level of SS teachers*?

Figure 17 shows the results of the fifth IQ for the SS teachers in this study, which confirms their DL level. Two basic categories were discovered after the analysis of data. Examining the SS teachers' answers for the first category was recognized as "competent enough" (f=11) and 'not competent enough' (f=2).

According to the responses of the SS teachers when asked about their degree of DL, the majority of them, approximately seven teachers, stated that they are sufficient and competent enough when utilizing digital tools. They also revealed some reasons for their being competent DL level which is (f=11). Apart from that, only two of the teachers insisted that they are not competent enough, which revealed reasons for not being competent enough (f=2).

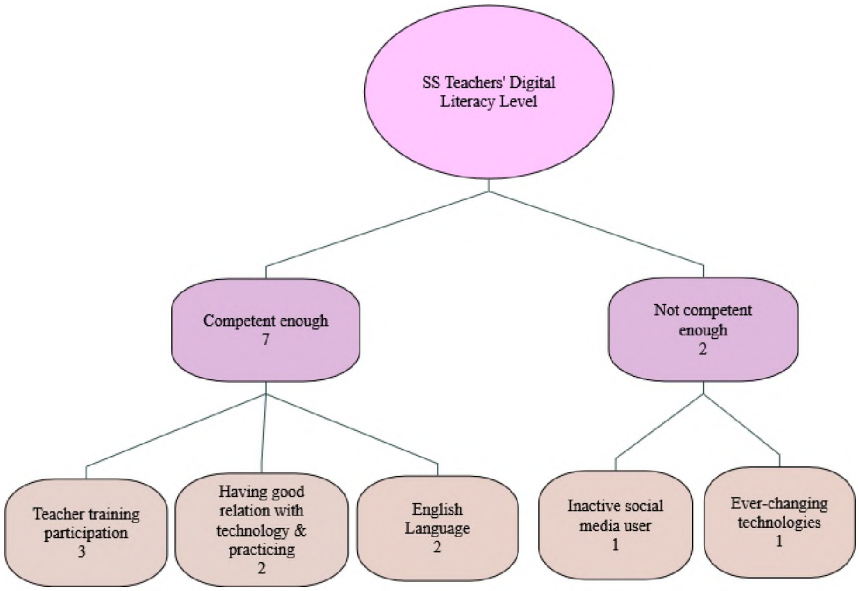

Figure 17. SS teachers' DL level

The first category was found competent enough (f=7), with its three main codes, according to the data evaluated for this IQ. The first code that was mentioned by three of the teachers is 'teacher training participation' (f=3). Accordingly, they claimed that because they had participated in teacher training courses, they had a high DL level, therefore, they feel competent enough. ST3 stated, "*I feel competent enough. Openly, I find my DL level sufficient. I say this by comparing myself with the environment and people around me, because usually when my colleagues are in a place where they hang out like that. Of course, DL is not just using this device or using an application as we said, but it was something more general. I used to use every feature of the ZOOM, and I found myself sufficient in this respect. The Ministry of National Education published a DL feature guide and teacher training courses for teachers. I think this guide and courses are something that shows my new level of DL. But of course, there is also more to be literate, since the digital world is a world that is constantly being renewed, i.e., it does not mean that being enough today will be enough tomorrow. Of course, we are constantly in exploration. I also think we need to be in continuous improvement. Finally, if I am not a digitally literate teacher, I would not attend seminars to improve my DL level and would not integrate the recommended digital tools mentioned in these seminars into my lessons. Thanks to the seminars I attended, I became aware of several digital tools that I mentioned above, and thanks to my own research and curiosity I became aware of some of them".* ST4 declared *"I feel competent enough. I am currently working on a digital content development commission. If you had asked before the training course, in fact, I did not feel that enough, but now we have produced and produced and reached more both written and visual. It really is becoming a part of my life. I know these kinds of things, that's why I can say I feel competent".* ST5 pointed out, *"In my undergraduate degree, we took three semesters of practical learning, which had an undeniable effect in every sense for having a good level of DL".*

The second code and the reason for being competent enough, according to the teachers' answers created as 'having good relation with technology and practising' (f=2), which is the most highlighted factor mentioned by the teachers. Accordingly, ST5 considered *"I have always had a good relationship with technology, and in my undergraduate degree, we took three semesters of*

practical learning, which had an undeniable effect in every sense. I am interested in DL, and I would like to master it. I believe that technological features make my job, my profession, or my personal work easier in daily life. That's why I am trying to learn everything that makes the job easier in a complete pragmatist way. I also try to learn more. I consider myself competent in this sense, therefore I choose to be competent enough". ST9 indicated, *"I feel competent enough when I think about accessing, producing, and sharing information. I am a member of many channels on Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, so as a teacher, I think that in my lessons or my social life, I have quickly accessed any digital innovation, digital situation, or any other information that could be useful for me through these channels. That's why I think my DL is at a good level".*

The third and the last code that was created for the category of 'competent enough' was 'English language' (f=2). ST1 remarked, "*I can say think my DL level is good and I choose the option of competent enough. I think we're good at it, whether at school or in our life. As an English language teacher, I think language is one of the factors that makes us really good users of digital technologies. In this regard, I feel sufficient*". T8 stated "*Yes, I feel competent enough, in terms of reaching and spreading information, because knowing the language can give us a lot of advantages. That's why I think I am at a good point*".

IO5. b. *What is the DL level of HS teachers?*

Figure 18 shows the results of the fifth IQ for the HS teachers in this study, which clarifies the DL level of the HS teachers. Once the answers of the HS instructors were examined, the first category was determined to be "competent enough" (f=2) and the second was recognized as 'not competent enough' (f=7).

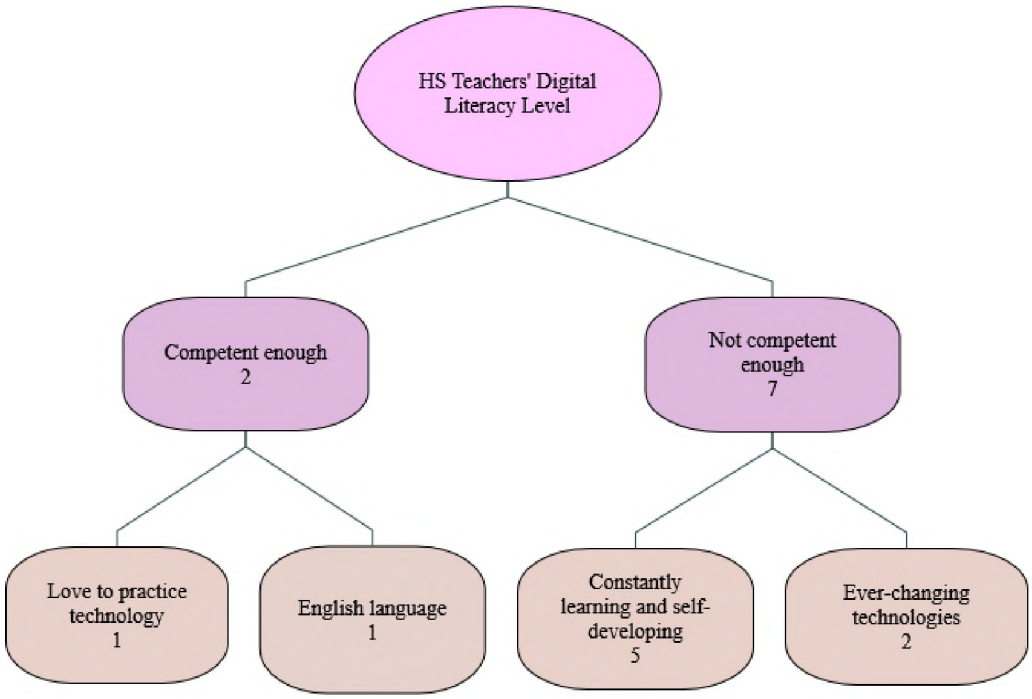

Figure 18. HS teachers' DL level

Observing the analysis of the data and the findings showed that most of the HS teachers in this study insisted on 'not feeling competent enough'. Several possible factors for this finding have been realized which can be addressed based on the teachers' explanations. One of the possible satisfactory

explanations for the HS teachers that they did not feel competent enough was due to the ever-changing technologies nowadays they required more and more practice. Another possible reason for this was that they insisted on constantly learning and developing their digital skills. The majority of the HS teachers of the study highlighted the fact that they did not feel competent enough (f=7).

For the first category, two codes were formed as 'love to practice technology' (f=1). HT1 noted "*I can say I am competent enough user of digital tools nowadays, I think the reason is that we are English language teachers and we can find anything with the help of the English language*". The second code 'English language' (f=1) was also indicated by one of the teachers. HT5 claimed *"I want to say option A which is competent enough because I love working with lots of technological tools. As English teachers, we have to be digitally literate. In this case, I find myself competent enough due to more practicing on technological devices and tools"*. Apart from that, two main codes were created for the second category: 'constantly learning and self-developing' (f=5) and 'ever-changing technologies' (f=2).

Five of the teachers insisted on constant learning and self-development. HT3 indicated "*I feel, I am neither competent enough, nor incompetent, so I can say that I am in between competent and incompetent because in my opinion we need constantly learning and developing due to the innovations of technologies*". HT4 stated "*Actually, I have to say that between being competent and not competent is developing because in this digital era everything is not static especially for education. So, we are all need constantly learn and devdevelop*HT6 noted "*I do not say option A. I mean, I do not say that I am very good, but my husband helps me a lot since he has taught me more about digital tools. I choose between A and B. I think there is still much more to learn about DL*". HT7 said "*I can say something between competent and not competent enough, the reason is that we as a teacher need more learning about new digital tools so in this way I can not say I am competent*". HT9 stated, "*To be honest, I can not say the option of being competent enough exactly, but it is so close to A, although I work with digital tools daily, still we need more to be literate, that is why I choose neutrality*". The second code is 'ever-changing technologies' which was claimed by two of the teachers. HT2 clarified, "*I can say that I am not very competent enough and not very incompetent, so I can feel neutral in using digital tools as it is clear the technologies are progressing so we need more and more practices to be competent enough and use them well in our instruction*". HT8 stated, "*I do not feel competent enough, and also because of the corona period, we have all developed our DL, but with the advances of new technologies and ever-changing of such digital devices and tools we still have a long way to go and more to learn*".

IQ6. a. *How does SS teachers' DL level affect their instruction?*

Figure 19 depicts SS teachers' DL impacts on their instruction in response to the sixth IQ in the current study. One main category was prepared after the analysis of data. Examining their answers, the first category was recognized as "Positive impact" (f=27).

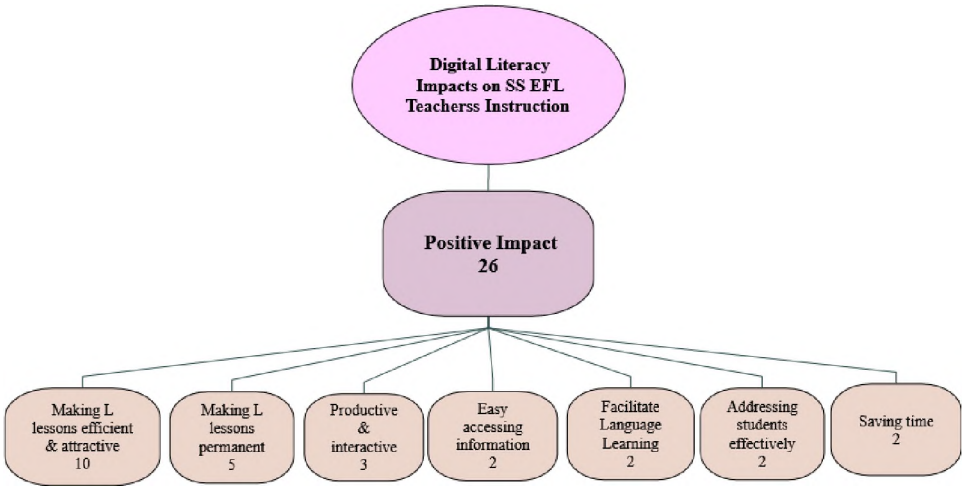

Figure 19. DL impacts on ST EFL teachers' instruction

When the teacher respondents of the study were asked about the impacts of DL levels on their instruction, the findings revealed that most of the teachers agreed that their level had a positive impact on their instruction. Twenty-six comments were created according to their answers (f=26). Similarly, seven codes were created: the first and the most focused is 'making the language lessen effective and attractive' (f=10), whereas the second code is 'making the lesson permanent'. Five codes were found (f=5), as well as 'fun and productive' (f=3) all of which related to one another, which is why we present their findings together. Essentially the teachers highlighted that their level of DL made the language lesson more effective and attractive as well as more permanent, fun, and productive; for instance, ST1 noted *"By increasing the DL level, I can make my teaching more efficient using technology. Likewise, I make my lessons more fun, permanent, and more emotional, that is why I am less tired and I never get bored. Most importantly. I think it motivates and even entertains students. Finally, using digital tools makes the lesson more fun, productive, and interactive for me and my students as well. Thus, I think it actually has positive effects on us".* ST2 insisted that "*Although I can use the digital tools in my lessons to make them effective and productive, I can be even better and I still think there are many things that I have not discovered".* ST3 also highlighted *"I am a teacher who thinks that teachers should constantly improve themselves and bring innovations to their teaching, and they are constantly researching and do not being afraid to try. I can say that my level of digital writing has a positive effect on my English language teaching and this makes my lessons not boring. Since we are trying to teach something on the screen during the pandemic process, I can say that being able to use digital tools makes my lessons more fun, more effective, and productive by removing boredom".* ST5 claimed *"My English language affects my DL level positively. I can say my lessons are more fun and attractive with the help of my DL level which is at a good level. Moreover, I am less tired".* ST7 mentioned *"Since it is based on audio-visual documents, it becomes more fun also making teaching and learning easier and more permanent. In other words, learning with songs or videos and direct expression has a positive effect on learning".* ST9, on the other hand, focused on the positive impacts of DL on their instruction and declared that *"I think it has a positive effect because if we use videos, songs or other tools, make the lesson is more interesting and fun for the students, in this case, it also increases permanence. In addition, they do it actively, and they go to classes with enthusiasm. They also want to do it and like it. Thus, I think that I am more efficient and more permanent".* Another code is 'easy accessing information' (f=3). ST4 claimed *"It has a*

positive effect, it maximizes our DL level and we can access information more easily with the help of our DL level. I can give an example that there is another English teacher at our school who is 40 or 42 years old, and he mostly writes his lesson on the blackboard using traditional methods or saying five times writing or reading from the book. This is the way we call it the grammar-translation method. I use the smartboard or something more interactive. Even though he is a very good English teacher and his pronunciation skill is excellent, the students do not want to go to his lesson so willingly. So in my opinion, having a high DL level has a significant role in our instruction". ST5 maintained *"with the help of my DL level which is at a good level I can access information more easily which makes me less tired". Another code is* 'facilitating language learning' (f=2). For facilitating language learning two comments presented as T6 emphasized *"Yes, of course, it affects positively because students are motivated to learn the language if we use technology in an advanced way. Thanks to digital tools that can get feedback faster, students can improve their skills such as reading and writing. Most importantly, the digital tools that we use facilitate language learning as they provide the opportunity to appeal to all sensory organs. Therefore, I prefer teachers to be digitally literate to help to learn better".* The last two codes focused on 'addressing students effectively' (f=2) and 'saving time' (f=2). ST4 agreed to their answers, *"I can say teachers with a high level of DL can address students more successfully".* ST9 also insisted *"I think my level of DL has positively affected my English teaching. Because these digital live lessons allow us to address more diverse, different students. That's why I think it has an affirmative effect".* Two comments were also revealed that they put emphasis on saving time with the help of having a good level of DL; ST1 stated *"It has a positive impact on saving time and energy".* ST7 clarified, *"I can announce the fact that my level of DL will also save time for me because I can get information easily".*

IQ6. b. *How does HS teachers' DL level affect their instruction?*

Figure 20 below depicts the HS teacher respondents' DL impacts on their instruction in response to the sixth IQ. One main category was prepared after the analysis of data. After examining their responses, the first category was recognized as 'Positive impact' (f=17).

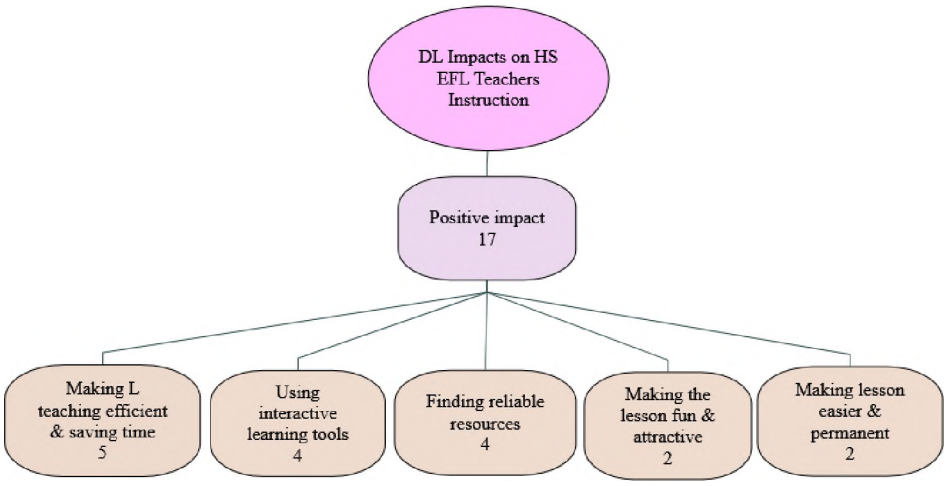

Figure 20. DL impacts on HT EFL teachers' instruction

In terms of the positive impact of the DL level on teachers' instruction, seventeen comments were highlighted. The first and the most significant impact of teachers' DL level on teaching is 'making language teaching efficient and saving time' (f=5). HT1 claimed that *"my DL is at a good*

level so that I can say it has a positive effect, of course. I think DL is more important for our language classes compared to the other branches, and in fact, other branches should have the same competence, but in my opinion, we, as English language teachers, use digital tools more actively". HT2 stated *"my DL level makes me getting information easier, so it saves my time. As English language teachers, we are different from other teachers for example mathematics, therefore we need to be constantly updated in using digital tools and also to affect us more effectively".* HT3 declared *"My level of DL affects positively my English language instruction and it makes language teaching efficient".* HT6 affirmed that *"my students say that "I made teaching English fun and efficient". That's why I can say my level of DL affects me positively. It enabled the students' attention and follow the lesson with the help of my DL information and I can teach my students more effectively".*

The second and the third codes are 'using interactive learning tools' (f=4), and 'finding reliable resources' (f=4). Depending on the teachers' answers to this IQ they claimed that their DL level affected their teaching well. Moreover, they noted that with the help of their good level they could use more interactive learning tools and find reliable resources as well. HT4 realized *"I think my level of DL has a positive effect because now we are living in the digital age. Interactive learning has been replaced by more virtual and more digital environments. Since it is necessary to keep up with this change, so I try to improve myself by following the latest developments as much as possible".* HT8, on the other hand, assisted that *"we as English teachers face more problems than other subjects such as mathematic, we have to use more interactive learning tools that enable students to learn effectively, and therefore we use much more interactive learning tools with the help of good level of DL".* HT2 announced that *"As English language teachers, we are different from other teachers for example mathematic, therefore we need to be constantly updated in using digital tools and also to affect us more effectively".* HT9 proclaimed as *"it is very positive because being digitally literate makes me stand out in finding reliable sources for the teaching purpose".* HT8 *"My DL level works positively for me, especially in terms of language, i.e., we face more problems in our EFL lessons than the other branches because you need one-to-one interactive lessons with students. In mathematics, as an example, problem-solving, so problem-solving is generally not the way we do, but I think that there are more branches in our case, and we need to work interactively with students".*

The last two codes are 'making the language lesson fun and attractive' (f=2), and 'making the language lesson easier and permanent'. As HT2 noted, "*My DL level makes my teaching and learning easier and more permanent because I can access more reliable, fun and attractive tools that lead students' attention to the lesson".* HT6 claimed, *"I can say that with the help of my level of DL, I used various tools so it makes the lesson fun and the students can concentrate on the lesson more than the traditional way of teaching".*

IQ7. a. *What is the SS students' DL level?*

Figure 21 shows the results of the seventh IQ, which resulted in categories and codes from the analysed data. Based on the response of the SS teachers' answers, two main categories were formed: 'low level' (f=21) and 'middle level' (f=1).

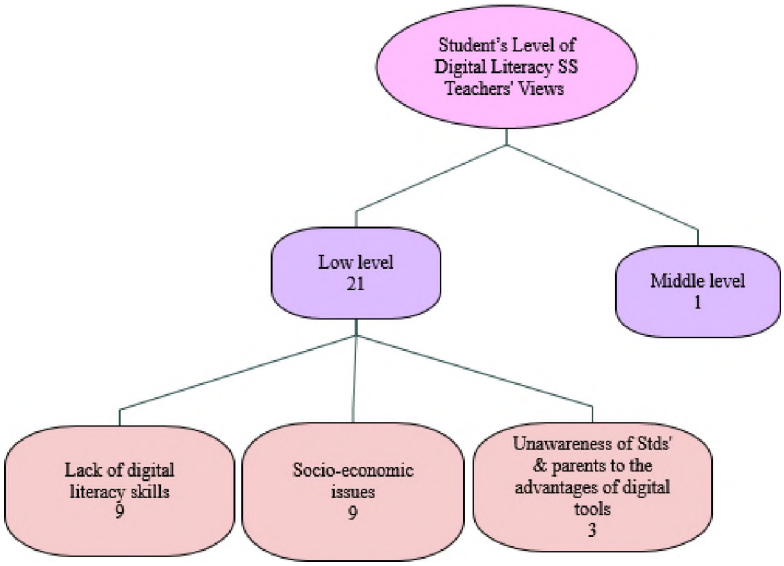

Figure 21. SS teachers' views about student's level of DL

First of all, in terms of students' level of DL level, the majority of the teachers complained that their students were at a low level of DL. They insisted that their students lack of DL and they claimed some factors for this reason, such as socio-economic issues and their parents' unawareness of the advantages of such tools. With reference to the teachers' answers, they revealed that their students are lack of DL skills (f=9). ST1 stated "*To be honest, I think students are getting very bad about it, however, our students are unaware of this. I mean, we just suffer, not just because of their social and economic situation, but even students who have tablets in their hands as well as the internet. Actually, they only use this tool for gaming or chatting with their friends. They have the means, but of course, the parents' level of knowledge affects the level of the student and I think it is not the only reason socio-economic structures*". ST3 declared *"I can say that the DL level of my students is really low. For this reason, I can only use digital tools during the lesson, and I can not give them much homework that they can do later using digital tools. At the beginning of distance education, I had real difficulty in getting them to understand how to download EBA to their phones and how to use it. Although I supported my history with text, images, and videos, they could not understand what and how to do it. How to search in the digital environment, how to get information, let alone this. Unfortunately, some still do not know what e-mail is"*. ST5 revealed *"My students are varied, in this sense, e.g., I have students who do not have the internet at home, and on the other hand, some of my students have very good opportunities. So, if we define DL in school as accessing information as an effort to reach information, that is, accessing something technologically. I do not find the students very adequate at this point. Similarly, they're not good at searching for information in line with their own needs. Besides, if we are talking about using technology, they use it well, and they play their favoured games, however when it comes to DL, I think, the student should definitely be educated at this point. In addition, in my points of view, they are not very good, they use technological devices mostly for entertainment purposes"*. T6 complained *"As a teacher working in a region with poor socio-economic conditions, my students have poor DL levels, as digital tools are difficult to access"*. ST8 stated *"I do not think my students are adequate in terms of DL due to socio-economically. The biggest disadvantage is that there are no devices in some of the student's homes, and they have no internet connections. That's why there is very little participation in online classes.*

So I do not find that they are perfect enough". ST9 *"Students with poor socio-economic conditions have difficulty accessing digital tools, so 80 or 85 per cent of the students could not attend online classes. This lowers their level of DL was due to their lack of computer literacy. When they attend the EBA login, or to Zoom login lessons, even basic skills such as turning on the microphone and so on".* The third code is unawareness of students and parents to the advantages of the digital tools. ST1 realized *"Actually, they only use this tool for gaming or chatting with their friends. They have the means, but of course, the parents' level of knowledge affects the level of the student and I think it is not the only reason socio-economic structures".* ST4 declared *"The level of DL of our students are very low. I can say that DL is almost non-existent. In my perspective, they are not aware of the advantages of the digital tools".* ST5 pointed out, *"they're not good at searching for information in line with their own needs. Besides, if we are talking about using technology, they use it well, and they play their favoured games, however when it comes to DL, I think, the student should definitely be educated at this point. In addition, in my points of view, they are not very good, they use technological devices mostly for entertainment purposes".*

IQ7. b. *What is the HS students' DL level?*

Figure 22 shows the results of the seventh IQ, which resulted in categories and codes from the studied data. Studying the HS teachers' answers two main categories were formed: 'high level' (f=8) and 'low level' (f=1).

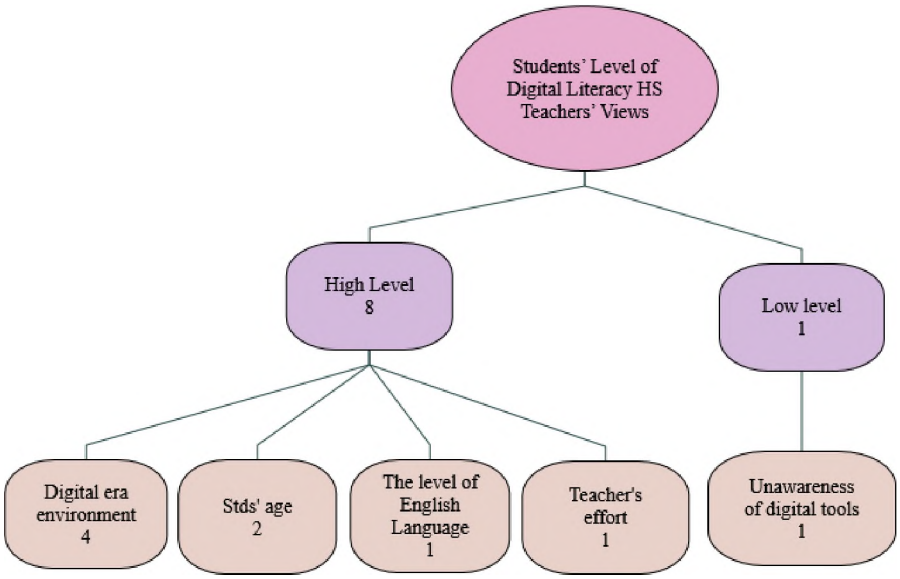

Figure 22. HS teachers' views about student's level of DL

Unlike SS teachers, the HS teachers had different points of view about their students' level of DL, mostly agreed that their students' level of DL was at a good level, which is (f=8), only one of the teachers noted that students' level was at a low level (f=1).

HS teachers have highlighted some significant factors for this high degree of DL, which the researcher divided into four categories; categories are 'digital era environment' (f=4), students' age (f=2), 'the level of English language' (f=1), and 'teacher's efforts' (f=1). The digital era environment was mentioned four times as a reason for students' high level of DL. The teachers believed that because of this digital environment, our students are more familiar with technology, and they have a

good relationship with technology. HT4 stated *"I think the situation we are in is constantly evolving. Students are trying to keep up with this change, just like the teachers. I believe that our students get faster and stronger at this age, so in my viewpoint, their level of DL is high"*. HT5 declared *"I consider that they are at a good level because we live in a digital age"*. HT7 *"I think students' DL is at a good level. As we are living in this environment that surrounded by the innovations of technology, therefore this generation is more familiar with technology"*. Also, the students' age was another factor for being sufficient in using digital tools, that mentioned by two of the teachers, for instance; HT2 believed that *"since they are HS students, so they can perceive their knowledge effectively and put it into practice immediately, consequently, I can say that their level of DL is high"* and HT8 stated, *"the students' level of DL is good because they are in HS their age is a factor for being good in using devices and tools"*.

In terms of language, one of the teachers highlighted that "*the student's level of DL is sufficient in my opinion. With such tools I can see that they are better; their language level also affects their level of DL*". The last comment for this category made for one of the answers, who mentioned the efforts of the teachers "*they are good, they learned a lot from me. But overall I can say their level is good. Some of my students are very good, even they do not ask how to do their activities, but some of them are not*". Regarding a low level only one of the teachers claimed that "students were at a low level and said "*Unfortunately, it's not good. Generally, DL levels are more focused on the use of social media. I think the students do not care much, and they think that the lessons are not so important for them. That's why I can not see them working hard to be digitally literate. In summary, I can reach fewer students in the online education process*".

4.2.4. Findings Related to the Third Research Question

RQ3. What are the facilities of using digital tools in (SS & HS) level of EFL teaching?

Some noteworthy comments were made in relation to the facilities of using digital tools by asking the ST and HS teachers some IQs.

IQ8. a. *What are the facilities of using digital tools in EFL teaching at the SS level?*

Figure 23 depicts the results of the ninth IQ for SS teachers, along with the codes. Twenty-five comments (f=25) were detected according to the responses of the SS teachers of the study about the capabilities of digital tools, and six codes were disclosed based on their responses to this interview topic.

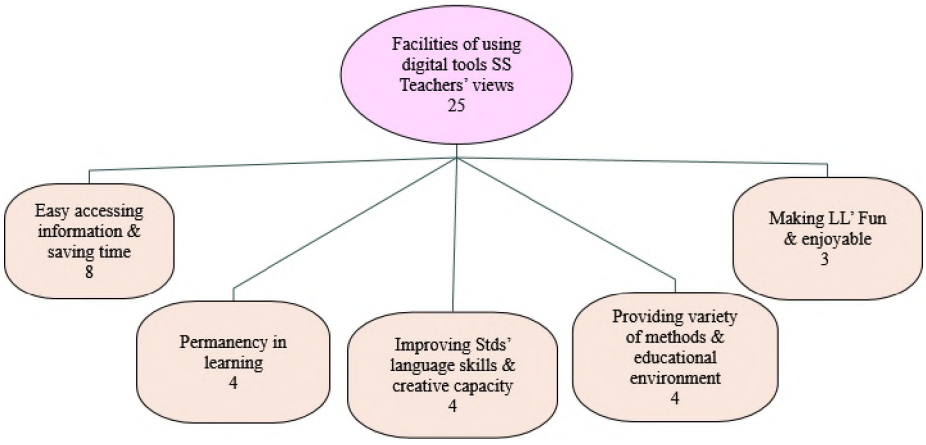

Figure 23. Facilities of using digital tools SS teachers' views

As stated by the teachers 'Easy accessing information & saving time' (f=8), mostly focused by the teachers. ST1 announced *"I can declare that with the help of digital tools we can access information easier, therefore, it saves time, for example, my and the 6th-grade students are working and writing very slowly, especially in the lessons. When they say we write at home, I take the photo of the board and send it to WhatsApp groups, then they say we will write at home, so I can save time in this way. Or, for example, when I want to do an activity in a classroom tomorrow, I share materials in the WhatsApp groups the students will pass on it in this way they would be more prepared for the lesson. In this way, of course, our lesson is more enjoyable and understandable. Finally, I can point out that digital tools enable us to access information faster and share it more easily. This has a positive impact on saving time and energy".* ST4 *"with the help of such digital tools I can access information in a short time, therefore it saves time for me as a teacher".* ST7 indicated, *"In my points of view one of the biggest benefits is that it saves time for us using digital tools in the way that we can access information faster and share to students easily".*

With reference to, 'providing a variety of methods &educational environment' (f=4), and making the language lesson fun and enjoyable (f=3) was highlighted by the teachers such as ST1 stated "*I can observe that digital tools make the lessons more enjoyable. Digital tools facilities in my opinion make the lesson enjoyable, fun, and understandable as I send students' assignments before the lesson time, or during the lesson, we try some enjoyable games that lead to understanding easily with the help of such beneficial platforms such as Web 0.2 Tools*". ST3 claimed the fact that "*There should be a variety of methods and techniques in foreign language teaching, which the digital tools can provide this. It is useful for developing the four well-known skills. They can be used at every stage of the lesson. They are easy to use and provide teacher convenience. It allows you to create your own materials based on the needs or levels of your students. Its individuality and flexibility in learning provide freedom*". ST4 mentioned "*since we use different learning techniques, the students can learn the subjects better, and the lessons can be made more fun, this is one of its benefits. Meanwhile, we use different learning techniques, the students know the subjects better, and lessons can be made more fun, therefore this is one of its benefits. For example, if I mention EBA when you use the digital tool like ZOOM for larger audiences, one of its biggest advantages is that it can be a class for you, the table you sit on, which is flexible so that you are very independent of where you are or what you do. In such a way, in my opinion, an appropriate educational environment is created for everyone*". ST7 noted, "*Digital tools make language lesson easy, fun, and enjoyable because the students also get extra information that they can not get from the teacher or only from the textbook, or I have seen it as an extra method*".

In terms of the last two codes including 'improving language skills and creative capacity' (f=4), and 'permanency in learning' (f=4) some of the teachers talked about the significance of language skills and permanency in the learning process for instance ST1 and ST4 claimed: *"digital tools can provide permanency in learning especially when we use new applications or new activity".* ST3 declared "*It is useful for developing the four well-known skills. They can be used at every stage of the lesson. They are easy to use and provide teacher convenience*" ST5 stated *"The advantages or the facilities of using digital tools are more for us as EFL teachers, because in English lessons, we need to improve some skills in our students and we need audio and visual materials for this, moreover, the digital tools can provide all of these for us. Accordingly, we are not native speakers, but we can offer native speakers to our students, for instance, the person who students listen to and watch on EBA is a native speaker".* ST6 revealed *"I think it is beneficial in terms of offering*

multiplicity, appealing to many sensory organs, and providing cooperative learning, which makes it easier for students to learn. As a necessity of the digital age, these skills of all students should be developed, also, a comprehensive training should be provided and its applicability should be checked". ST8 mentioned "I think, it provides permanence, develops their skills more easily, and increases motivation". ST9 stated *"I can also say the following as the advantages of digital tools. For our students to use these digital tools, we need to develop their skills to adapt to the 21st century, and students should use technology effectively and efficiently. For students who can achieve this, they will progress better in classes all their lives. For this reason, when we think about English lessons, I can say from my students are more interested in the lessons by using digital tools, and the negative attitudes and negative behaviours of the students may also demolish the prejudices against English lessons. But overall I can recognize that they look more positively".*

IQ8. b. *What are the facilities of using digital tools in EFL teaching at the HS level?*

Figure 24 presents the data of the eighth IQ for HS teachers, with codes. Noticing the answers of the HS teachers about the facilities of digital tools, twenty-three comments were found (f=23); five codes were revealed according to the teachers' responses to this IQ.

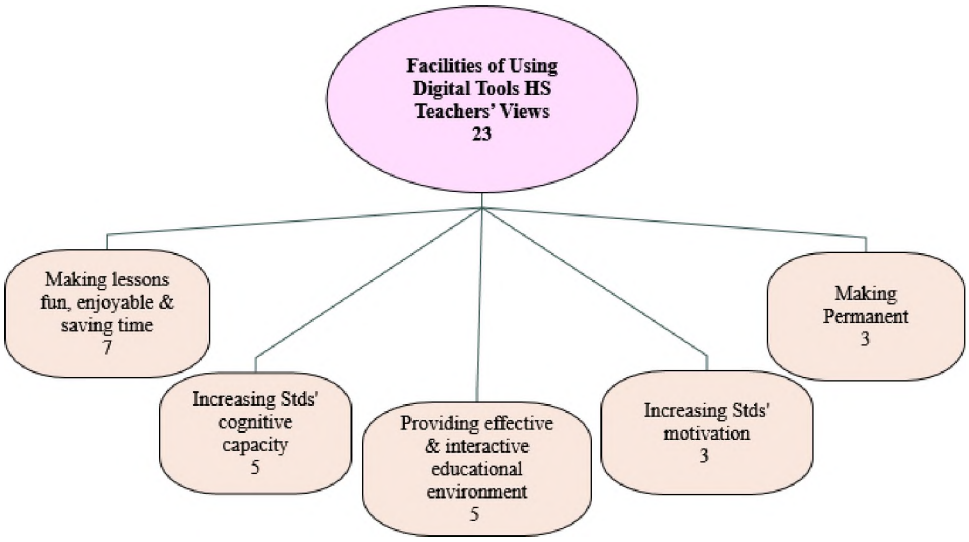

Figure 24. Facilities of using digital tools HS teachers' views

Inquiring further of the HS teachers, some interesting facts were achieved about the capabilities of digital technologies used by the study's HS teachers. 23 comments were highlighted by the teachers for the facilities of such tools, also five main codes without any categories were created in accordance with their answers. Most of the teachers assisted that the use of digital tools 'made lessons fun, enjoyable, and save time' (f=7), 'providing effective & interactive educational environment' (f=5), and 'making the lesson permanent' (f=3), which they claimed that these are very crucial in the teaching and learning process agreeing to the teachers' answers. HT1 noted, *"In my opinion, digital tools are very beneficial for some reasons, for example, they are more practical in terms of providing a more effective and interactive educational environment. Another benefit of the digital tools is that they can make the lesson fun, and being able to do more activities in a short time, thus save time and keep students active in the lessons".* HT2 stated, *"Language teaching and*

learning have a dynamic structure that requires different skills, and as English teachers, we can make language learning both fun and permanent by using tools that appeal to these skills. Our students can actively take part in their language learning and we can teach our lessons more easily, especially in the distance education process". HT3 declared, *"I think this is very effective in increasing students' learning language in a fun way and increasing their motivation. Students' interest in digital tools enables us to teach more enjoyably. Another advantage of digital tools is that they are ultimately saving time in the end, for example, when we do an activity via the Kahoot tool instead of asking individual students, it saves time by seeing everyone there. So we will provide feedback with this in the lesson and we do not waste time with feedback".* Also, HT4 claimed, *"It is possible to provide access to information at any time and to have the opportunity to make information permanent".* HT5 revealed, *"As an advantage, I have to say that the students nowadays can talk digitally. For example, there is a software called Plotagon, which creates a mutual dialogue in a virtual environment. So, they play a more active role in the lesson. The second is in terms of time management, with the writing activity, I can convey the subject in a very short time. They also grasp, know, and become permanent, because they write something by themselves. I think it is more beneficial in terms of both competence and time management".*

In terms of 'increasing students' cognitive capacity' (f=5) and 'increasing motivation' (f=3), some noteworthy comments were focused including HT3 pointed out, *"I think this is very effective in increasing students' learning language in a fun way and increasing their motivation".* HT5 stated *"I think it is more beneficial in terms of both competence and time management. Of course, spending a lot of time with technology is not something we want, but now we have to do that with the need for such tools in our daily life and especially the teaching process. What matters to us is how we can use digital tools positively".* HT6 revealed, *"The advantages, in my opinion, are students that can express themselves very well in online education, and digital tools increase their interest in the lesson".* HT8 declared, *"The advantages are more for us, so I can say that it makes the learning process more effective and increase students' cognitive capacity".* And the last HT9 claimed, *"It enables students with different learning styles to learn better and motivate them to learn via digital tools".*

4.2.5. Findings Related to the Fourth Research Question

RQ4. What are the challenges of using digital tools in (SS & HS) level of EFL teaching?

Some noteworthy comments were made in relation to the challenges of employing digital tools by the SS and HS teachers.

IQ9. a. *What are the challenges of using digital tools in EFL teaching at the SS level?*

Figure 25 illustrates the summary of the last IQs for SS teachers, together with the codes. Remarking to the answers of the SS teachers about the challenges of using digital tools, fifty-one comments originated (f=51). Eight codes were also revealed according to the teachers' answers to this IQ.

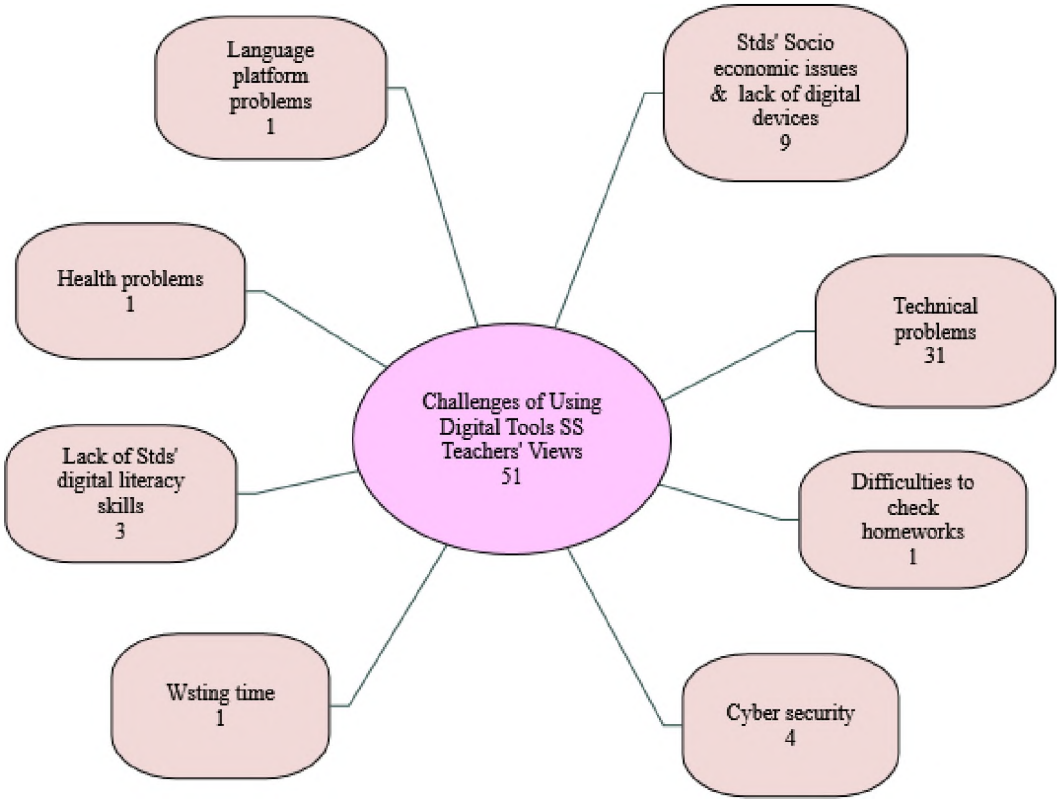

Figure 25. Challenges of using digital tools SS teachers' views

Most of the SS teachers insisted on the reality that they faced many challenges due to technical problems which include power outages, internet access problems, device errors and one of the teachers complained about software issues. Similarly, they complained about students' socio-economic issues that mad difficulties of using digital tools in their instructions.

In the matter of 'technical problems' (f=31), and 'students' socio-economic issues' (f=9) all the SS teachers complained about these problems for instance ST1 complained "*There may be technical problems, such as sometimes power outages, and internet problems*". ST3 stated "*The biggest challenge is to work with low socio-economic students. The fact, they do not have their own technological devices and internet access is the biggest obstacle for me or when I want to use more and more diverse digital tools to improve my students' English skills*". ST5 declared, "*Of course, during the lessons, a technical problem may occur. Sometimes I have to cancel the lesson at that moment because it can not be solved immediately, and sometimes students disappear*". ST7 pointed out, "*Students with a low socio-economic level may not have access to the lesson properly. Also, we may have problems with the electricity service because internet access or computer use only possible with electricity*". ST9 also claimed that "*Technical problems, security problems, digital devices are not working more precisely, lack of materials and timeless applications, and waste of time*". Another challenge that was focused on by the teachers, was 'cybersecurity' issues which made trouble sometimes as ST4 complained "*Since we entered both EBA and school blended education, so we have experienced many challenges in teaching, both physical and technical problems, e.g., loss of internet connection, or if the smartboards are connected to the computer, my flash disk may have a virus, or maybe there is no a compatible Programme to support the format of the video that I want to play, we have such a problem on the computer. Overall, I can say, cybersecurity problems, lack*

infrastructure, high fees for applications are the general issues". ST5 on the other hand noted, "*There is also a problem at the point of cybersecurity, which I think is a big challenge in front of using digital tools. For example, in a lesson, foreigners always entered our online lessons. In my opinion, there is no equivalent in it in any way. We had a problem at EBA, I think the biggest challenge of using digital tools is security*".

The teachers also highlighted students' lack of DL skills, which made difficulties in using digital tools in their instruction such as ST1 complained *"since our students are not enough digitally literate individual, I can not use digital tools as much as I want. Likewise, when I give homework in live lessons, students have more trouble because they are insufficient in this regard, so it takes a long time to guide students on this issue"*. ST6 declared, *"The DL levels of my students also affect my education process. We can not conduct collaborative work because we do not have a common area of use"*. Based on the observing language problems, one of the teachers said that as the platforms are in the English language not Turkish, it may make trouble for us, ST5 stated, *"the platform we use is not in the Turkish language, therefore students do not know how it works very well, i.e., they do not utilize it very well"*. Moreover, one of the teachers dedicated that they have 'difficulties to check home works' like T8 highlighted, *"Since students are not enough in this regard, it can sometimes be difficult to make them use properly. It is more difficult to follow the children after the lessons we do in the online lessons. For example, if something was done in a homework. They can submit their homework one by one at different times, so I think there is a problem to follow"*.

The last two codes are 'health problems' and 'wasting time' which were mentioned by two of the teachers; T1 stated "*technological devices cause health problems and overexposure to the screen increases my headaches and back pains*". ST9 declared "*using the digital tool is a waste of time in my opinion because sometimes it takes a lot of time checking students' home works or using social media also takes time*"

IQ9. b. *What are the challenges of using digital tools in EFL teaching at the HS level?*

Figure 26 describes the value of the last IQs for HS teachers, together with the codes. Seven main codes made for the challenges of using digital tools via HS teachers (f=23)

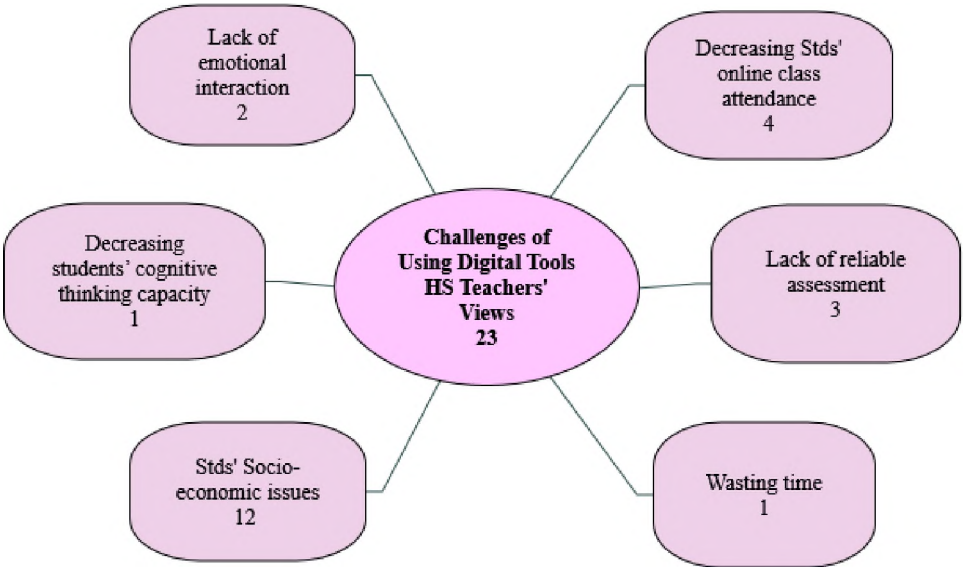

Figure 26. Challenges of using tools HS teachers' views

When HS teachers were asked about the difficulties they face when using digital tools in their classroom, they identified the following issues and concerns. Most of the teachers proclaimed that their students' socio-economic issues made it difficult of using such tools. HT1 declared "*The challenges and difficulties I can announce are, the inability to reach all students at the same rate. Because the student's economic issues are different and all of them do not have the same opportunities to access the digital tools, which makes them difficult to attain the lessons. In other words, unfortunately, having general difficulties in accessing these tools due to the socioeconomic level of the students creates a handicap for the frequent use of these tools in the educational process*". HT2 stated "*Unfortunately, not every student can have a computer, tablet, or smartphone, and even if they do, internet access may not be available. So their access to digital tools can be different and difficult. For these reasons, all of them are not attending the live lessons. This situation can create inequality of opportunity among students. Otherwise, I do not have any difficulties in using digital tools*". HT5 pointed out, *"The necessity of having internet access and Smartphones. Unfortunately, we sometimes have difficulties with participating all students in the lessons due to the lack of digital tools. So I can realize that socio-economic is a major obstacle that we face in our instruction"*. HT7 mentioned, *"One of the challenges and difficulties of the digital tools that I have faced normally is that I can not reach all the students in the online classes, and another obstacle is that all the students do not have digital devices which make trouble for attending the lessons"*. Due to the non-existence of the students in classes, teachers claimed that they can not assess students reliably. HT7 stated, *"One of the disadvantages I can realize is that in online classes we can not see the students, we do not know what they are doing. Sometimes they mute themselves and close their camera. Therefore, the biggest disadvantage for me is that there is no reliable assessment, we as a teacher do not have a chance to make an assessment"*. It also leads to decrease students cognitive thinking as the teachers highlighted because students copy and paste assignments they lose their thinking skills, HT9 remarked *"Sometimes we can not control the students and we do not know what they are doing behind the camera, which means some of them to close their camera, so we face different kinds of problems in our online instruction. One more disadvantage of digital tools is when we give them an assignment, for example, the students will do their homework, but the question is, did they do the homework themselves? Of course not. They copy and paste from the internet so we can not evaluate them very well. Actually, I do not say the advantages and disadvantages are the same, but I can say if one can use the digital tools correctly it may have many advantages"*. Wasting time is the last code that was claimed by one of the teachers, HT5 stated, *"We spend a lot of time by using digital tools, of course, spending time with technology is not something we want, but now we have to do that with the need of such tools in our daily life and especially the teaching process. What matters to us is how we can use digital tools positively"*.

5. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the results of the research questions of the study and compares similar study results with the literature. Also, the main conclusion and recommendations are given at the end of this chapter.

5.2. Discussion

5.2.1. Discussion of the Findings for the First Research Question in Regards to the SS and HS teachers

The first research question of the study set out for revealing Turkish SS and HS EFL teachers' general views about DL. Relevant results were reached from data through the interviews.

The first IQ was to find a meaningful definition of DL by asking the SS and HS EFL teachers. The results indicated that views on the definition of DL are significantly different between HS and SS teachers. According to Dudeney & Hockly, DL means the capacity to understand how to utilize digital technology safely, productively, and wisely, so it indicates that being digitally literate is not just being competent with technical abilities (Dudeney & Hockly, 2016, p. 115). However, based on the findings, most of the SS teachers had a different view of the definition of DL, which is incompatible with Dudeney & Hockly's definition. Most of them focused on *accessing* and *sharing* information via technology and being able to use online apps and platforms properly. For them, a digitally literate person knows how to use digital devices and platforms effectively. Although few of them defined DL as *"it is important how we use technologies"*, one defined DL as one of the needs of the 21st century, which is well-matched with (Theisen et al., 2011).

Besides the findings of the HS teachers are consistent with the definition by Dudeney & Hockly, i.e., most of them defined DL as *accessing*, *producing*, *analysing*, and most importantly *using digital tools effectively and safely*. They insisted that being digitally literate *"is not just finding information, rather it is significant how do we use such tools and transfer information to students safely"*.

The results show that the HS teachers had more information about DL, while some of the SS teachers still lack enough information about DL. In addition, Akayoglu et al. obtained the same results in defining DL. They found that their pre-service teacher participants focused on technical skills and have the ability to read and write online. Whereas some of their participants explained a broader view of DL than just learning to read and write on the internet (Akayoglu et al., 2020).

The second IQ of the study sought to discover the kinds of digital tools and devices used by the respondents. Surprisingly a significant difference was noticed via the findings, which is that the SS teachers mostly prefer smartphones for their language teaching, while the HS teachers prefer computers for their instruction.

The reason why SS teachers use smartphones is that they are handy devices that can be used everywhere, also they are portable and provide free apps and all services that are prepared for computers (Klimova, 2018). Son et al., found similar results using a survey of in-service teacher participants. Teachers used computer software in their teaching despite their high level of computer skills (Son et al., 2011). The results of the current study are supported by Alzubi (2019), who

conducted a study on 41 EFL teachers and the results showed that around 83 per cent of the participants supported the integration of smartphones in their EFL setting (Alzubi, 2019). On the other hand, it is believed that the HS teachers used some determined devices including computers and smartphones. Although there are different kinds of digital devices, such as tablets, the HS teachers dedicated that they used only computers and/or smartphones for connecting to the internet. They declared that computers are more preferable because of the ease of sharing screens, preparing and presenting materials, and running class activities. The fundamental idea is that computers can be incorporated to reveal student-centred and creative learning techniques, as opposed to the traditional teacher-centred technique (Kim, 2008). Moreover, computers are not new technologies and even their conventional operating systems are also user-friendly, therefore teachers almost use this device to prepare and monitor the relative materials and class activities. Likewise, Andrei and Koroleva stated that computers (laptops) are more efficient compared to smartphones (Andrei, 2019; Koroleva, 2016). Bezgodova et al. believe that using different types of devices can affect the educational process (Bezgodova et al., 2020).

According to a study conducted by Capan, about 64 per cent of the participants believed that using the computer is fit into their teaching objectives and provides students' learning preferences (Capan, 2012). Nevertheless, the HS teachers' answers for the second IQ findings of the current study are not supported by the previous research carried out by (Hedayati & Marandi, 2014), that their results claimed that the Iranian EFL teachers were not willing to use the computer in their instruction; teachers' attitudes, facilities, and student constraints were among the factors.

In regard to the ST and the HS teachers' responses, Web 2.0 tools are the most widely used digital tools. One of the SS teachers mentioned interactive applications. Prezi, PowerPoint, and Telegram were also used by one of the teachers. YouTube used by some of the teachers, because as the teachers said it can be used inside and outside the classroom and teachers can help their students to increase conversation, right pronunciation, and listening skills. It is also a motivational tool, and easy for sharing videos (Karkoulia, 2016; Mullen & Wedwick, 2008; Watkins & Wilkins, 2011), these scholars supported the present study's findings. WhatsApp used by a few of the HS teachers for sending assignments and notifying their students while conducting a lesson. The findings are in line with other scholars including Bensalem (2018) and Sweeny (2010). Moreover, one of the teachers mentioned Wooclap for open-ended questions, multiple-choice questions, surveys, and word cloud preparation work. As the teacher participant claimed that Wooclap is an interactive platform that allows students to respond to questions from the teacher that they can use their mobile phone, tablet, or laptop easily (Gilquin, 2020 , p. 6). Because of technology, instructors are able to assess their students' learning more easily and efficiently.

What is more interesting is that all the HS teachers used Web 2.0 tools effectively for their language classes, especially during the online and pandemic situation. Since it has many attractive and informative platforms for students' learning outcomes. Most importantly, the HS teachers explained that these tools have beneficial for language lessons more than the other lessons. The most common Web 2.0 tools used by the HS samples of this study were Kahoot, Edpuzzle, Quizizz, Google docs, Google forms, Google presentation, Mentimeter, Edmodo, StoryJumper, Padlet, Awwapp, Gamification, WhatsApp, and Quizlet. As mentioned in the literature review, the findings of this question appear to be well substantiated with former studies by (Kayar, 2019; Özel, 2013), which they claimed that to make lessons fun and enjoyable, Web 2.0 tools are very attractive to instructors, especially for EFL teachers. They found that most of the Web 2.0 tools used by EFL

teachers were Kahoot, Quizizz, Google classroom, Edmodo, Duolingo, Padlet, StoryJumper, Quizlet, Mentimeter, iTalk, wikis, Podcasts, and Blogs.

The SS and HS teachers used relevant digital tools with the purpose of engaging students' '*pedagogical*' and '*linguistic*' strategies. In the line with this study's findings, many innovations have been used for various purposes in teaching settings, from the most basic technologies to the most advanced ones. Progressively projectors, computers, projection devices, and smart technology with the latest technical equipment, such as smartboards, have been implemented in learning environments, in accordance with the advancement of science and technology (BECTA, 2006; Bıçak, 2019). Following the answers of both the SS and HS teachers, there was no significant difference between their responses, although there were many similarities in the purposes of both groups of teachers.

The teachers of the current study highlighted the significance of existing technologies in their instruction and they also insisted that they should use 21st century novel technologies for teaching. Their pedagogical goals for teaching through digital tools were the following goals that were noticed by the results of this study. *Creativity* and *thinking capacity* was mentioned by one of the SS teachers. Teachers incorporate their subject-matter expertise, learning and teaching techniques, and technology for facilitating opportunities that promote students' achievement, *creativity* and advancement in both face-to-face and online contexts. So it indicates that using such tools has a crucial role to increase creativity and thinking capacity in students. This finding is compatible with Kessler, (2016). Brainstorming was also stated by one of the HS teachers who claimed that she used digital tools for brainstorming. It can support the learning effort by facilitating the thinking mechanism and providing appropriate knowledge supported by Vijayakumar (2011).

It is discernible that students in EFL classes need motivation compared to the other lessons since they are strange to foreign languages. For this reason, both the SS and HS teachers of the present study tried to use digital tools for motivating their students and to attract their interest. Obviously, some of the SS and nearly all the HS teachers determined that the purpose of using digital tools was for making the lesson enjoyable and fun which increases students' motivation, and it has a very productive impact on learning especially in foreign language instruction. Some former studies including (Al-Jarf, 2004; Bahous et al., 2011; Ilter, 2009; Kalanzadeh et al., 2014; Ramachandran, 2004) support the findings of this study and stated that motivation has a significant role in EFL classes to encourage students learning. They also claimed that the utilization of technology via such interesting activities can activate students and enhance the learning environment. Another crucial point mentioned by the SS and the HS teachers is that the goal of digital tools for them was to '*awaken students' attention*', to '*increase their engagement*' and '*participation*' in the classes.

Based on the SS and HS teachers' responses the goal of using digital tools in their instruction was '*permanency*' and '*practising*' in the learning process. Additionally, using digital tools by the teachers promotes teamwork activities such as *problem-solving* and establish students' self-confidence.

In terms of the linguistic purposes of using digital tools, nearly half of the SS teachers and HS teachers were surprisingly mentioned that they use digital tools to develop students' language skills such as, listening, reading, writing and speaking. Some of the SS teachers used digital tools to '*make the lesson more fun and enjoyable*. Another goal of all SS and HS teachers was to use digital tools to make the lesson fun and enjoyable, that is why new digital tools, such as Web 2.0 tools, are very attractive to instructors, especially EFL teachers. Similarly, as mentioned in the literature, most of

the Web 2.0 tools used by EFL teachers were Kahoot!, Quizizz, Google classroom, Edmodo, Duolingo, Padlet, StoryJumper, Quizlet, Mentimeter, iTalk, Wikis, Podcasts, and Blogs to make lessons fun and enjoyable for both students and teachers (Kayar, 2019; Özel, 2013). Few of the SS teachers and HS teachers used digital tools for '*practising words*' and '*improving students' vocabulary*'. Through technology, teachers can increase their students' attention towards learning vocabulary and practising words. With this regard, two of the SS and four HS teachers of the study used technological tools while practising words and vocabulary. Therefore, if the teachers want to develop advanced literacy in their students, scholars such as (Dalton & Grisham, 2011; Graves & Watts-Taffe, 2008) recommend that *vocabulary* should be improved. *Sharing* and *managing assignments* was another purpose of using digital tools by both SS and HS teachers, in this regard, few of the SS and HS teachers signified that '*it is easy to manage the tasks or assignments of students via technology nowadays*'. The findings of facilitating technologies for managing and sharing assignments are in line with Turmudi (Turmudi, 2020). Teachers indicated that they have used social media resources in their personal and academic experiences for a variety of purposes, involving communication, entertainment, academics and literacy development. They also noted that digital technologies could be incorporated into their classrooms for linguistic and pedagogical purposes.

Another IQ related to the first research question was about the duration of using digital tools by both the SS and the HS teachers of the study and the time which they spent to share information and educational purposes. Relevant results were noticed as stated in the findings. In this digital era of the 21st-century, teachers are using technology in a variety of ways in their instruction. Some teachers spend time using technology in the classroom to explain a lesson and make it more attractive. Spending time using various methodologies via digital tools in the classroom allows teachers to efficiently express learning material while also allowing students to focus on the lessons.

A considerable difference was observed between SS and HS teachers based on the findings of the study. However, SS teachers used digital tools longer than the HS teachers, but it can be said that both groups of teachers used technological tools mostly for *education* and *teaching purposes*, as well as for *online classes*. Accordingly, one of the SS teachers used technological tools between 2 to 3 hours per day, and this duration was only for teaching purposes as the teacher claimed. Some of the teachers used technological tools between 3 to 4 hours, as they mentioned this duration was for *accessing and sharing information, obtaining news teaching and learning, social media and communication with others*. Also, few teachers used digital tools between 4 to 5 hours a day, for their online classes, teaching, and material procurement, and to increase performance. Six to eight hours stated by some of the teachers who used digital tools between six to seven hours just for achieving information and teaching purposes. There was also 8 hours using digital tools for accessing and using visual data rather than just getting information. Also, working on the digital content development commission the teacher cleared that most of the time would be spent on this commission participating so he used digital tools for about *8* hours. On the other hand, the finding related to the HS teachers revealed that they used digital tools between one to five hours per day. Their general duration of using the digital tools was for *teaching purposes*, *self-improvement* and *assessing information*. The findings of this IQ confirm previous findings in the literature by (Nim Park & Son, 2009). Unlikely, in 2011 a study was conducted by Rahimi and Yadollahi; they found that 3.9% of the participants did not use the internet or technology at all, and the rest used in the range of 1 hour or more than three hours per week (Rahimi & Yadollahi, 2011).

Based on the first research question's findings and according to the operational definition that was the study's model, the EFL teacher samples of the study pointed out that SS and HS EFL teachers were assured of the effective use of digital tools, however, their definition of DL indicated that some of them still lack enough information. Accordingly, they recognized that digital tools supported their instruction effectively, and they used different kinds of technological tools for different purposes which support students' effective outcomes.

5.2.2. Discussion of the Findings for the Second Research Question in Regards to the SS and HS teachers

The main objectives of the second research question were to reveal the DL level of the SS and HS teachers, and how it affected their teaching. Several significant results from the data were attained through the analysis.

There were only two options for the respondents, including feeling "competent enough" or "not competent enough". What is more notable is that the findings varied between the SS and the HS teacher samples of the study, which few of SS teachers reported as being 'not competent enough' while the majority of the teachers chose 'competent enough'. On the other hand, the findings for the HS teachers were different. Few of the HS teachers felt 'competent enough', yet the majority of teachers insisted that they 'do not feel competent enough'. There are several possible factors for the HS teachers' findings, which can be addressed according to the explanations they mentioned. One of the possible satisfactory explanations of the HS teachers was that they did not feel competent enough due to the ever-changing technologies which required more and more practice. Another possible reason was that they insisted on constantly learning and developing their digital skills so that they did not feel competent enough.

Regardless of a variety of studies indicating how teachers' DL can improve the learning and teaching process, there is worldwide evidence of EFL teachers with limited levels of digital literacies (Cote & Milliner, 2018a). Dashtestani confirmed that Iranian educators lacked enough DL, and CALL incorporation for their EFL instruction (Dashtestani, 2014). Son and his colleagues conducted a survey with Indonesian English teachers and they found that their EFL teacher participants lacked several essential digital competencies (Son et al., 2011).

Half of both SS and HS teachers claimed that they are familiar with how to use digital resources. Other teachers believed that they were able to utilize digital tools purposefully to interact with their students or language teaching settings. Remarkably, half of both SS and HS teachers demonstrated that their DL skills were not competent enough due to the ever-changing of novel technologies. They insisted on the need for self-development of digital technologies, which is well-matched with findings of (Bezemer & Kress, 2015).

Commonly, most of the HS and SS teachers maintained that before the training and seminars about digital technologies that were conducted by the Ministry of Education, they were not competent enough, but the training enabled them to use digital technologies more sufficiently and to be able to use current technological resources in their language instruction. Quintana & Zambrano (2014) supported the results of the current study; they claimed that recent training by the ministry of education had a positive impact on the teachers' teaching environment (Quintana & Zambrano, 2014).

Many studies have revealed limitations of female teachers in using technology compared to male teachers due to their low skill, attitudes and limited access to technology (Ayyildiz et al., 2021;

Volman & van Eck, 2001). Likewise, male teachers are using ICT in their teaching and learning objectives more than females (Kay, 2006). Markauskaite (2006) studied first-year graduate trainee teachers to report gender differences in DL and reveal their digital familiarity. The study showed substantial gaps in practical abilities to use technology and observational consistency among male and female teachers; the score of males in the aforementioned study was more than the score of females. Surprisingly, most of the teacher samples of the study were female and they were using digital tools effectively like males, most interestingly three of the HS female teachers were trainers of the technological tools, which is opposite to the aforementioned studies.

DL is important in assisting teachers in becoming lifelong learners. It provides them with both academic and beneficial life skills and also it affects students' outcomes (Cole, 2019 May 23). So, in line with it, one of the IQs was to reveal the effects of SS and HS teachers' levels of DL on their instruction. Based on the findings of both of the SS and HS teachers, the majority of teachers insisted that their DL level had a *positive* impact on their teaching EFL classes. As the EFL teachers, both SS and HS teachers had many similar points of view, and according to the findings of this IQ few different perspectives were recorded.

Considering the positive impacts of teachers' DL levels, some of the SS and HS teachers depicted that their DL levels facilitate language learning. They claimed that they can search well and find good resources for whatever they need in their personal life and academic life as well. The positive impact of the DL level of the SS and the HS teachers was to make the language lessons efficient and attractive, as well as save time. Some of the respondents referred to reliable resources that made the lesson more engaging and entertaining through such interesting tools, moreover, they made the learning permanent. The teacher samples of the study also claimed that with the help of their DL level, they can *access information easily* and *quickly*. Back to the literature, there is evidence that supports these findings, if technology implements perfectly by the digitally literate teachers, it can affect teaching EFL positively. It can provide significant opportunities to the EFL stakeholders both teachers and students (Dashtestani, 2016; Turan & Akdag-Cimen, 2020). Thus, it indicates that enhancing a sufficient level of DL tends to be a necessary condition for applying effective technology resources into EFL contexts (Lotherington & Jenson, 2011). Another crucial positive impact of the DL level of the teachers on their instruction was that it led to *improve* their students' *language skills* (reading, writing, listening and speaking), and attracting their focus on the English language lesson (Mudra, 2020). In addition to the positive impacts of both SS and HS teacher samples of the study, identified that using interactive learning tools made their instruction more *enjoyable*, and it made the outcomes *more productive* and *efficient.* Some of the SS teachers highlighted that a teacher with a good DL level and by using digital tools can address students effectively more than in the way of classical teaching. The last comment for the positive impact of the DL level of the teachers on their instruction was *saving time.* The teachers in both SS and HS teachers concluded that their good level of DL and access to information would save their time.

The teachers in both respondent groups gave different answers when asked about their students' DL levels. Differences in the class environment, age and language level of the students can be significant factors that make this difference. Only one of the SS teachers stated that her students' level of DL is in the middle level, while the majority of the teachers believed that their students have a *low level* of DL. On the other hand, there is only *one* teacher from HS teachers that indicate the *poor level* of DL of their students because they do not care about digital devices, whereas, the majority of the HS teachers had a completely different opinion, as they believed that their students'

DL level was at a *good level*, which means that they can manage well with existing technologies and distance learning programmes.

As above-mentioned, both SS and HS teachers gave some reasons for their insights about the level of DL of their students. *Lack of students and parental awareness about the advantages* of digital technologies is a parameter that was highlighted by *three* of the SS teachers. Because these technologies, especially smartphones, are somewhat new and were previously used only for a variety of everyday tasks such as communication and, to a lesser extent, entertainment, it can be a factor for parents, and even students, to be unaware of the *advantages of the digital tools* for education. Additionally, all SS teachers consider the *lack of digital devices* and the *internet* to be two factors affecting students' lack of digital knowledge. These deficiencies can also be related to the *socio-economic* of individuals. Because all the factors are related to each other, and also due to the existing shortcomings, all the SS teachers have observed that students are less able to *engage* in online classes. Besides, SS teachers believed that the infrequent use of digital devices for academic and non-academic affairs causes a lack of *students' knowledge* in applying *digital skills.* In this way, students have less *access* to *information.*

Most of the HS teachers provided positive feedback on their students' DL. They stated that the level of knowing English *language* skills of their students higher than that of the ST students. As the teachers worked in SS and HSs, they said that the *students' age* can also help them better understand and make the best use of digital facilities. These teachers argued that, because we live in a digital age and in a digital world, DL is prevalent in everyday development, particularly among students.

Teachers' efforts are important because they guide students on how to use related tools and apps, as one of the teachers claimed that her efforts made the students more *sufficient* with novel technologies. This finding is supported by Huang & Liaw (2005). They highlighted the fact that the attitude of a teacher regarding the utilization of technology is fundamental towards all effective usage of technologies in instruction (Huang & Liaw, 2005).

All in all, according to Martin (2008) model, which is used in the present study for assessing the DL's level, the SS EFL respondent teachers are in the second level of DL. While the corresponding HS teachers are in between the first and second levels of DL. So neither the SS teachers nor the HS teacher respondents are at the third level of DL. Since DL has become essential for creativity and novelty, so without being sufficient enough in the digital world, an individual can not be actively involved in society or gain the abilities and information required to live in the twenty-first century. Accordingly, the teachers claimed that their level of DL affected their instruction positively.

5.2.3. Discussion of the Findings for the Third Research Question in Regards to the SS and HS teachers

The third research question sought to determine how digital tools facilitate the EFL level of teaching in both SS and HS teachers. The findings of the current study confirm the previous studies that examined the benefits and the facilitation of the digital tools for the in-service teachers worldwide, e.g., (Alshumaimeri, 2008; Chung, 2014; Jebril, 2012; Kim et al., 2013; Mollaei & Riasati, 2013; Nim Park & Son, 2009), similarly, in Turkish in-service contexts, such as (Çelik & Aytin, 2014; Saglam & Sert, 2012; Uluuysal et al., 2014).

Teachers need to update their knowledge to be mastered in using current digital tools. Since the English language is constantly changing, an EFL teacher needs to access more related sources of information than the other fields. Obviously, one of the goals of using digital tools is to save time. Some of the SS and HS teachers believed that their experience helped them to do their work in a shorter time and *accessing information* via modern technologies is faster than traditional techniques, such as using the library in classical teaching. Although many materials, such as e-books are not free, there are still many reliable sources of information are released for the public. Additionally, governments can share related materials faster and cheaper than the traditional way. Before now, teachers had only one chance to improve their knowledge via books that provide only text and images. Nowadays, due to digital tools and the internet, teachers can also gather information from videos and even they can communicate through email and available social services. Searching for a specific word inside a PDF file optimizes time, also finding a particular book in an e-library can be possible in a fraction of a second.

Communicating with native speakers was not somehow possible for all teachers before, but digital tools provide more opportunities for EFL teachers to practice and *improve their skills* that can ultimately share better knowledge with their *students*. Improving students' skills was what both SS and HS teachers agree with. There is a pile of apps and programmes designed for entertainment, which indirectly improve student skills. Al-Qallaf & Al-Mutairi conducted a survey on EFL students to investigate the influence of blogs on teaching. They realized that students wrote longer sentences at the end of the semester, had less spelling and grammatical errors, were more motivated and autonomous, and according to the data, had a more favourable attitude about studying EFL. Educators are also excited about integrating Web technologies in their classrooms, but they have a number of concerns, including DL skills, technology-use behaviour, and digital material accessibility (Al-Qallaf & Al-Mutairi, 2016). Fröjd and Ström (2021) declared that digital tools could help students to improve their vocabulary.

Digital tools create a new learning environment that is more *fun and enjoyable* compared to the boring classical methods. A research conducted by Kurniawati et al. showed that EFL students enjoy learning through online tools, such as video and cyber media, and even offline tools such as MS PowerPoint, songs, and movies (Kurniawati et al., 2018). Another conducted on EFL students showed that students do their activities more *fun* using Kahoot! a game-based learning platform (Chiang, 2020).

As some comments by the SS teachers highlighted that, teachers possess more options using digital tools due to more *variety of methods and techniques* compared to classical methods. It is obvious that a classroom with no modern technology has only a simple black or whiteboard which is used for writing notes and sometimes drawing a scheme or diagram. In such classes, EFL teachers have the main role to express and act in the best way. Also, their handwriting should be readable; they should be fast in writing or drawing to manage time; additionally, class activities, especially oral discussions, should be run at the optimal time and participation of almost all students. In the traditional system, teachers were in the centre, while, digital tools got through many challenges and shift EFL classrooms to more learner-centred (Mehring, 2016). Likewise, Bajramia and Ismaili (2016) claimed that video materials can play an important role to improve student-centred mechanisms. Insure, all these new techniques can help EFL teachers to better deliver lessons, but, proficiency in using these tools requires DL.

Digital devices can reduce pressure on teachers to some extent, and with early preparation, thus, the teacher can more easily address the content of the lesson. Some other comments by the HS teachers in the current study stated that digital tools *make teaching easy and effective.* Digital devices designed for learning are mainly user-friendly, in such a way that the relevant teacher can learn most of its applications in a short period of time and helps to save time. Therefore, the effectiveness of the classes is increased. Apart from that, assessment for learning can be effectively accomplished. Student-level feedback is collected and processed digitally, which can have a direct impact on classroom performance. Teachers can improve their teaching style through their students' feedback, and students can better correct their shortcomings based on the results of their feedback (Panero & Aldon, 2016).

Students and instructors need a sufficient interactive environment. Although the atmosphere of mimicry classes can be somewhat appealing, the interactive environment can be effectively enhanced using special learning technologies. Some of the SS and HS teachers of this study assumed that the digital tools that they used in EFL classes, make the learning *environment* more *interactive and effective*. In line with these comments of this study, Tzu-Chein stated that interactivity aids or increases the motivation of both instructors' and students' thinking, as well as the reconstruction of their own cognitive structure (Tzu-Chien et al., 2002). The interactivity can be enhanced by computer and internet networking. Because interpersonal communication can be improved through virtual environments, it can play an important role in communication and dynamism between educators and students (Jaffee, 2003).

Another good point mentioned by some of the HS teachers is that digital tools *make students more active and motivate them*. Likewise, Jeng and his colleagues (2010) reported that mobile, as a more popular technology, lets students adopt an active role (Jeng et al., 2010). To achieve active learning, which is crucial, students are asked to employ their intellectual capacity. Thus, the diversity of resources creates an opportunity for all students to play a role. In most imitation classes, only part of the students are active, but this does not mean that the other students have no interest, as it is indispensable to create the necessary conditions for them. Since students have different personalities and learning contexts, teachers should be aware that different findings or outcomes may be achieved (Carrell et al., 1996). Motivation is also the potential energy and influences students' self-learning (Palmer & Goetz, 1988), and it is proved that motivation is crucial for EFL students (Ghazvini & Khajehpour, 2011). There are three factors pointed out by Acat and Demiral (2002) that cause motivation, where the instrumental in use are the important ones. Huang and colleagues (2016) determined the role of mobile, as a digital device, on the motivation and mental status of EFL students. On the other hand, the role of software in encouraging students can also be mentioned. For example, Plump and Wang reported that game-based learning, like Kahoot!, can positively impact students' motivation (Plump & LaRosa, 2017; Wang, 2015)

Some comments by the SS teachers HS teacher samples of this study addressed creativity. Creativity, especially in writing, is essential to work as a writer (Craft, 2005). Lee (2019) investigated how the creativity of EFL students in writing can be improved using digital games. Lee also found that around 80% of students had an interest in participating in his test and based on her survey, students enjoyed her technique. The researcher stated that students should learn not just by reading and writing, but also their *creativity* can be *improved* by experience, which means students make their own stories.

In the last decades, investments have been committed to the cognition of students by organizing educational programmes. Since students have different adaptations due to differences in personality, they have different circumstances to face problems and interpret information. Harrison & Rainer (1992) also supported the current study's finding. *Cognitive* development theory categorizes the reasons behind the rate of *students'* adaptation level, provides teaching methods (Brendel et al., 2002). Some of the HS teacher respondents believed that digital devices helped students understand the material better. Learners should be more involved and independent in order to improve this ability. The digital tools allow students to think better and have more authority, which enhanced their level of understanding. Likewise, Alnofal (2018) has a similar view.

Learning in the EFL classroom alone is not enough, but students can work on their skills out of the classroom (Soliman, 2014). Being an i*ndependent learner* is what one of the SS teachers also believed that can be achieved by digital devices. Both students and teachers get benefit from this mechanism because teachers can raise the level of teaching materials and students can use relevant programmes such as tutoring in private time and according to the available opportunities, which improves their language skills. Additionally, the virtual learning environment contributes to the sustainability *(permanency)* of EFL students' learning, which was suggested by some of the SS and HS teachers who responded to the questions in the current study.

No significant difference was observed between the SS and HS teachers' responses depending on their answers. Both SS and HS teachers mentioned the facilities of digital tools in their instruction. The facilities were likely similar for both groups of samples of the study.

5.2.4. Discussion of the Findings for the Fourth Research Question in Regards to the SS and HS Teachers

The fourth and final research question of the study highlighted the challenges that the teachers of the study faced. Many challenges and difficulties were mentioned by both SS and HS teachers. EFL teachers are often faced with a number of limitations in their class settings, such as lack of institutional support, a restrictive school curriculum, imperfect resources and technical problems. The result of this research question is compatible with Zheng & Borg (2014). What is more remarkable is that the challenges were varied according to the SS and the HS teachers of the study. It was noteworthy that both groups of teachers reported similar socioeconomic issues for students.

Most of the SS teachers' comments insisted on the reality that they faced many challenges due to '*technical problems'*, including *power outages*, *internet access problems*, *device errors* and one of the teachers complained about software issues and one of them also complained about unworkable digital tools precisely. Technical problems such as device errors or software glitches make challenges and difficulties for the SS teachers. It is also probable to encounter a technical issue during the lesson for instance, when the smartboard fails to work properly repairing it takes time. And there is a case if the teacher is not yet experienced with the smartboard, or the teacher is unable to control the smartboard, this can cause annoyance for the students. After all, it can be seen as a waste of time for both teachers and students. The findings are in the line with previous studies conducted by Rinekso & Lesagia, in which they found the same problems of using smartboards by the EFL teacher participants of their study (Rinekso & Lesagia, 2020). Besides, smartboards are elevated as learning tools that improve educational content which promotes the teaching-learning process effectively (Kennewell & Beauchamp, 2007; Smith et al., 2005). However, according to the obtained findings of this research question, it seems that the SS teachers were quite confident in using the smartboard

device but they were faced with many technical problems. In addition, Al-Faki & Khamis investigated the difficulties of using smartboards with English language teachers of Jeddah Schools, KSA. They found some significant difficulties such as teachers, school administrations, students' factors and technical supports (Al-Faki & Khamis, 2014).

Another challenge for the ST and the HS teachers was *internet access problems,* in which regularly all the ST and HS teachers faced the same problems in their online classes. They even mentioned that sometimes due to the internet access or bad connection they were forced to cancel their classes or it wasted their time until they fixed the problem.

Another significant challenge that was mostly faced by both SS and HS teachers, was '*students' socio-economic*' issues about having personal computers tablets, and even smartphones. For these aforementioned factors, several students can not participate in online classes, specifically in the pandemic period (Covid-19) that teachers are forced to teach via online and distance systems. Furthermore, some of the HT and nearly all SS teachers claimed that due to some *economic problems*, students' attendance of the online classes was decreased. One SS teacher and one HS teacher participant mentioned that using digital tools was a waste of time while using too many digital technologies, preparing lessons need more time, sometimes during the class time activities took a long time. The SS teachers pointed out that online classes also provided *cybersecurity* issues and they said that sometimes foreign students will enter the class.

Another challenge of using digital tools as it was claimed by one of the SS teachers was that using digital tools cause '*health problems'*. Also, some of the SS teachers claimed that because their students were not digitally literate, they created problems for them while teaching online classes. As students' DL was low they even mentioned that some of their students do not know about an email address or how to enter EBA (Eğitim Bilişim Ağı, (is a social platform designed for all stakeholders, especially teachers and students, with reliable and accurate e-content suitable for class levels) (Şenyurt, 2015). *Decreasing cognitive thinking* was claimed by the HS teachers. One of the SS teachers complained that the language of the online class platforms is English, so it made a problem for students. One more significant point was claimed by the HS teachers that digital technology causes a lack of emotional interaction between teachers and students. There is a fact not only for students and teachers, but for human beings also in general technologies make a lack of emotional interaction among themselves.

Depending on the answers of the teacher samples of this study, the challenges and the problems of using digital tools in their online classes are more similar for both SS and HS teacher samples. The most significant issue for both respondents of the study was socio-economic problems.

5.3. Conclusion

DL has now become a vital aspect in the world and especially in the education process. So, with the rapid advancement of novel technologies, SS and HS EFL teachers must not only recognize using current digital tools but most importantly to be able to properly assess those resources and tools for secure, knowledgeable and effective implementations. Based on the answers to the research questions, the main conclusions are written as follows:

- The first research question revealed that current digital technologies had been implemented in SSs and HSs by the EFL Turkish teachers. Generally speaking, the findings of the first research question and IQs, pointed out the fact that both SS and HS EFL teachers of the present study were

confident of using digital tools effectively, but it seems that some of the teachers of both groups still lack enough information about DL depending on the results of the definition of DL.

• The second research question sought to examine the DL level of SS and HS teachers, and how does their DL level affect their teaching. The results from the data showed that teachers' DL was in the middle level. Some of them consider DL mean the proper use of digital tools, while it can be said that DL is the effective use of innovations, analysis and sharing of information in a well-developed manner. Nearly all teachers claimed that their level of DL had positive effects on their instructions.

• Related to the third research question, the facilities of the digital tools for EFL instruction were examined. Noteworthy results were discovered from the teachers regarding the possibilities of current digital tools for EFL teaching. The teachers agreed with the fact that the innovations of the digital technologies facilitated their language instruction, including easy accessing information, making the lesson fun, effective, and enjoyable, improving students' language skills, increasing students' cognitive and creative capacity, providing a variety of methods and educational environment, and most importantly digital tools increase motivation.

• The last research question was for examining the challenges and difficulties that the teachers had by using the digital tools in EFL teaching. Notable results were found according to the SS and HS teachers' answers. It seems that although digital tools made their instruction easier and had many advantages, they faced many challenges due to students' socio-economic issues, technical problems (power outages, internet access problems, and device errors), health problems, wasting time, lack of students' DL, increasing emotional interaction, decreasing student's cognitive thinking capacity and lack of reliable assessment.

5.4. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the present study some significant recommendations are provided, including the following:

1. English language teachers should be encouraged to participate in training courses on how to use digital technologies and tools to improve student outcomes and improve language proficiency.
2. The quality and the variety of the learning resources should be extended and schools should take some steps, such as providing materials in libraries and offering related sites for students to increase their teachers' DL.
3. Computers and internet should be provided to increase the learning resources and to improve the quality of learning contributions
4. Results showed that parents' and students' levels of DL were not sufficient enough as they were not aware of the advantages of digital technologies. Therefore, seminars should be done on this issue.
5. Long-term and extensive specialized training platforms for teachers in SSs and HSs should be developed and updated.

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Appendix 4: The Focus Group Discussion Information

Interview Questions under Each Research Question

RQ1. What does digital literacy mean to (secondary & high) school EFL teachers?

IQ1. What does digital literacy mean to you?

IQ2. What kind of digital tools do you use in your instruction?

IQ3. For what purposes do you use digital tools in your instruction?

IQ4. How many hours do you spend using digital tools??

RQ2. How does the digital literacy level of (secondary & high) school EFL teachers affect their teaching?

IQ5. What is your level of digital literacy?

IQ6. How does your digital literacy level affect their instruction?

IQ7. What is your students' digital literacy level?

RQ3. What are the facilities of using digital tools in (secondary & high) school level of EFL teaching?

IQ8. What are the facilities of using digital tools in your instruction?

RQ4. What are the challenges of using digital tools in (secondary & high) school level of EFL teaching?

IQ9. What are the challenges of using digital tools in your instruction?